

depth study

World War I

In this depth study, students will investigate key aspects of World War I and the Australian experiences of the war, including the nature and significance of the war in world and Australian history.

This depth study MUST be completed by all students:.

5.0 World War I (1914–1918)

Over 2000 Anzac troops marched through London to commemorate the first official Anzac Day on 25 April 1916.

depth study

World War I

(1914–1918)

World War I has been described as the 'first modern war', largely because it was the first war in which advanced machine guns, chemical warfare, tanks, attack aircraft and submarines were widely used. It was also the first 'total war', where nations mobilised all of their available resources for the war effort. Millions of people, mainly young men, lost their lives in this conflict, and towns, homes, businesses and farms were destroyed.

However, World War I was also a catalyst for great change. The map of Europe had been redrawn by 1919, as large empires dissolved and new nation states were formed. Most of the nations involved had borrowed heavily to finance the war, and this allowed the USA to emerge as the world's new

economic power. Soviet Russia was also formed, igniting a fear of communism across many western nations. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles also sowed the seeds for the rise of fascism, and for other 20th century conflicts like World War II and the Vietnam War.

Key inquiry questions

- 5.1 What were the causes of World War I?
- 5.2 How and where was World War I fought?
- 5.3 How did World War I affect life at home in Australia?
- 5.4 How is World War I remembered and commemorated?

The remains of a fallen soldier in a trench, photographed during World War I

World War I (1914–1918)

Wars have many different causes, so it is important to look at both long-term and short-term factors. The long-term causes of World War I can be traced back to at least the mid 19th century. These included tensions between the European powers, the creation of the alliance system, the arms race, the Balkan wars, and the rise of nationalism.

Long-term factors such as these often form the real basis for going to war, but in many instances it takes a catalyst to trigger outright conflict. In the case of World War I, this catalyst was the assassination of the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Less than two months later, all of the great powers of Europe were engaged in a bitter war that was to last more than four years.



Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria



Australian soldiers at Gallipoli



The signing of the Armistice between the Allies and Germany in a railway carriage in the French forest of Compiègne on 11 November 1918



A key moment in the Russian Revolution: the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917

Source 5.1 Timeline of key events in World War I



Source 5.2 An English recruitment poster from World War I, urging men to join the fight

5.1 What were the causes of World War I?

World War I involved all of the great powers of Europe. Because these nations had such large empires, many other colonies, nations and dominions, including Australia, were also drawn into the conflict.

Wars between nations start for a variety of reasons. These can include historical tensions, territorial disputes or competition among nations for resources or economic markets. Other factors, such as different political ideologies and systems of government, can also drive nations towards war. Short-term factors, such as the deaths of key figures or the mobilisation of armies, can be the triggers that turn tension and hostility into outright war.

Background to World War I

The **Great War**—as World War I was referred to at the time—was caused by a complex interaction of factors that had been simmering for more than 20 years. National rivalries, jealousies over territory, competition over economic progress, competition over the size of armies and navies, and the race to colonise new parts of the world all contributed to the tension.

In the 1870s, a newly unified Germany had attempted to consolidate its place in European politics by developing a system of alliances. This system changed the nature of European diplomacy, and resulted in the development of two alliances, consisting of all the European powers. The powers believed that these alliances would act as a deterrent to war, because if a member of one alliance was attacked by a member of the other, all the members of both alliances would be involved. This was called 'balance of power' politics.

The disagreement that provoked World War I grew from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne), and his wife on 28 June 1914.

Europe in the lead-up to war

In 1901, Europe appeared peaceful. Queen Victoria had occupied the British throne for over 60 years and many of her descendants married into royal houses all over Europe (see Source 5.4). As a result, many of the royal families of Europe were closely related. Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and the British Prince of Wales (later King George V) were all first cousins (see Source 5.5). The Tsar's wife was also one of Queen Victoria's granddaughters.

In the lead-up to World War I, many thought it was unlikely that close relations would become involved in armed conflict—and certainly not fighting on opposing sides.



Source 5.3 The Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie. Their assassination in June 1914 sparked the outbreak of World War I.



Source 5.4 Queen Victoria (seated front centre) photographed with members of her extended family in 1894. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany is seated front left.



Source 5.5 Tsar Nicholas II of Russia with his cousin King George V—their mothers were sisters.

On the surface, Europe seemed prosperous and peaceful at this time. The Industrial Revolution had transformed Western Europe, with new production methods and technology affecting almost every sector of society. Governments had made improvements in health care, sanitation and relief for the poor. Roads, canals and railways made transport easier and more accessible, and literacy rates were rising. The middle classes had generally been extended further political rights and enjoyed a higher standard of living. The working classes had also won some improvements, such as the right to vote in Britain after 1867.

However, this prosperity masked both international and domestic tensions. There were jealousies among many of the royal families, despite their close relationships. Issues such as the different rates of economic progress, the size of colonial empires and the development of weapons, armies and ships all caused rivalry.

The rate of economic progress, together with improvements in the standard of living, was also unevenly spread. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries had little impact on the nations of Eastern Europe such as Austria–Hungary, the Balkan states and Russia. This contributed further to the rivalry between nations. Even in industrialised nations like Britain and Germany there was a huge gap between rich and poor. Many working-class families lived in cramped, unsanitary conditions or in urban slums. Women were still not allowed to vote in Europe, and nationalist movements divided people along ethnic lines. Many governments and people were afraid of the rising influence of radical movements like socialism and anarchism. Although Europe seemed to be peaceful before World War I, rivalries and tensions bubbled beneath the surface—so much so that by the time Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated, Europe was ripe for war.



Source 5.6 Europe before World War I

Causes of World War I

There were a number of short- and long-term factors that led to the outbreak of World War I. Key concepts such as **nationalism**, **imperialism**, militarism and the alliance system began to dominate international relations in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Nationalism

Put simply, nationalism is a sense of pride in and love of one's nation. It grows out of an understanding that the people of a nation share a common language, culture and history. In Europe, nationalism played an important role in the lead-up to World War I.

Nationalism can either unite or divide the people of a nation or region. For example, feelings of nationalism contributed to the unification of many small Germanic kingdoms to form the German Empire in 1871. A sense of nationalism also encouraged cooperation between Germany and Austria–Hungary, because German-language speakers ruled both empires. Nationalism also played a role in the federation of Australia's six separate colonies in 1901.

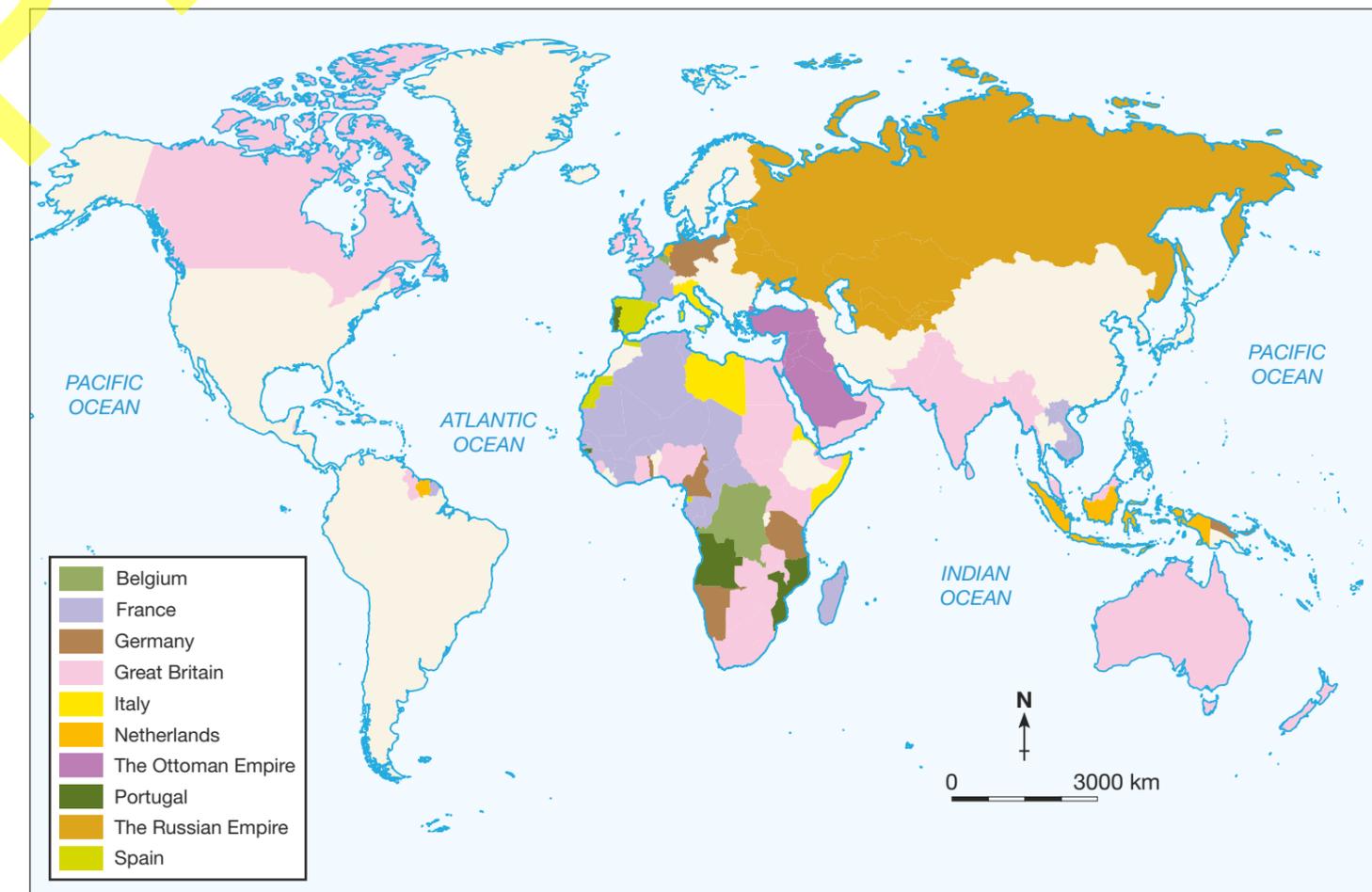
One example of a country that was attempting to assert its independence was Bosnia–Herzegovina, an area in south-eastern Europe known as the Balkans (see Source 5.6). In the years before World War I, Bosnia–Herzegovina was under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, Bosnia–Herzegovina was made up of many different ethnic groups, including Bosnians, Serbs and Croats, who did not see themselves as historically, ethnically or culturally linked to either Austria or Hungary. Instead, most of the people of Bosnia–Herzegovina wanted to join with Serbia to form their own nation.

Russia had been supporting moves by Bosnia–Herzegovina to become independent and unite with Serbia, so when a Serbian youth was accused of assassinating the Austrian Archduke, Russia was drawn into the conflict that followed.

Imperialism

Another factor that led to tensions between European countries in the lead-up to World War I was imperialism. Imperialism is the policy of one country extending its territory to create an empire, usually for financial and strategic reasons.

European powers, such as Britain, Spain, France and Portugal, had colonised much of the world, including North and South America, Australia and parts of Asia, between the 15th and 19th centuries (see Source 5.7). By the late 19th century, European nations were engaged in a new wave of imperialism, often called the 'scramble for Africa'.



Source 5.7 European global empires in 1914

The main rivals in the race for new colonies this time were Britain, France and Germany. Britain had the largest colonial empire, with colonies and dominions (such as Australia) all over the world. France also had many colonies around the world. Germany, however, had only been a unified nation since 1871 and was still trying to build a large colonial empire when war broke out.

Kaiser Wilhelm II, ruler of Germany, was eager to add to the number of German colonies. In 1905, and again in 1911, Germany attempted to block further colonial expansion by France by sending troops to take control of a number of French colonies in North Africa. In both cases, France, with Britain's support, resisted Germany's attempts, resulting in the defeat of Germany.

focus on ...

cause and effect: beginnings of a war

In the case of many historical events, it is difficult to distinguish between cause and effect. Often there is a circular pattern. This is well illustrated by the arms race that preceded World War I.

Fear of war prompted many nations, particularly Britain and Germany, to build up their armies and navies. However, the rivalry this arms race caused increased the likelihood of outright war.

The same applies to the network of alliances. These were formed as protection against invasion by members of the other alliance—a sort of security against war. The reality is that the alliances actually made the war longer and more widespread. When a dispute developed between Austria and Russia following the assassination of the Archduke, all six major powers, and their empires, were drawn into the conflict.

In addition to the key countries listed in Source 5.8, many other countries, colonies and territories were attached to one or other of the alliances (see Source 5.7).

All British colonies (such as India) and dominions (such as Australia and New Zealand) automatically became part of the Triple Entente. Japan had signed a treaty with Britain in 1902. This meant that they could all be drawn into conflict if war broke out. Bosnia–Herzegovina was also considered a member of the Triple Entente because Russia was a key supporter of Bosnia–Herzegovina's bid for independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A conflict between Bosnia–Herzegovina and Austria–Hungary would therefore become a conflict between all the countries that were members of the two alliances.

Militarism: the arms race in Europe

No war can be fought without guns, ammunition and soldiers. In the early 20th century, modern battleships and submarines were also important weapons of war. Despite claims of European powers that they were not preparing for war, most were training armies and building up their stores of ships and weapons.

Germany and Britain were the leading players in what was called the 'arms race'. Britain had the largest navy but was still pouring millions of pounds into ships and armaments. Germany was economically powerful and possessed a large army. Its leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II, wanted to establish Germany as a world power. To achieve this goal, the Kaiser poured resources into strengthening the German armed forces.

By early 1914, even though the leaders of Europe were still talking of peace, they were clearly preparing for war.

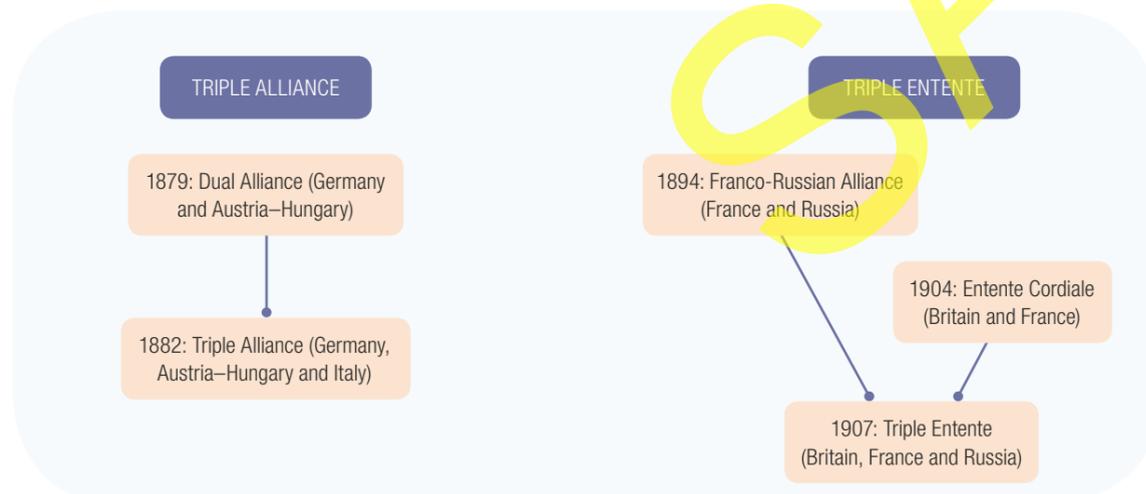
Check your learning

- 1 How would you sum up the situation in Europe around 1900? Explain your answer.
- 2 In your own words, explain the term 'nationalism', noting both its positive and negative features.
- 3 Why was Germany's colonial empire so much smaller than Britain's?
- 4 What is meant by the term 'balance of power' politics? Explain both the benefits and the drawbacks of this system.
- 5 Does an arms race necessarily mean that war is likely? Give reasons for your answer.

Alliances

One of the key factors that led to a total European war was the alliance system. Between 1879 and 1907, leading nations grouped themselves into two alliances—the 1882 Triple Alliance and the 1907 Triple Entente (see Source 5.8). *Entente* is a French word meaning an 'understanding' or alliance. Each participating nation promised to provide military support if one of its members was attacked.

Another aim of these alliances was to prevent wars. It was assumed that no power would go to war if there was a risk that a conflict between two nations could easily build into a conflict among many. These alliances increased the tension between Triple Alliance and Triple Entente countries.



Source 5.8 The development of European alliances from 1879 to 1907



Source 5.9 A German cartoon 'Map of Europe 1914' by W. Trier, satirising the political and military situation in Europe at the beginning of World War I



Source 5.10 Balkan states in 1914

The outbreak of World War I

The event that triggered the start of World War I took place in the Balkan states, an area of south-eastern Europe (see Source 5.10). The Balkans were very unstable. Three major imperial powers were actively involved in the region: Austria–Hungary, the Russian Empire and the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire.

The complex relationships between these powers made the Balkans a potential crisis point. Austria–Hungary controlled parts of the Balkans and, in 1908, had annexed (taken control over) Bosnia–Herzegovina. Russia supported Serbian nationalists, who wanted Bosnia–Herzegovina as part of Serbia.

The Emperor of Austria–Hungary was aware of the tension in the Balkans. Believing that the people would be dazzled and charmed by a royal visit, he sent his nephew and his wife on a goodwill visit to the city of Sarajevo in Bosnia–Herzegovina. On 28 June 1914, most of the people of the area lined the streets, enthusiastically welcoming the royal couple. However, a small group of Bosnian Serb nationalists took the opportunity to show their feelings about their imperial rulers.

While visiting the city, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were shot and killed by Gavrilo Princip, a member of a Serbian nationalist group called the Black Hand.

The declaration of war

The expansion of the conflict from an incident in the Balkans to a world war was a direct result of the alliance system. Austria–Hungary, with support from Germany, quickly issued an ultimatum consisting of ten demands to Serbia. Serbia agreed to accept nine of the demands but refused to agree to the last one—that officials from Austria–Hungary be involved in the investigation into the assassination of the Archduke. When Serbia failed to agree to all ten demands, Austria–Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914.

Empires mobilise

Russia saw itself as Serbia’s protector. It responded by mobilising its army for war against Austria–Hungary and Germany. On 31 July, Germany demanded that Russia stop these preparations for war. Russia did not respond and so Germany declared war on Russia. The Germans had also asked the French government what its intentions were. France issued a vague response, stating that it would ‘follow its own interests’.

The Schlieffen Plan and the invasion of Belgium

By 1914, the German General Staff had decided to invade France through Belgium in the event of a two-front war. This was based on a 1905 strategy drawn up by Chief of Staff Alfred von Schlieffen, called the **Schlieffen Plan**.

Source 5.11 An artist’s impression of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo



The Schlieffen Plan was based on the following assumptions:

- Russia would take at least six weeks to get its army ready for war.
- France would be easily defeated in six weeks.
- Belgium would not resist any German attack.
- Britain would remain neutral.

If war broke out, Germany would attack France by marching through Belgium. Belgium and France would be quickly defeated, after which Germany could turn its attention to Russia.

If this plan was implemented, it would violate Belgium’s neutrality. Britain had signed a treaty in 1839, guaranteeing to come to the defence of Belgium if another country attempted to invade its borders. As a result, the German invasion of Belgium forced Britain to become involved in the growing conflict.

focus on ... contestability: the Schlieffen Plan

Historical events can become contestable with the release of new sources of information. The Schlieffen Plan is a good example because it has become the accepted explanation of German tactics in 1914. More recently, however, historians like Terence Zuber have used material released from German archives after the fall of the Berlin Wall to challenge this view. They argue that the 1905 Schlieffen Plan was not a practical war plan, but actually a theoretical training exercise. This argument is based on inconsistencies between the 1905 Schlieffen Plan and the German mobilisation plans implemented in 1914.

Zuber points out that the Schlieffen Plan was for a war against France on a single front, yet in 1914 Germany was planning for a war against France and Russia. The actual document was also in the possession of Schlieffen’s daughters in 1914, not with the General Staff. Historians have to be prepared to accept the emergence of new evidence that challenges accepted beliefs. The Schlieffen Plan has long been accepted as fact, but as Zuber argues, it can now be regarded as contestable.

The war escalates

On 3 August 1914, British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey sent a message to the German government announcing that Britain would declare war if Germany did not withdraw its troops from Belgium by midnight. There was no response to the message, so on 4 August 1914 Britain, and its empire, found itself at war with Germany.

Italy was also a member of the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria–Hungary. It was expected that Italy would join the war on their side. However, under the wording of the Triple Alliance, members were not bound to support each other if one had been the aggressor. Italy used this clause to remain neutral at the start of the war and to switch to the Triple Entente in May 1915.

Turkey entered the war on the side of the Triple Alliance in October 1914. It was against Turkey that Australia’s first land battles took place. The USA also came into the war, on the side of the Triple Entente (or Allies), in April 1917, after Germany had resumed its unrestricted submarine warfare.

Source 5.12

Key dates in the lead-up to World War I

28 June 1914	Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand
23 July 1914	Austria–Hungary presents ten demands to Serbia
25 July 1914	Serbia agrees to only nine of the ten demands
28 July 1914	Austria–Hungary declares war on Serbia
29 July 1914	Russia promises support for Serbia
1 August 1914	Germany declares war on Russia
3 August 1914	Germany declares war on France and invades Belgium
4 August 1914	Britain declares war on Germany (Australia becomes involved)
6 August 1914	Austria–Hungary declares war on Russia
23 August 1914	Japan (an ally of Britain) declares war on Germany
29 October 1914	Turkey enters the war on the side of Germany
23 May 1915	Italy enters the war on the side of the Triple Entente

Check your learning

- 1 Why did the Archduke and his wife tour Sarajevo?
- 2 Explain why there is historical debate over the use of the term ‘Schlieffen Plan’ to describe Germany’s actions in World War I.
- 3 Why did Serbia reject Austria–Hungary’s ultimatum in July 1914?
- 4 Carefully examine the key dates leading up to World War I (Source 5.12). Use this information to construct a flow chart that shows the lead-up to World War I.

Australia's entry into World War I

Before World War I, Europe had been relatively peaceful for over 40 years. The last major war had been fought in 1871, meaning that a whole generation of young men had grown up with no real experience of war. The same was true of Australia. Apart from a small number of soldiers who had fought for Britain in the Sudanese and Boer wars, Australians had not been engaged in war and had little understanding of what it meant.

Possibly because of this, there was a perception that war was glorious, exciting and heroic. Young people, especially boys, were brought up on military stories and were taught military drills in school. In these stories, the heroes were rarely wounded or killed; they won their battles effortlessly, and the drills taught them to obey orders and work together.

The great adventure

When World War I began, Australia had been a single, united country for only 13 years. Although Australia was self-governing, it was still a dominion of the British Empire. As such, Australia was obliged to follow the instructions of Britain in many areas of government. Therefore, when Britain declared war on Germany, Australia was also at war, as were all other countries in the Empire.

In Australia, a wave of enthusiasm for the war effort swept the country. The men of Australia rushed to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). According to legend, many were concerned that the war might end before they got to Europe. The Australian government initially promised to supply 20000 men to the British war effort by the end of 1914—in reality, the number of men enlisted by this time was around 50000.



Source 5.13 Australian recruitment poster from 1915 (AWM ARTV00021)

The reasons for enlistment were varied and complex. Some men were driven by a desire to show what this new young nation could contribute to a world conflict. Others went to war because of pure loyalty to Britain, 'the mother country'. Many of the first wave of volunteers were former British soldiers and other British citizens who happened to be in Australia. Still others wanted to show support for Britain in case we should need Britain's help at some stage in the future. Leader of the Opposition (later Prime Minister) Andrew Fisher pledged that Australia would 'stand beside the mother country to help and defend her to the last man and the last shilling'.

As well, there were young men who joined out of a spirit of adventure, an opportunity to leave home, to see the world, to meet French girls. Whole football and cricket teams joined, as did groups of workmates from businesses and factories in cities and country towns. Many women encouraged their husbands, boyfriends, brothers and even fathers to enlist. Many young women preferred to socialise with men in uniform.

The opportunity to earn a good income also acted as an incentive. The pay was 6 shillings (60 cents) per day, a figure calculated to match the average wage of Australian workers, minus the cost of rations. The promise of regular pay also motivated many unemployed men to volunteer. As the war progressed, hatred of the enemy also became a motivation for enlistment. Propaganda stories (often exaggerated) of German atrocities were used in recruiting campaigns.

In every city and town, recruiting rallies were held. Platforms would be set up with the Australian and British flags side by side as a backdrop to the speeches. High-profile sportsmen such as footballers, cricketers and athletes would be planted in the crowd. When the call went out for young men to step forward and sign up, it was frequently one of these sportsmen who led the charge.

Among those who offered to enlist were Aboriginal Australians. Only 400 Aborigines were accepted for service, and they were all deemed to be 'of substantial European origin or descent'. When Australian soldiers returned from World War I, there were many benefits available to them to assist their readjustment to civilian life. Aboriginal soldiers, however, were denied access to these benefits.

Of course, not all motives for joining the war effort were noble. There were stories (perhaps just rumours) of soldiers changing their names before enlisting in order to get away from their wives or other commitments. Others enlisted to escape the boredom of jobs they hated, to leave school early, or to escape the strict rules and confines of their family homes.

Those who had fought in the Boer war had some understanding of the brutality of war, but for most, war seems to have meant adventure. Of all the thoughts that ran through the heads of those who enlisted, particularly in the first few months, the idea of death or even injury seems to have been very much in the background.

Questioning voices

Not all Australians were enthusiastic about the war. Some argued that it was not Australia's war and that a force from this young country could make little difference to the outcome. Others were opposed to the war because they were **pacifists**—people who do not think violence is an answer. One group of pacifists were the Jehovah's Witnesses, a religious group for whom any engagement in war went against their beliefs.

There was also a small group of conscientious objectors and pacifists—people who oppose war and believe that they would betray their principles by enlisting or fighting, or by supporting war. Among this group was the Women's Peace Army, led by **suffragette** (a woman demanding the right to vote) Vida Goldstein (see Source 5.15).



Source 5.14 Recruitment posters such as this appealed to the 'sportsmen' in Australia (AWM ARTV00026).



Source 5.15 Vida Goldstein was both a suffragette and a pacifist.

Some Australians did not enlist because they were afraid, or because they believed it was to their economic advantage to remain at home. Little has been recorded about these people. Often those who were reluctant to go to war used excuses such as poor health or family responsibilities to explain their decision not to enlist.

Taken together, however, all of these questioning groups seem to have made up only a small fraction of the total population. In 1914 and through most of 1915, the dominant feeling towards the war was positive and supportive. It was only as the harsh reality of war became known that some Australians began to question their initial enthusiasm.

perspective: motives

Australian soldiers enlisted in the First AIF for a range of reasons. The age, background, circumstances and values of particular soldiers were all significant factors. The following sources provide a brief insight into the motives of some of the men that enlisted.

Source 5.16

I wasn't eighteen. I was working on the lathe, next to another chap ... I said to him 'why don't you enlist?' I said, 'I'll enlist if you do' ... I went right up to Victoria Barracks and enlisted. We left the factory and I had to get my father's signature. Well, I forged that.

Stan D'Altera (in A Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, Oxford University Press, p. 27)

Source 5.17

I couldn't help myself. Mum was a widow and she needed me to help run the farm ... But I read what Andrew Fisher said and I went, 'Fisher's message to England was that Australia would stand behind her to the last man and the last shilling.'

Unnamed soldier (in P Adam-Smith, *The Anzacs*, Penguin, p. 17)

Source 5.18

*The Bugles of England were blowing o'er the sea,
As they had called a thousand years, calling now to me:
They woke me from my dreaming in the dawning of the day,
The Bugles of England—and how could I stay?*

JD Burns, a student at Scotch College, Melbourne, in 1914
(in EM Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, Cambridge University Press, p. 40)

Source 5.19

... I have joined the Australian Army ... it's not bad money here, 5/- a day and clothes and food ... nearly as good as cabinet making and not half as hard. You may [think] it funny [my] turning up such a good job, but ... this [employer] had only about three days work left for us ... things are so bad out here for there is a drought on [and] we haven't had any rain for months, so I [thought] I would join the army.

Corporal RE Antill in a letter to his parents, 1914 (*defencemagazine*)

Source 5.20

I have enlisted and I don't regret it in the very least. I believe it is every young fellow's duty. There are far better men than any of us have already gone ... we are the sort of men who ought to go.

Private AJ McSparrow (in B Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 7)

Check your learning

- 1 What was the attitude of most Australians to war before 1914? Why did they hold this attitude?
- 2 Why were some people or groups not enthusiastic about the war?
- 3 What techniques were used by the government to encourage men to enlist?
- 4 Reread Sources 5.16 to 5.20.
 - a How many different motivations and attitudes can you identify?
 - b What other reasons might have motivated men to enlist?
- 5 Create a conversation between the unnamed soldier in Source 5.17 and a younger brother who has been left to run the farm alone. Your conversation should include three arguments 'for' and 'against' enlisting in 1914.

bigideas

5.1 What were the causes of World War I?

Remember

- 1 Write definitions in your own words for the terms:
 - a imperialism
 - b nationalism
 - c alliance
- 2 What were the two major alliances formed before World War I? Which countries were the members of the two alliances?
- 3 Give three reasons why many Australians strongly supported Australia's involvement in World War I.

Understand

- 4 Why might Serbia have refused to agree to the last of Austria-Hungary's demands: that Austro-Hungarian officials be involved in the investigation into the assassination of the Archduke?
- 5 How do you explain the fact that the rulers of Britain, Germany and Russia, although they were first cousins, were engaged in such bitter conflicts with each other over the course of World War I?
- 6 At the start of the war, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) was neutral. If Turkey had remained neutral, the story of the war, in particular Australia's role, would have been very different. There would not have been a Gallipoli campaign and 25 April would be just another day on the calendar.
 - a Conduct research into the reasons why Turkey chose to enter the war, and why Turkey became involved on the side of the Triple Alliance.
 - b How would the Triple Entente powers have been helped if Turkey had remained neutral?
- 7 Why did recruiters rely on a sporting image to encourage young Australian men to enlist?

Apply

- 8 Examine the background of World War I.
 - a List and briefly explain all the major causes of World War I.
 - b Choose the cause that you believe was most significant and explain why you have chosen this cause.
- 9 If the assassination of the Archduke had not taken place, do you believe that World War I would still have occurred? Explain and support your opinion.

Analyse

- 10 Examine the two recruiting posters (Sources 5.13 and 5.14). Identify all the methods used on these posters to encourage enlistment. Support your answer with reference to words or images in the posters.

Evaluate

- 11 Think about some of the reasons why young men decided to enlist for World War I. Do you think the same reasons apply for young Australians who enlist to fight in wars overseas today?

Create

- 12 Create an illustrated timeline or flow chart of the events leading to the outbreak of World War I. You may like to illustrate the timeline by hand, or use the Internet to locate illustrations of the events.
- 13 Use a range of print and digital resources to locate and print a series of recruitment posters from World War I (two of which must be Australian). Be sure to include posters from a range of different countries that were involved in World War I. Analyse these posters, looking for points such as:
 - appeal to sense of national identity
 - appeal to sense of adventure and excitement
 - appeal to sense of outrage and anger at the enemy.
 Create a PowerPoint or other multimedia presentation in which you identify the key features of the posters in each category. Discuss whether you think each poster was successful in encouraging people to get involved in the war effort and why.



Source 5.21 British aircraft played a vital role in the new way of fighting wars.

5.2 How and where was World War I fought?

World War I was fought across a larger area than any previous conflict. Theatres of war ranged from the Middle East to the Western Front, from Russia to the Pacific, the North Sea to the Dardanelles, and from northern Italy to Africa. Each region produced its own unique demands, tactics and conditions of warfare. The common feature across all regions and theatres was the emergence of new technologies.

The nature of warfare in World War I

Unlike earlier wars, World War I was fought across a large part of the world and involved many countries. Britain, France and Russia faced Germany and its allies on the Western Front. Germany also fought against Russia on the Eastern Front. There was fighting in Turkey and the Middle East and in North Africa. There were also small conflicts in the Pacific Ocean, where a combined effort of Japanese and Australian forces took over German colonies in New Guinea. Battles at sea interrupted shipping and trade. War was also fought in the air and under the sea for the first time—terrorising civilian populations.

New technology

Over the course of World War I, many new technologies were introduced, and existing military vehicles and weapons were improved. Developments in powerful, long-range weaponry, such as the machine gun and heavy artillery, were particularly important. Deadly new chemical weapons were also a significant development.

Much of this technology is blamed for extending the war, as the conflict quickly became an evenly matched battle of technology and tactics—with neither side able to break the deadlock. Unlike earlier wars, in which the soldiers moved around constantly to gain an advantage, both sides on the Western Front were forced to dig trenches for protection, bringing the armies to a stalemate.

Guns and artillery

Machine guns, which had first been used during the American Civil War, were improved for use in World War I (see Source 5.22). Many were capable of firing up to 600 rounds of ammunition per minute in short bursts. Facing one machine gun was similar to facing 250 soldiers with rifles. However, the guns often overheated and were heavy and difficult to move through the mud. Nonetheless, they were devastating when used against oncoming troops.

Heavy artillery guns could fire large shells over a long distance, usually projecting them in an arc to land on the target from above. Like machine guns, artillery weapons were heavy and difficult to move. They were usually mounted on wheels that often became bogged down in the mud or got stuck in craters.

Gas

In April 1915, Germany introduced poison gas (see Source 5.23) as a weapon of war. Chlorine, which was blown over the enemy trenches, burned and destroyed the respiratory tracts (airways) of anyone without a gas mask, causing terrible pain and death. Other gases were introduced throughout the war, including mustard and tear gas. Poison-gas attacks were so horrific that their use was banned in 1925 under the Geneva Protocol.

Tanks

The British army introduced the first tanks into the war in September 1916 at the Battle of the Somme. While they were successful at overcoming barbed wire obstacles and trenches, the mechanical unreliability of these early tanks limited their impact. They had been rushed into production and frequently broke down or became stuck in muddy ditches. The crews inside the tanks had to endure unbearably hot and noisy conditions, almost constantly choking on the fumes inside the cab. By the end of 1917, improvements in tank technology and tactics meant that tanks were becoming more effective.



Source 5.22 British machine gunners firing during the Battle of the Somme



Source 5.23 A soldier and dog work to find the wounded in poisonous war areas.



Source 5.24 German airmen attach a 100-kilogram bomb to the underside of a Gotha bomber.

Aircraft

Large-scale aerial warfare was conducted for the first time during World War I. At first, small planes were used to scout enemy positions. Later, planes armed with machine guns were used in aerial combats, known as **dogfights**.

Huge airships called **zeppelins**, named for their inventor Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, were used by the Germans in the first air raid over England in January 1915. Made of a cylindrical metal frame covered with fabric and filled with gasbags, a zeppelin was able to fly higher than conventional aircraft and drift almost silently over its targets. This made zeppelins difficult to fight against with normal anti-aircraft weaponry. The zeppelins' ability to hit their targets accurately was poor though, and they were also vulnerable to strong winds that could blow them off course. Towards the end of the war, zeppelins were largely replaced by multi-engine bomber planes, such as the Gotha G.V. Britain responded with its equivalent, the Handley Page Type O bomber.



Source 5.25 Dogs were sometimes used to carry messages to and from the front. This one brings news to a soldier in the trenches.

Communications

Advances in communication allowed faster contact between commanding field officers behind the front line and soldiers at the front line. The development of telephone and wireless (radio) systems allowed instant front-line reports and quick decisions. However, phone lines, which had to be laid in each new location, were easily damaged by the artillery, and the wireless radios were heavy and difficult to move. Despite the increasing use of these new technologies, soldiers still acted as runners to relay information. Motorbike couriers, carrier pigeons and even dogs were used at times (see Source 5.25).

Check your learning

- 1 Identify three ways in which World War I was different from preceding wars.
- 2 Did new developments in technology actually extend the war?
- 3 Why do you think that the use of poison gas was banned under the Geneva Protocol while the use of other types of weapons was not?
- 4 What were the advantages and disadvantages of new developments in communications?

Where was World War I fought?

In World War I, the greatest loss of life was in Europe. Many of the best-known land battles of World War I were played out in an area in France and Belgium known as the Western Front (see Source 5.26). However, the Eastern Front was also very important, especially in terms of the conflict between Germany and Russia. A third front, along the border between Italy and Austria, was the scene of fierce fighting and great loss of life.

Because so many European nations had large colonial empires, people from all over the world participated in the conflict. Members of the British Commonwealth (such as Australia, India, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand) were involved in the conflict. The war came close to Australia because Germany had colonies in Samoa and New Guinea. As early as August 1914, New Zealand forces occupied German Samoa with no loss of life. Australian forces had driven the Germans out of New Guinea by the end of 1914.



Source 5.26 The countries involved in World War I and the sites and years of major battles

focus on ... significance: Lawrence of Arabia

At the outbreak of World War I, Thomas Edward Lawrence was a university student, specialising in the Middle East. When the war began, he enlisted in British intelligence and took part in a campaign in the Middle East. Lawrence became a close adviser to an Arabic prince, Faisal. Lawrence and Faisal helped to unite the Arabic tribes and encouraged uprisings that distracted the Ottoman (Turkish) troops.

The type of warfare used in the Middle East was different from that used at Gallipoli and in France. Rather than large armies attacking each other in force, they used a guerrilla-style campaign. This involved small bands of independent, non-military Arab tribesmen launching surprise attacks on the Turks. These tactics forced the Turks to divert troops to protect supplies and communication, weakening their ability to respond to other attacks.

Lawrence worked with the Arab tribes against the Turks and supported their demands for independence. His adventures as 'Lawrence of Arabia' made him a popular hero. Later, Lawrence's reputation as a heroic figure was questioned by historians who were critical of the accuracy of Lawrence's writing about his part in what was called the Arab Revolt.



Source 5.27 TE Lawrence in Arabia, 1915

The war also took place in the Middle East. The Gallipoli campaign, for example, was designed to open up access for the Allies. They needed this access in order to get troops and supplies into Russia—to aid the campaign on the Eastern Front. In the end, the Gallipoli campaign was abandoned, but not before the deaths of around 140 000 soldiers from countries including Britain, Canada, France, Australia, New Zealand, India and Turkey. More than half of those killed were from Turkey.

Following the withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915, some of the Allied troops, including the Australian Light Horse, were redeployed to Palestine where they and the Arabs fought against the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire.

Japan, a rapidly modernising nation, was also involved on the side of the Triple Entente. In 1914, in response to a request from Britain, Japanese ships led raids on German naval vessels around Chinese waters. The Japanese further provided 17 battleships to assist British naval actions in the Mediterranean and in South Africa. It is interesting that Japan also took advantage of the war situation to extend its power and influence in China.

The USA enters the war

At the start of the war, the USA was neutral, but its sympathies definitely lay with the members of the Triple Entente. The USA continued to trade with Britain and, it is believed, to provide indirect support for the war effort.

In an attempt to stop trade across the Atlantic, the Germans began to use submarine warfare. On 7 May 1915, the British passenger ship *Lusitania* was sunk by a German submarine, killing 1198 passengers (see Source 5.28). Among the dead were 128 Americans.



Source 5.28 A sketch of the passenger ship *Lusitania* sinking on a trip from Liverpool to New York after it was hit by a torpedo from a German U-boat on 7 May 1915

Following the sinking of two more British ships carrying American passengers, Germany agreed to stop submarine attacks on ships carrying civilians. This pledge lasted until March 1917—a month in which German submarines sunk more American ships. On 6 April 1917, the USA declared war on Germany.

Another suggested motivation for the USA joining the war was the large amount of money that American bankers had lent to the British and French. It was important that the Triple Entente countries win the war in order for them to pay back the debt to the USA. The addition of thousands of fresh American troops at this crucial point of the war was intended to boost the war effort of the Triple Entente and maximise their chances of winning the war.

This is in fact what happened. The American troops were fit and enthusiastic. The USA also supplied extra food, facilities, and money to fund the final months of the campaign.

Check your learning

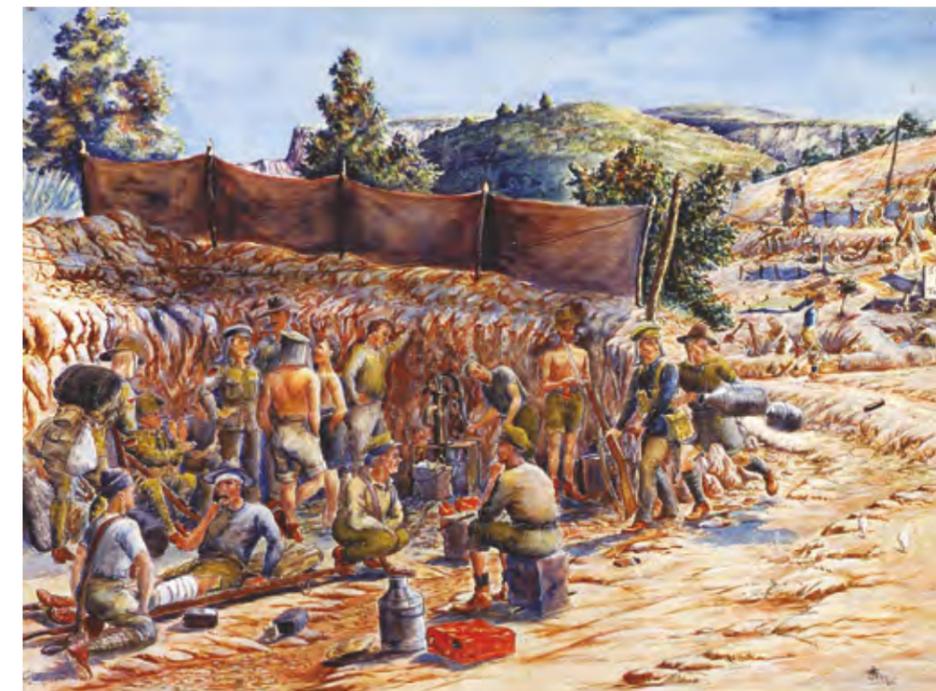
- 1 World War I was predominantly a European war. Why were people from so many other parts of the world involved?
- 2 What impact do you think the early Australian and New Zealand successes in the Pacific would have had on attitudes to war?
- 3 What was TE Lawrence's role in the Middle East?
- 4 Identify the main reasons why the USA became involved in World War I. Which do you believe to be the most important? Why?

Australia's first battles

The first major battle of World War I for Australian troops took place on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. Many Australian men who enlisted in the early months of the war believed they would be travelling to Europe to fight against the Germans. However, in October 1914, Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany.

British strategists decided that Australian and New Zealand soldiers should join the Gallipoli campaign, which was designed to knock Turkey out of the war as quickly as possible.

For eight months, from April to December 1915, the Allies continued to fight on the Gallipoli Peninsula, but the campaign was ultimately a failure. As a result, the majority of Australian soldiers were moved to the Western Front. There they engaged in trench warfare for the next three years, until November 1918. Australian troops who remained in the Middle East, mainly the Light Horse, continued to fight the Turks, especially in the Australian and Anzac Mounted Divisions and the Imperial Camel Corps.



Source 5.29 A painting by Lieutenant General Sir Carl Jess, *Australian infantry on fatigues at Gallipoli*

Formation of the Anzacs

When the war began, there was an equally enthusiastic response from Australia and New Zealand. Initially their two forces were separate. The Australian troops formed the First Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealanders the First New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

Early in 1915, as the two forces were training in Egypt, it was decided by General Birdwood, commander of the Australian and New Zealand forces, to form a combined corps. The first name suggested was the Australasian Army Corps, but this was rejected by New Zealand. Eventually the title Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (or ANZAC) was adopted. It was under this banner that the soldiers of both countries fought at Gallipoli and throughout World War I.

Gallipoli

The first major engagement of the Anzacs was as part of a campaign that aimed to take the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) out of the war. The plan was to open up a supply line from the Mediterranean through to Russia.

The only way that Britain and France could move troops, equipment or armaments to their ally Russia was through the Mediterranean Sea and into the Black Sea. To do this they had to pass through Turkish waters (see Source 5.30).

The first part of the campaign plan was launched in March 1915. This involved a naval attack through the Dardanelles—a sea passage from the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea. This action failed because the entrance to the Dardanelles had been mined. Three Allied battleships were destroyed by these mines, and another three were badly damaged.

A plan was then developed to launch a land attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula from the Aegean Sea coast. The hope was that the Allies would surprise the Turks, defeat them quickly and then march on to take control of the Turkish capital, Constantinople (now Istanbul). This would open up the desired supply lines through to Russia, and help the Allies to fight Germany and Austria from the east.

On 25 April 1915, ground troops from Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, India and the British dominion of Newfoundland (now a Canadian province) landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The campaign was in trouble from the beginning. As the Australian and New Zealand troops landed at what is now called Anzac Cove (see Source 5.32), they faced cliffs up to 100 metres high and heavy resistance from behind the Turkish fortifications. Those soldiers who made it to the beach were unprotected as they faced the Turkish guns. The Anzacs managed to secure the beach and made limited progress up the cliffs and inland.

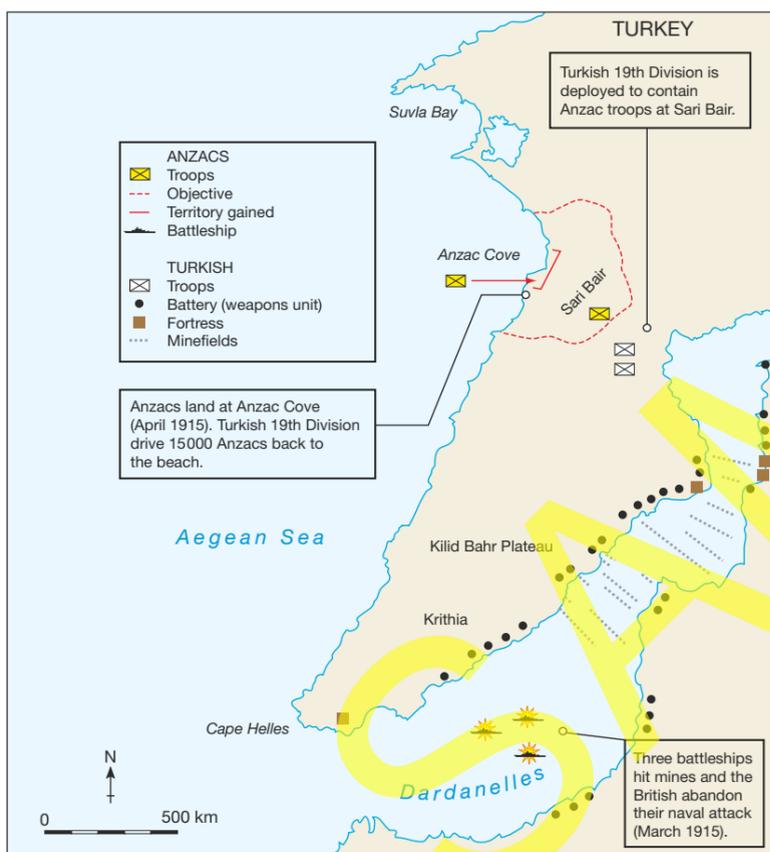
Although the plan had been to make seven kilometres of progress, the day ended with barely one kilometre achieved. More than 600 Australian soldiers were killed on the first day of the campaign. On hearing of the disastrous landing, the British commander of the campaign, General Sir Ian Hamilton, ordered the troops to ‘dig, dig, dig until you are safe’.

Hamilton’s decision to persist with the campaign was supported by news of the success of the Australian submarine *AE2*. On 25 April it became the first Allied warship to penetrate the Dardanelles, and attacked Turkish shipping until it was damaged and scuttled on 30 April.

In May 1915, the Turks launched a great counter-offensive to destroy the beachhead, but were driven back. During this battle, Australian Lance Corporal Albert Jacka became a national hero after receiving the Victoria Cross for single-handedly holding a trench and killing seven Turks. In August, the Australians and New Zealanders launched two famous diversionary attacks. The Australians captured Lone Pine in fighting so fierce that seven Victoria Crosses (the highest Commonwealth military decoration for valour ‘in the face of the enemy’) were awarded to their men. At the Nek, a charge by Lighthorsemen cost 234 lives on an area the size of three tennis courts.

On the battlefield, respect grew between the Turkish soldiers and the Anzac troops. Each side saw the other as honourable, and agreements were made to hold fire and bury the dead respectfully (see Source 5.31) and both sides had an amnesty to enable a number of dead Turkish soldiers to be buried under the Red Crescent flag of their nation. Over time, the two sides even began trading with each other.

Despite these offensives and counter-offensives, the situation on Gallipoli was to remain essentially unchanged for the eight months of the campaign.



Source 5.30 The Gallipoli Peninsula (detail above) and its position in the region (top map)

Source 5.31

It is stated in messages from Cairo that the majority of wounded who have arrived there deny the stories of Turkish atrocities. They state that the Turks are fighting most fairly. In one case, a Turk dressed the wounds of a British soldier under fire.

Another left his water bottle with a wounded Australian. An Australian who was taken prisoner, but subsequently escaped, stated he was very well treated.

Extract from the Melbourne newspaper *The Argus*, 22 June 1915

Conditions at Gallipoli

Conditions at Gallipoli were extremely difficult. The Allies landed in the Turkish spring. A sweltering summer followed. The bitterly cold winter would really take its toll. For men used to temperate Australian conditions, the icy north wind and snowfalls cut right through the meagre protection offered by inadequate uniforms. Frequent rainfalls flooded the trenches and turned the battlefields to mud.

Despite the rain and snow, drinking water was in short supply. It had to be shipped in to the troops, and this could be difficult if a supply ship ran into problems. Water was rationed carefully and soldiers were so conscious of the shortages that they often shaved with leftover cold tea. Food was more plentiful, although lacking in variety. Rations commonly included canned meat, corned beef (called ‘bully beef’) and hard biscuits. Fresh food was rarely available.

Poor health was a major problem. Painful conditions and diseases such as trench foot, dysentery, diarrhoea and gastroenteritis were common in the damp conditions of the trenches. Illness was spread by rats, lice, flies and mosquitoes. Many pests were attracted by the strong odour of decomposing bodies and human waste. Poor sanitation and poor food-handling practices meant the germs were often transferred to food and water supplies.

Withdrawal

In December 1915, the Anzacs were finally ordered to withdraw from Gallipoli. To hide the fact that they were leaving, they rigged up some rifles to fire at random. They did this by attaching tins to the rifles’ trigger mechanisms with string. When the tins filled with water dripping from other tins suspended above, their weight caused the triggers to be pulled and the rifles to fire. This tactic became known as the ‘ghost guns of Gallipoli’. Soldiers also carefully wrapped the horses’ hooves in cloth to muffle the sound of their leaving. The last Australian soldiers were evacuated overnight on 19–20 December. Because of its efficiency, the silent withdrawal is usually remembered as the most successful part of the Gallipoli campaign.

Over the course of the campaign, 8709 Australians died, and 19000 were wounded. Over the same period, over 80000 Turks were killed. During their time on Gallipoli, the ‘diggers’—as Australian troops became known—displayed a courage and ingenuity that would form the basis of the Anzac legend. This legend would contribute to the Australian sense of identity over the course of the 20th century.



Source 5.32 Anzac Cove, Gallipoli

Source 5.33

We landed on Gallipoli in what we were wearing and continued to wear it day and night until the socks were the first garments to become unwearable, and they were cast out and we went barefoot in our boots.

We discarded our tunics during the day as the weather became hotter, and working and living in earthen trenches, while sometimes sweating profusely caused our pants and thick pure woollen shirts to become even worse than filthy.

We got only sufficient fresh water, in fact, on some days barely enough to drink, so washing garments was out of the question, and so the only alternative was to get down to the beach and wash our garments and ourselves in the brine, which as far as our garments was concerned made little difference.

There were parasites which caused an abominable itch to which ever part of the skin where they operated. They lived and bred mainly in the seams of the inner garments and as there was no hot water or chemicals available for their control or destruction the field was open for them to multiply and flourish. The best control means available was to wear the clothing inside out and then there were no seams next to the skin for the pest to hide away in and breed. This I did with my flannel shirt, but I simply could not come at wearing my trousers inside out, even though many of the other men did. It simply looked too awful.

An extract from a letter that Lieutenant Frank Boyes wrote about conditions at Gallipoli

Source 5.34 Gallipoli, Turkey, 18 December 1915. This photo is of an Australian Army mock attack arranged in the Anzac area for photographic purposes two days before the evacuation took place (AWM H10379)



contestability: two heroes

Most Australians, if asked to name a hero of Gallipoli, will name Simpson—Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick and his donkey.

In contrast, few people know the story of Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges, who led the Australian forces that landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. In this section, we will look in more detail at these two individuals and the ways in which they made contributions to the war.

Private John ‘Simpson’ Kirkpatrick and his donkeys

English-born Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick jumped ship from a British merchant vessel in 1910 and spent the next four years wandering around Australia doing a variety of jobs. Hoping to get a free passage back to England, he enlisted in the AIF, and was placed with the



Source 5.35 Simpson and one of his donkeys with an injured soldier (AWM J06392)

3rd Field Ambulance. On 25 April 1915, he found himself landed on the beaches of Gallipoli.

Simpson, and many others, had the job of transporting wounded soldiers back to the field hospitals for treatment. The day after the landing, however, Simpson spotted some donkeys that had been used as pack animals. Simpson soon formed a bond with one of the donkeys. Although we do not know the exact name Simpson gave the donkey, records from the time suggest the name was Duffy. The sure-footed and steady donkey was the perfect mobile stretcher.

Simpson worked tirelessly and cheerfully, often making up to 15 trips a day through sniper fire—a round trip of almost 2.5 kilometres. The donkey was kept under cover while Simpson darted out to retrieve the injured soldiers.

On 19 May, Private Simpson was killed by machine-gun fire. His faithful donkey Duffy returned alone to the field hospital, carrying his last soldier to safety. Simpson was buried at Anzac Cove under his true name, John Simpson Kirkpatrick.

The then-Colonel John Monash said of him, ‘Private Simpson and his little beast earned the admiration of everyone at the upper end of the valley ... he frequently earned the applause of the personnel for his many fearless rescues of wounded men from areas subject to rifle and shrapnel fire.’

Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges

Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges was a hero of the Gallipoli landing and, for several years, one of the best-known names in Australia. He was responsible for the raising and naming of the 1st Australian Imperial Force. Bridges led the Australian Division that was the first to land at Anzac Cove on the morning on 25 April 1915.

Late in the day on 25 April, Bridges realised that the landing had been a failure and



Source 5.36 William Throsby Bridges (AWM A02867)

concluded that they should leave Gallipoli before there were further losses of life. Together with the New Zealand Commander, General Godley, he tried to convince the British General Sir Ian Hamilton that they should evacuate, to no avail.

Bridges gained a reputation for visiting his troops on the front lines, even if he was putting himself in danger. Only 20 days into the campaign, Bridges was shot. He died three days later.

Bridges was one of only two soldiers from World War I whose body was returned to Australia for burial (apart from the unknown soldier brought back in 1990). He was knighted just before his death and, in September 1915, was buried in the grounds of Duntroon, the military college he had established in Canberra. Moreover, his horse ‘Sandy’ was the only horse brought back to Australia from World War I.



Source 5.37 *The Charge of the Australian Light Horse at Beersheba, 1917*, George Lambert (1920) (AWM ART02811)

The Australian Light Horse

Following the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the Australian infantry were deployed to France. However, the mounted troops remained to continue fighting against the Turks in Egypt. They became involved in what was known as ‘the Sinai and Palestine campaign’.

The Australian Light Horse was a combination of cavalry and mounted infantry that had been developed during the Boer War (1899–1902). Traditional cavalry forces were becoming obsolete as nations developed more powerful infantry and artillery weapons. However, Australia’s vast distances made military leaders reluctant to do away with mounted soldiers. The answer was a mounted force of trained infantry soldiers who would ride swiftly into battle, but fight on the ground like regular infantry. Australian mounted troops made a significant contribution to the defeat of Turkish troops in the Middle East.

The most famous battle fought by the Light Horse was the Battle of Beersheba in October 1917. The charge was aimed at capturing the important Turkish base of Beersheba, and has been called the last successful cavalry charge in history (see Source 5.37).

Check your learning

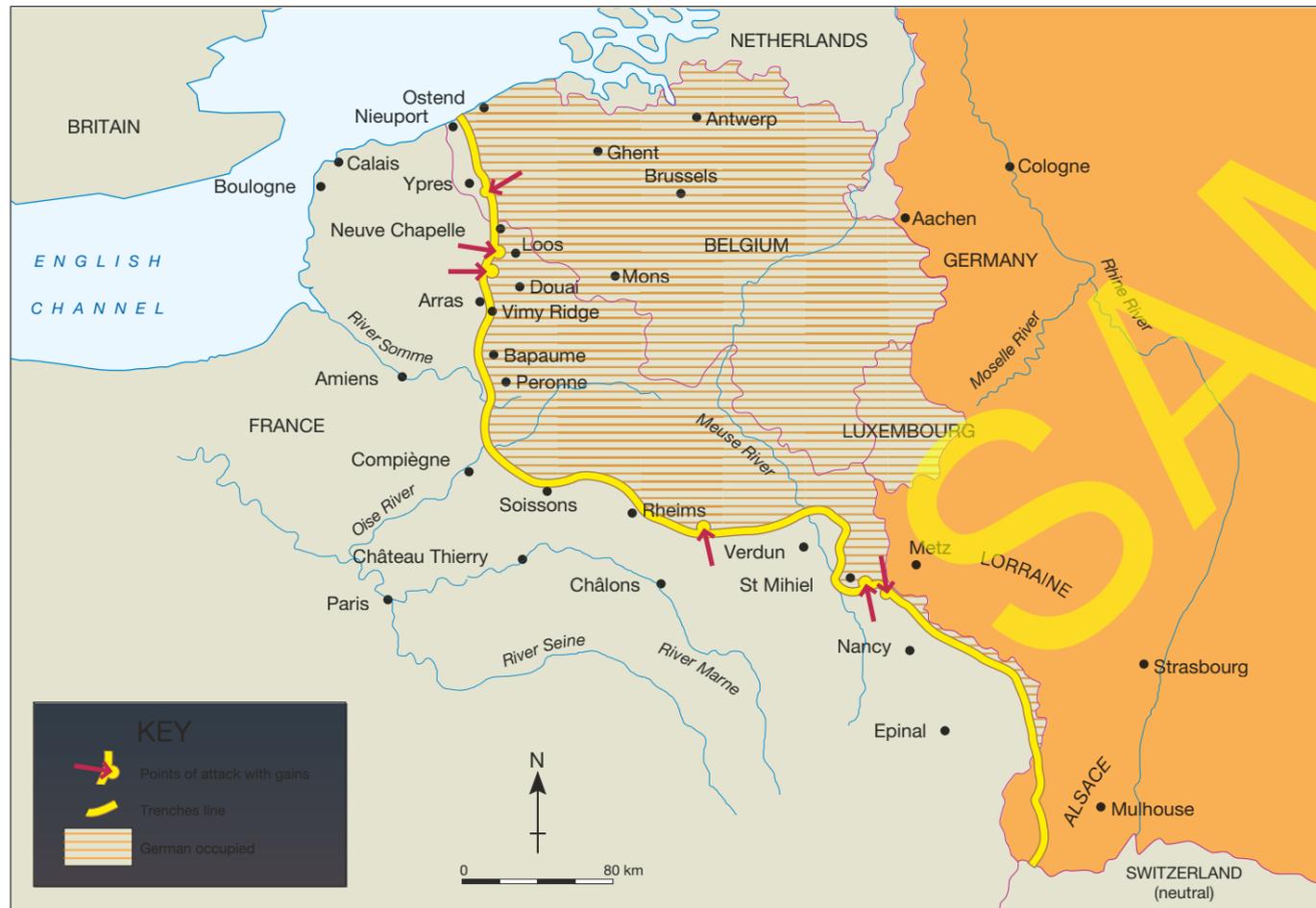
- 1 What was the aim of the Gallipoli campaign?
- 2 Give two reasons why the campaign was unsuccessful.
- 3 Why do you think the Australian soldiers earned high praise, even though they did not achieve what they hoped to?
- 4 Explain why some people argue that the withdrawal of the Anzacs from Gallipoli was the most successful part of the campaign.
- 5 Given their brief periods of service at Gallipoli, do you think either Simpson or Bridges deserve to be remembered as a ‘hero’?

The Western Front

Although the Gallipoli campaign was the first major engagement for Australian and New Zealand troops, it was not the first campaign of the war. Nor was it the centre of action. The fighting that took place along the Western Front through France and Belgium (see Source 5.39) was the most destructive and enduring of all of the theatres of war during World War I.

At the start of the war, in August 1914, the Germans had marched through Belgium into France. Fierce resistance from the British and French stopped them from moving further into France. However, the Allies were unable to drive the Germans back. By Christmas 1914, there was a deadlock. The Germans and the Allies faced each other across a line of trenches (see Source 5.38) that stretched from Ostend on the Belgian coast in a south-easterly direction to the Swiss border (see Source 5.39 for more detail).

Source 5.38 French soldiers wait in their trenches on the Western Front during World War I.



Source 5.39 The Western Front, 1915. The two-trench system ran unbroken from the Belgian coast to Switzerland.

The Western Front is seen by many historians as the defining experience of World War I. New weapons, such as gas and tanks, were introduced there. Defensive tactics using machine guns, trenches, barbed wire and artillery meant that rather than a rapid war of movement, war on the Western Front became bogged down in a senseless series of attacks and counter-attacks, each achieving little but costing millions of lives.

Breaking the stalemate

Between 1915 and 1918, many attempts were made to break the stalemate of trench conflict. These attempts tended to follow a pattern. Initially there would be a long and sustained artillery attack—opposing trenches would be bombarded with explosive shells. These attacks could go on for a few hours or sometimes for many days. It was believed that this would force the defending troops underground, destroying their fortifications and clearing the way for troops to cross no man's land (the narrow strip of land between opposing trenches that belonged to neither army).

Weighed down with heavy equipment, soldiers would cross the strip of territory to their opponent's trenches. Struggling through mud-filled shell holes created by their own artillery, they might learn that the bombardment had not destroyed the barbed-wire obstacles between the lines. More frightening still was the possibility that the artillery attack had failed to destroy the enemy's position. Often, as attacking soldiers made their way across no man's land, the enemy would emerge from deep bunkers to fire on them with machine guns.

Generally, such assaults on enemy trenches failed to achieve their goals. Confusion, smoke, noise and death turned plans into chaos. If attackers reached enemy lines, hand-to-hand (or one-on-one) combat with rifles, bayonets, pistols and grenades often followed. If ground was gained, it could be retaken in a counter-offensive only weeks later. The only real consequence of most of the battles that took place on the Western Front over four years was death and injury.



Source 5.40 Allied soldiers at the Battle of the Somme, 1916

The Somme

The first Battle of the Somme (an area along the banks of the Somme River) was one of the most costly attempts to break the stalemate of the trenches. Between July and November 1916, the Allied forces tried to break through German lines. Focused on a 19-kilometre front in northern France, the soldiers managed to push the Germans back by about eight kilometres. These gains came at an enormous price. The initial ‘softening up’ bombardment used over 1.5 million shells in a week-long attack. British deaths on the first day of the assault are estimated at over 19 000. Thirty-five thousand were injured and 2000 were counted as missing. French casualties for the first day alone were around 7000.

Later in the Somme campaign, Australian and New Zealand troops fought at Pozières from 23 July to 8 August 1916. After making early gains, Australia suffered over 23 000 casualties. By the end of the Somme campaign, casualty figures for the Allies were around 620 000 dead and wounded, and 500 000 for the Germans.

Australian engagements on the Western Front

Australians fighting on the Western Front between 1916 and 1918 were engaged in numerous battles that were to earn more than 50 Victoria Crosses for the soldiers who participated. Australians again distinguished themselves in battle and earned a reputation for courage and toughness, especially in 1918, under the leadership of General Sir John Monash.

There was also terrible loss of life. In battles along the Somme, and at towns such as Passchendaele, Villers-Bretonneux, Ypres and Amiens, thousands of soldiers were killed or wounded, often for little gain in the futile ‘game’ of trench warfare.

Two of the most destructive battles involving Australians were at Fromelles in northern France in 1916 and at Bullecourt, closer to Paris, in 1917. At Fromelles, an attack on the German trenches was designed to draw German attention away from an onslaught on the German lines 80 kilometres to the south, on the banks of the Somme River.

The attack was unsuccessful and the cost was terrible. In one day, 1917 Australian soldiers were killed and over 3600 were injured, some to die later of their injuries. This event has been described as ‘the worst 24 hours in Australia’s entire history’.

Because the Germans quickly regained any territory they had lost, the Australians had no opportunity to bury the dead. The Germans buried many in mass pits. During the 1920s, most of the bodies were reburied in Commonwealth War Graves cemeteries, but one mass grave remained undiscovered until 2007. In that year, as a result of painstaking research by war historian Lambis Englezos, a burial site was identified on the edge of the town of Fromelles.

It has since been confirmed that up to 400 Australian soldiers are buried in this mass grave. The process of identifying these soldiers and preparing them for reburial (see Source 5.41), with full military honours, in a newly built cemetery is slow and delicate. Up to 75 soldiers have been positively identified so far through the use of DNA technology.



Source 5.41 The remains of Commonwealth soldiers who died during the Battle of Fromelles, and objects recovered at the site, are recorded by specialists of the Oxford Archaeology Institute after being recovered in mass graves in Fromelles.

Check your learning

- 1 In your own words, define the Western Front.
- 2 Why had the war become ‘bogged down’ on the Western Front by the end of 1914?
- 3 Why is the first Battle of the Somme regarded as one of the most disastrous battles of the war?
- 4 When it was obvious that little or nothing was gained through repeated assaults on enemy trenches, why do you think military commanders continued to order these assaults?
- 5 Despite their knowledge of terrible loss of life and injury, soldiers continued to take part in these assaults on the Western Front. Suggest three reasons why they did so.

Life in the trenches

The trenches that soldiers dug during World War I were typically around two metres deep by two metres wide. On both sides, conditions were barbaric, although German trenches tended to be better engineered and more comfortable than the French and British equivalents. To avoid snipers (marksmen trained to ‘pick off’ enemy soldiers from concealed locations), soldiers spent most of the daylight hours under the trench line—most attacks took place at dusk or in the early morning when visibility was poor. Soldiers were often bored during the day, and caught brief moments of sleep where they could. Those falling asleep on watch could be severely punished.

The soldiers had to share the trenches with millions of rats (see Source 5.42) that fed on the remains of dead soldiers left on the battlefields. With so much available food, some rats grew to be as large as cats. They bred constantly and spread disease as they ran over the faces of the sleeping soldiers.

Lice were also constant companions that lived and laid eggs in the seams of the soldiers’ uniforms. The troops were often unable to bathe or change their clothes for weeks at a time. Even when washed, it was almost impossible to rid clothes of the lice eggs. Lice were responsible for the spread of ‘trench fever’. If soldiers were fortunate enough to end up in military hospital, it took them up to 12 weeks to recover from this painful illness. As the war continued, delousing stations were built behind the trench lines.

Relentless rain turned the trenches to canals of stagnant mud. Trench foot, acquired from standing for long periods in wet, muddy conditions, was a fungal infection that caused swelling. Serious cases could result in amputation. The winter of 1916 was one of the harshest on the Western Front. The cold was so intense that water was carried to the troops as blocks of ice. Boiled water would develop a crust of ice after only a minute or two. Soldiers slept huddled together for warmth under their quota of two blankets each.

Adding to the smell of death and decay that hung over the trenches was a variety of other sickening odours. The smell of unwashed soldiers and overflowing latrines (toilets) mixed with the remains of poison gases, cigarette smoke and a variety of food smells was so intense that new arrivals were often physically sick.

John Alexander Raws was a South Australian soldier who spent only four weeks on the Western Front before he was killed in shelling on 23 August 1916. He wrote to his family, describing conditions in the trenches (see Source 5.43).

Source 5.43

We are lousy, stinking, ragged, unshaven, sleepless. Even when we’re back a bit we can’t sleep for our own guns. I have one puttee [fabric strip wound around the lower leg for protection], a dead man’s helmet, another dead man’s gas protector, a dead man’s bayonet. My tunic is rotten with other men’s blood and partly splattered with a comrade’s brains. It is horrible but why should you people at home not know.

John Alexander Raws

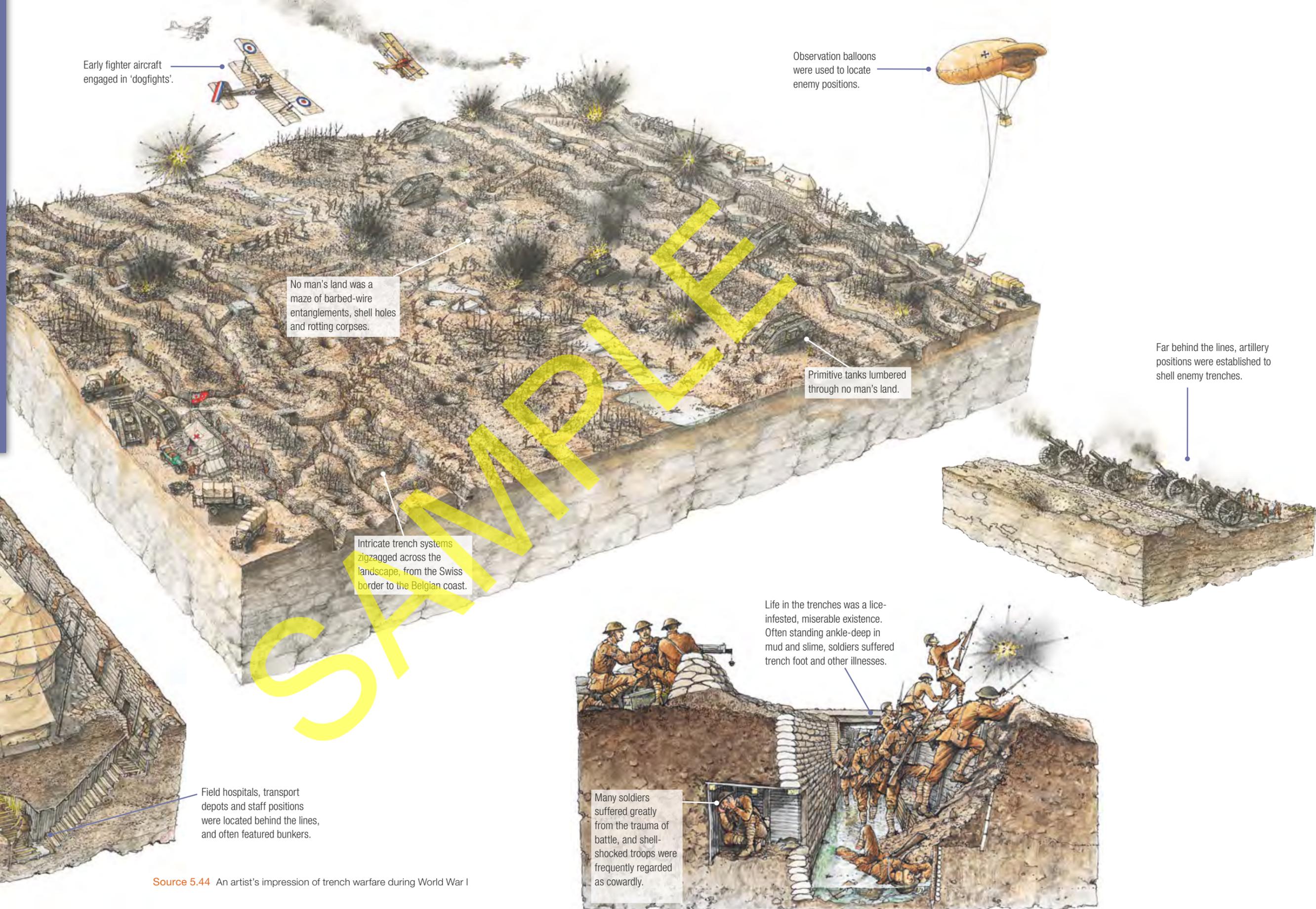


Source 5.42 German soldiers display the result of a night’s rat-catching in a trench on the Western Front.

Trench warfare

The trenches along the Western Front were approximately 700 kilometres long, stretching from the coast of Belgium to the border of Switzerland (see Source 5.39). In most cases, trenches were two metres deep by two metres wide.

Life in the trenches along the Western Front could vary quite a lot, but for most soldiers conditions were appalling. During the winter months, rainfall turned the low-lying trenches into mud pits. In some cases the water reached waist height, leading to condition called trench foot, which caused the feet to rot. During the summer months, rats, lice and flies infested the trenches. The rats could grow to the size of cats, feeding off men's rations and the constant supply of rotting bodies.



Early fighter aircraft engaged in 'dogfights'.

Observation balloons were used to locate enemy positions.

No man's land was a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, shell holes and rotting corpses.

Primitive tanks lumbered through no man's land.

Far behind the lines, artillery positions were established to shell enemy trenches.

Intricate trench systems zigzagged across the landscape, from the Swiss border to the Belgian coast.

Life in the trenches was a lice-infested, miserable existence. Often standing ankle-deep in mud and slime, soldiers suffered trench foot and other illnesses.

Field hospitals, transport depots and staff positions were located behind the lines, and often featured bunkers.

Many soldiers suffered greatly from the trauma of battle, and shell-shocked troops were frequently regarded as cowardly.

Source 5.44 An artist's impression of trench warfare during World War I



Source 5.45 A nurse in a makeshift hospital on the Western Front

Nurses on the Western Front

At the start of the war, a small number of women wanted to join the services but were told that war was ‘no place for ladies’. The only women allowed to enlist and serve overseas were nurses.

The nurses worked under appalling conditions, especially on the Western Front where makeshift field hospitals were set up often in trenches behind the lines (see Source 5.45). The nurses became known as ‘the roses of no man’s land’.

Over the course of World War I, 2562 Australian nurses joined the AIF as members of the medical units. Out of this number, 2139 served overseas in the Middle East and on the Western Front. Twenty-five women lost their lives while serving overseas and 388 received military honours.

Source 5.46

I cannot remember what came next, or what I did, except that I kept calling for the orderly to help me and thought he was finking [showing cowardice], but the poor boy had been blown to bits. Somebody got the tent up, and when I got to the delirious pneumonia patient, he was crouched on the ground at the back of the stretcher. He took no notice of me when I asked him to return to bed, so I leaned across the stretcher and put one arm around and tried to lift him in. I had my right arm under a leg, which I thought was his, but when I lifted I found to my horror that it was a loose leg with a boot and a puttee on it. It was one of the orderly’s legs which had been blown off and had landed on the patient’s bed. The next day they found the trunk about 20 yards away.

Sister Kelly, an Australian nurse in France described her experiences when a bomb hit a casualty clearing station behind the lines



Source 5.47 A surfaced World War I German U-boat

War at sea

In 1914, the sea was vital for transportation, trade and communications. Protecting one’s own sea lanes—or striking at those of the enemy—was an essential part of the war effort.

Because the main fleets of Britain and Germany were considered vital to any sea campaign, both nations were unwilling to use them in a large naval battle unless absolutely necessary. As a result, the only major sea battle of any importance between Britain and Germany was fought at Jutland in 1916. Although both sides claimed victory, most historians believe the British triumphed. After this, German ships were largely restricted to harbour defence.

Submarines were an alarming new weapon used during World War I. They were first used by the Germans to attack and sink merchant ships (see Source 5.47). They were commonly referred to as U-boats (*Unterseeboote*) and were able to limit the transportation of imported food and vital goods between allied countries. The involvement of the USA in World War I was a direct result of Germany’s U-boat campaign.

Another naval tactic that reduced the ability of ships to carry soldiers and supplies, was the laying of underwater mines (explosives) in the North Sea. Although agreements had been made regarding where mines could be placed, neither side was very strict in following them. Mines made the North Sea a very dangerous place for ships. This was also a problem for the neutral nations of Norway and Sweden, which were heavily reliant on the North Sea for their trade with the rest of the world.



Source 5.48 South Australians celebrating Armistice Day near Parliament House

The end of the war

The stalemate on the Western Front dragged on through 1916, 1917 and into 1918, with little change. By early 1918, troops on both sides were exhausted, resources were depleted and morale was at rock bottom. For the surviving original Anzacs who had enlisted with such enthusiasm in 1914, there was a feeling that the war would never end.

Australian troops had distinguished themselves at Pozières, Ypres, Passchendaele and Villers-Bretonneux. In mid 1918, they helped to drive the Germans back from south of the Somme. Some Australian officers, particularly General John Monash, distinguished themselves on the Western Front, with Monash responsible for developing tactics for coordinated infantry, artillery, tank and aircraft attacks.

On 11 November 1918, the Armistice (ceasefire) was signed and ‘the war to end all wars’ was over.

Check your learning

- 1 Identify and list some features of life in the trenches.
- 2 Suggest one reason why it was good that soldiers such as John Alexander Raws (Source 5.43) wrote to family about the real horrors of war, and one reason why it was not.
- 3 In what ways did submarines change the way in which World War I was fought?
- 4 What qualities did nurses need to possess in order to do their jobs successfully under such difficult circumstances?

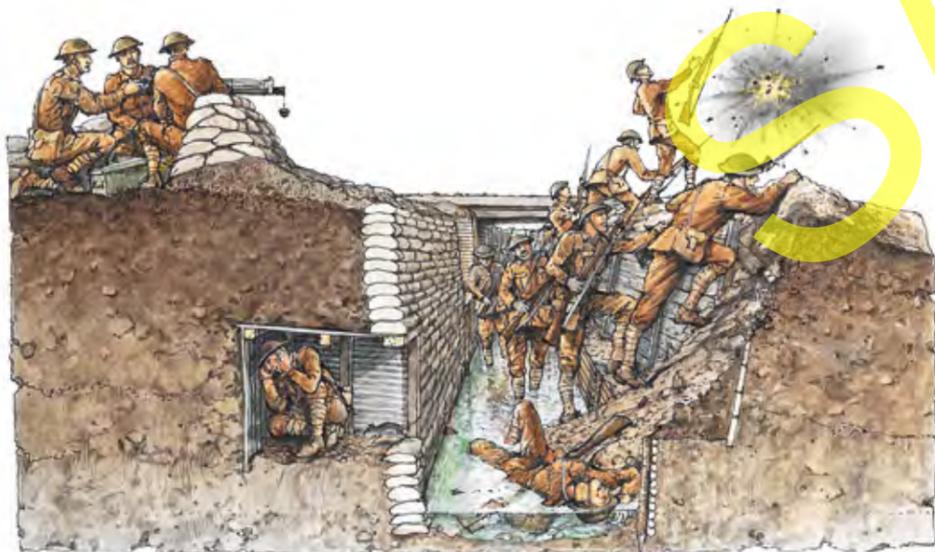
5.2 How and where was World War I fought?

Remember

- 1 What happened on the first day of the Gallipoli campaign?
- 2 What was the view of Major General Bridges about the future of the Gallipoli campaign?
- 3 Give an example of one weapon or tactic used during the war:
 - a on land
 - b at sea
 - c in the air.

Understand

- 4 Look at the image below.
 - a Identify as many factors as possible that made life in the trenches hard for soldiers.
 - b Of these factors, which do you think would be the most difficult to tolerate. Give reasons for your answer.
- 5 What can you learn about the resources and tactics of the two sides from the fact that there was a stalemate along the Western Front for four years?
- 6 Read the letter written from the trenches by John Raws (Source 5.43).
 - a Why do you think he felt that people at home should know what he was going through?
 - b What impact do you think these letters would have had on the views of war at home? Suggest several responses.
- 7 Why do you think that women were excluded from the armed services but were encouraged to join as nurses?



Apply

- 8 Re-read 'Breaking the stalemate'. Use the material to write a song or poem about the futility of war.
- 9 Compare the views and experiences of John Alexander Raws (Source 5.43) and Lieutenant Frank Boyes (Source 5.33).
 - a What are the similarities and what are the differences between the two men's experiences?
 - b What do you think were the reasons for these differences?
- 10 Take on the role of a relative of either of the men listed in Question 9. Write a letter to him commenting on the horror of his experiences but also attempting to boost his spirits and spur him on to continue the fight.
- 11 Conduct research on an Australian soldier who died in World War I. You may like to gather information on a family member, or investigate a name from your local war memorial, church or school, or the honour board at your local RSL. Once you have decided who you would like to research, go to the Australian War Memorial website and collect information on the following points:
 - a name and age at time of enlistment
 - b possible reasons for enlistment
 - c role in the war (major battles fought, interesting information)
 - d date and cause of death.

Analyse

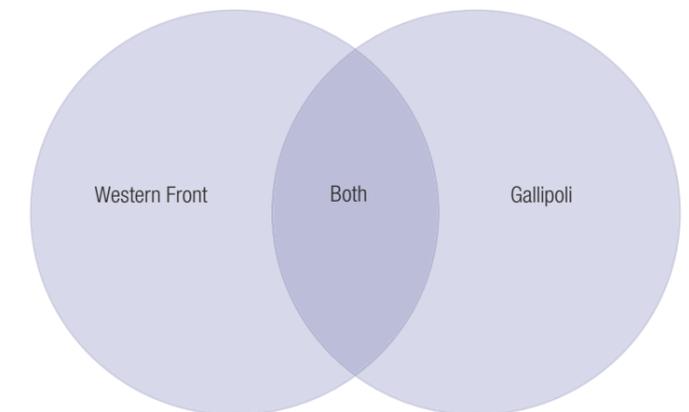
- 12 Do you think the Gallipoli landing and the Anzac legend would have become as central to Australian culture and folklore if it had not been the nation's first experience of war?
- 13 Conduct a survey of ten people (males and females of varying ages and backgrounds) about the legend of Simpson and his donkey. Base the survey around the following questions:
 - a What did Simpson do at Gallipoli?
 - b Where did Simpson come from?
 - c What had he done before enlisting in the AIF?
 - d Why did he enlist in the AIF?
 - e Why is he so famous?
 - f Does he deserve his legendary status?
 Use the information you have gathered from the survey to prepare a class debate on the topic: 'Simpson was a great Australian.'
- 14 Although the United States did not enter the war until April 1917, the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 is often cited as a reason for US involvement. What would you say to someone who said that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was the event that brought on US involvement?
- 15 Soldiers who suffered from 'shell shock' were often regarded as cowardly.
 - a Why were they regarded as cowardly?
 - b If you had lived during World War I, do you think that you, too, would have regarded such soldiers as cowards? Give reasons for your response. Remember to use your historical empathy skills when you answer this question.

Evaluate

- 16 To what extent do you think the experience of World War I has been a defining feature in the development of Australian identity?
- 17 Based on the knowledge you have gained from this chapter and from other sources, do you think people's attitudes towards war in general has changed over the years? Give reasons for your response.

Create

- 18 Create a Venn diagram comparing trench warfare on the Western Front and at Gallipoli. Use all of the information available to you, in particular Sources 5.42, 5.43, and 5.44.



- 19 Draw a sketch or make a papier-mâché model of the beach at Anzac Cove where the troops landed during the Gallipoli campaign (see Source 5.32 and find other resources on the Internet or in your school library). Ensure that you label your sketch or model, and highlight the difficulties that the soldiers would have faced on arrival. You can find more information at the Australian War Memorial website.
- 20 Create a PowerPoint presentation or photo essay (a combination of images and words) that tells the story of Australia's involvement in World War I from the outbreak of war to Armistice Day. Your presentation may include writing, your own sketches, cartoons, posters and pictures—or a combination of all of these. Choose suitable music from the war era to accompany your presentation.

“Fancy not wantin’ to go Bill!”



HARRY J. WESTON

Source 5.49 An Australian pro-conscription poster from 1917 encouraging Australians to enlist. After heavy casualties on the Western Front, Britain pressured Australia to make a bigger contribution to the war effort.

5.3

How did World War I affect life at home in Australia?

World War I was different from all other wars that came before it. Historians often describe it as the first ‘total war’, because it was the first time that nations had mobilised all of their industries, resources and citizens for the war effort. Before World War I, most people’s involvement in wars was usually limited to paying taxes and worrying about friends and family members engaged in the fighting. ‘Total war’ placed many new pressures on those left at home.

During World War I, civilians in all countries were forced to make sacrifices. Shortages of food, luxuries and even everyday necessities had to be accepted so that armies could be adequately supplied and supported. With so many men away at war, there was an expectation that women would take on many duties previously the responsibility of men. Women did a great deal of voluntary work, including fundraising and assisting with recruiting. They also moved into previously male domains in the workforce, such as working in munitions factories. In Britain, women were also able to join the armed forces, but only for home defence.

The effects of the war on the European home fronts

World War I had a wide-ranging impact on the European home fronts. All of the European combatant (fighting) nations introduced some form of conscription or national service. In Germany, for example, the Hindenburg Programme in 1916 made all men aged between 17 and 50 eligible for national service, either in the army or in war-related industries. In all combatant nations, soldiers too badly wounded to return to the front had to be cared for by a combination of government aid and charity. Food shortages were a problem for all the home fronts. In Germany, people were forced to make do with substitute goods, such as coffee made from acorns instead of coffee beans.

The war also had a major impact on neutral nations. Denmark, Norway and Sweden relied on the North Sea trade, and this was threatened by Germany’s submarine warfare. Despite remaining neutral throughout the war, the Netherlands suffered widespread unemployment and food shortages because of the drop in trade, and was even forced to introduce rationing in 1917.

The effects of the war on Australia’s home front

World War I had a significant impact on Australia. The nation was only 13 years old when it was drawn into this conflict, which is still seen as one of the most important events in the history of the world.

As a result of World War I, Australia lost over 60 000 young men. Many of these men were the fittest and most able of the male population. As a percentage of total troops sent to war, Australia’s losses were the highest of any of the Commonwealth nations (see Source 5.50).

The initial enthusiasm with which most Australians greeted the outbreak of war did not last. By the middle of 1915, the reality of war began to dawn. Following the landing at Gallipoli, Australians received the news of more than 2000 deaths. As a result, many in the nation took a more sober view or became disillusioned. There was still strong support for the war and the soldiers, but any excitement had evaporated.

By late 1916, Australia was a bitterly divided country. Not only was there a growing dissatisfaction with the war, but a real sense that there was ‘inequality of sacrifice’. Many working-class Australians felt that they had contributed the most in terms of enlisting soldiers, and that they were also being exploited at home. There was a perception that middle- and upper-class people were less affected by the war. Some were even seen to be profiting from lucrative government war contracts.

These perceptions were not always accurate, but they still had an impact on the growing divisions in the nation. There was also division between those who had gone to war and those who had not. Much of this bitterness came to a head with the conscription debate in 1916 and 1917.

Source 5.50 A comparison of British Commonwealth casualties, World War I

Country	Total soldiers sent to war	Total casualties (captured, missing, wounded or killed)	% of casualties
Britain	5 000 000	2 535 424	50.71
Canada	422 405	210 100	49.74
Australia	331 781	215 585	64.98
New Zealand	98 950	58 526	59.01
India	1 096 013	140 015	12.77

Statistics from *Australian Campaigns in the Great War*, Lt. The Hon Staniforth Smith



Source 5.51 Australia Labor Party anti-conscription leaflet

The War Precautions Act

In 1914, the federal government passed the War Precautions Act, which gave the government increased powers for the duration of the war. This Act gave the federal government the legal right to, among other things, monitor and intern German–Australians, levy a direct income tax, censor letters and publications, and set fixed prices for certain goods.

The impact of war on Australian women

Most women were supportive of involvement at the start of the war and more than 2000 served, generally as nurses. While these women faced dangerous conditions overseas, the women on the home front also found their lives changing.

Before the war, most women had been homemakers, with a small number working in traditionally female roles such as teaching, nursing, dressmaking or domestic work. However, with around 500 000 young men off at war, women wanted to support the war effort at home. There was some resistance by trade unions to hiring women in traditionally male jobs, as it was thought that this might lower wages. However, women were able to take on some traditionally male roles, such as store clerks and bank tellers. The government controlled war-related work and women were rarely able to gain jobs in these areas. By the end of the war, the percentage of women working outside the home had risen by about 13 per cent.

During the war, vast numbers of women were involved in volunteer organisations such as the Australian Red Cross and the Country Women's Association. These groups put together care packages for soldiers and their families. Women and girls sewed and knitted to ensure that the troops had warm clothing, and they raised money to help those affected by the war.

Some women, such as political activist Vida Goldstein, were opposed to any involvement in the war. Goldstein formed the Women's Peace Army in 1915. There were also some women who wanted to play a more active role in the war effort. The Australian Women's Service Corps was formed with the aim of training women to take over male jobs in the services at home, to free more men to fight overseas. However, they were told that their services were not necessary.

Source 5.53

The Australian Women's Service Corps, which has a membership of 1000, and which was formed recently with the object of training women to undertake the duties of motor-drivers, orderlies, clerks, and kitchen hands, in order to release men for fighting purposes, a few weeks ago made an offer to the Defence authorities to provide 700 women for such duties. A reply has been received from Mr. T. Trumble, secretary of the Defence department, thanking the corps for its patriotic offer, but intimating that there are no positions available wherein the services of women could be utilised.

The Argus, Melbourne 4 January 1917

When the war was over, there was an expectation that women who had moved into men's traditional roles would return to the home, making way for returned soldiers. Most women were willing to do this. However, there were roles such as secretaries, typists and telephonists that continued to be regarded as women's work.



Source 5.52 Australian Red Cross poster

Even the women who had worked in voluntary occupations had gained skills and confidence. For many women, especially younger ones, the war had opened up opportunities that were to help shape their lives as the nation moved into the 1920s.

Discrimination against 'the enemy within'

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, many Germans had settled in Australia. They were particularly well represented in areas such as the Barossa Valley in South Australia and the Western Districts of Victoria. Germans lived in the major cities and small towns. Almost immediately after the start of World War I, these German–Australians came under suspicion and scrutiny. Many Anglo-Celtic Australians believed they had divided loyalties.

At the time, many German–Australians had come to think of themselves as Australian first. Indeed many of them enlisted in the AIF. For example, the first Australian commander of the AIF, General John Monash, was the son of German migrants. However, when Australia and the rest of the British Empire were at war with Germany, German–Australians were considered potential threats to national security, and many were taken into custody.

In response to the threat of German–Australians, the government closed down German schools and changed the names of towns that it thought sounded 'too German'. In New South Wales, Germantown became Holbrook; in Tasmania, the town of Bismarck became Collinsville; and in Victoria, Mount Bismarck was renamed Mount Kitchener—after the British Field Marshal, Lord Kitchener. In Townsville, the German Gardens became the Belgian Gardens. Many German–Australians changed their names to more English-sounding ones.

There are also reports of absurd reactions, such as children throwing stones at German breeds of dog such as the dachshund and rottweiler. Even soldiers with German names who enlisted in the Australian army sometimes faced suspicion and hostility.

Over the course of the war, 4500 people considered to be 'Germans' were imprisoned in Australia. Of these, 70 had been born in Australia and about 700 were naturalised Australians.



Source 5.54 This poster, created by the New South Wales Recruitment Committee, uses anti-German sentiment to encourage people to enlist in the armed forces.

focus on ...

empathy: prejudice during war time

When times are tough, whether through war, depression or natural disaster, it is human nature to look for someone to blame.

Ethnic or religious groups such as Irish Catholics, Jews or Muslims have often been held responsible, or used as scapegoats (those seen to bear the blame), for particular events over the course of history. The general public usually knows little about the scapegoat group, which makes it easier to hate and blame. When individual members of the targeted group are actually known it becomes easier to empathise with them.

During World War I, Germans and Turks were demonised in the press, in posters and in general conversation. In the 1917 election, Australian-born Germans were forbidden from voting. A soldier fighting in France wrote to the *British-Australasian Magazine* in 1918 objecting to the fact that his mother (an Australian-born woman of German descent) was denied the vote: 'Now this has hurt me very much ... She worked hard in every respect towards assisting the troops on this side, she paid particular attention to the Red Cross.'

However, there were still Australians who empathised with Germans. Some in the Barossa Valley continued to mix on friendly terms with neighbours, and to shop and trade with German businesses such as wineries and bakeries. When there was talk of banning the German language in schools, the NSW Education Minister Arthur Griffiths said, 'I might remark that we are at war with the German nation; we are not at war with German literature.'



Source 5.55 Aspro was developed in Australia as a direct result of the war. Aspirin, a pain relief medication that had been used in Australia for years, became unpopular because it was made by the German company Bayer.

Impact on the Australian economy

World War I had a major economic impact on Australia and other nations. The cost of providing weapons, ammunition and supplies to the forces at home and overseas was vast. To meet these expenses, the federal government introduced income tax. It was also necessary to borrow funds from overseas. Australia borrowed heavily from Britain to build vital wartime infrastructure, such as expanded railways. Australia would take over 20 years to pay back loans taken out during the war.

The redirection of raw materials to the war effort and the needs of wartime industries caused inflation. As a result, the cost of living in Australia rose by up to 50 per cent during the war years. The war also disrupted international trade. Naval blockades and the use of shipping for military purposes meant fewer ships were available to move trade goods to overseas markets. The Australian government had introduced tariffs (or taxes) on imported goods to protect its local wartime supplies. Many countries looked elsewhere for trade and discovered new sources in Japan and the USA.

On the positive side, however, Australia developed new industries. The fact that fewer goods could be brought in from overseas meant that inventive Australians began to develop alternatives that were made here. By the end of the war, 400 new products were being manufactured in Australia. The Newcastle steelworks, opened in 1915, was flourishing, the Australian National Shipping Line had been established and the role of the Commonwealth Bank expanded considerably.

One new product, developed as a direct result of the war, was a medication called Aspro (see Source 5.55). Before the war, aspirin (which at the time was a trademarked German-made pain reliever called Aspirin) had been widely used for pain relief in Australia. After the outbreak of war, the use of aspirin became unpopular and unpatriotic because it was made by the German company Bayer. Two Australian pharmacists, George Nicholas and Henry Smith, analysed aspirin and came up with an Australian version, which they called Aspro. Aspro became one of the most widely used over-the-counter medicines available in Australia.

There were people who profited from supplying goods needed for the war effort. These included farmers who supplied wheat, dairy products and meat to feed the soldiers here and overseas. Wool was in great demand for soldiers' uniforms and munitions factories were working overtime to support the war effort.

However, many workers felt that they were not sharing in the wartime profits. Wages fell but the cost of living rose. This led to some resentment and even to strike action in the coal industry, the railways and the wharves. These strikes drew much criticism. The strikers were described as unpatriotic and selfish, and they were largely unsuccessful.

Source 5.56 Wool, used to make soldiers' uniforms, was a valued commodity during the war.



The conscription debate

One of the most divisive and bitter arguments of the war was about the issue of **conscription**. Conscription is the act of calling up eligible people (in this case, men) for compulsory military service. By 1916, most of the initial excitement of war had been replaced by the grim reality that war meant suffering and death. Although there was a peak in enlistments after Gallipoli, from late 1915, numbers steadily declined.

The Labor Prime Minister, Billy Hughes (see Source 5.57), announced in 1916, following a trip to the Western Front, that conscription was vital to continue the war effort. This was despite the fact that only a year earlier he had declared, 'In no circumstances would I agree to send men out of this country to fight against their will.'

A plebiscite (a public vote or opinion poll) on conscription for overseas service was held in October 1916. It was narrowly defeated. Most of Hughes' Labor parliamentarians were opposed to conscription and, as a result, the Labor Party split. At the end of 1916, Hughes and 24 of his supporters left the Labor Party and formed a new party. The new Nationalist Party was made up of Hughes and his supporters, along with most of the former members of the Liberal Party. A second plebiscite was held in late 1917 and it was also defeated. Hughes could still have introduced conscription, as the results of the plebiscite were not binding, but he chose not to.

Although both plebiscites were defeated, achieving no change at all, the divisive impact on the nation was lasting. The issue split friends, neighbours, workmates and even families. Well into the 1920s the scars of these bitter battles could be felt in the Australian community.

Supporters of conscription tended to be middle- and upper-class people of British and Protestant background. The pro-conscriptionists argued that it was the patriotic duty of Australians to continue to support the war effort. They accused opponents of being lazy and selfish, of being 'German lovers' and of letting down the thousands who had already given their lives. In their **propaganda**, they used images of noble Australian soldiers and showed the Germans as grotesque, inhuman monsters (see Source 5.58).

Opponents of conscription were more likely to be working class, Catholic and of Irish background. Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix was the unofficial leader of the anti-conscription campaign and he urged Catholics to vote 'No'. Those who opposed conscription claimed that Australia had already given enough of its young men. They said that it was not really Australia's war. They also argued that several hundred thousand soldiers had gone voluntarily to the war and that it was not necessary to force Australians to fight.

Source 5.58 World War I poster, encouraging Australian men to fight against a monstrous enemy



Source 5.57 William Morris (Billy) Hughes



Source 5.59 A pro-conscription poster (AWM ARTV05469)

Many trade unionists opposed conscription, arguing that the war was a capitalist war and should not be supported. Some trade unionists also argued that if the majority of able-bodied Australian men were sent to the front, employers would begin to employ non-whites at lower wages, undermining the gains that Australian workers had made over the preceding 14 years. Women were equally divided on the issue and were used by both sides of the campaign. Images of women and children frequently appeared in conscription propaganda (see Source 5.59).

However, it is important to recognise that the divisions between the two sides were not clear. Many farmers were opposed to conscription even though they actually prospered as a result of the war. There were also some Protestant religious leaders who were anti-conscription. Among those who had lost loved ones in the war there were those who did not want others to suffer as they had.

Other bereaved families wanted to make sure that the war was won so that their sons would not have died in vain.

The consequences of war

Approximately 65 million people from 30 nations were directly involved in World War I. Of those involved, 9 million soldiers were killed or mortally wounded, 22 million were wounded and 5 million went missing in action and were never recovered. Civilians were also at grave risk. During the war, around 9 million people who were not directly involved in the fighting died from starvation, epidemics or military actions. For Australia, which was still a young nation, the total losses were enormous. About 60 000 or 18.5 per cent of Australians who served overseas never made it home.

Australia, which had entered the war with such enthusiasm and confidence in 1914, was a more serious, sober and divided nation when the war was over. There had been much sorrow and division but there had also been reason for great pride. As the years progressed, many were to look back on World War I as one of the defining influences on the nation's development.

Check your learning

- 1 Identify three ways in which World War I changed Australia.
- 2 How did the war influence Australian manufacturing?
- 3 How did Australians show their contempt for Germany during the war?
- 4 Why did many farmers oppose conscription?
- 5 What roles did Australian women play in the war effort in Australia?



Source 5.60 A sculpture commemorating Australian soldiers in World War I on the Anzac Memorial, Sydney

bigideas

5.3 How did World War I affect life at home in Australia?

Remember

- 1 What roles were open to Australian women during World War I?
- 2 What is a plebiscite?
- 3 Why do you think both sides of the conscription issue used women, especially mothers, in their propaganda?
- 4 What was significant about the number of Australian deaths in World War I?

Understand

- 5 Why do you think that Billy Hughes held two plebiscites when he had the power to introduce conscription without the nation's support?
- 6 Why do you think that the offer of the Australian Women's Service Corps was rejected?
- 7 Can you explain why middle- and upper-class people were more likely to support conscription than working-class people?

Apply

- 8 Divide the class into two sections, one for conscription and one against it. Hold a conscription rally. You may wish to do some further research on the arguments used and the people involved in the conscription campaigns. Each side must prepare:
 - a speech
 - a persuasive cartoon
 - a poster that would be carried in a rally.
- 9 Aspro was developed because Bayer Aspirin was no longer imported from Germany. Research other products that had been imported from Germany and Austria before the war to see if their banning led to the development of other Australian products.
- 10 Many women wrote letters to newspapers arguing for and against conscription. Choose one side of the argument and write a letter to the editor from the perspective of a parent whose son is a soldier at the front line.

Analyse

- 11 Negative attitudes towards Germans, even those who were born here or were naturalised Australians, were widely held during World War I.
 - a How do you explain this reaction?
 - b Do you think the same reaction would happen today if Australia were at war with a country from which many Australian citizens had migrated?

Evaluate

- 12 Do you think that wars are more likely to have a unifying or a divisive impact on a country? Explain your view.
- 13 Do you think the war might have affected Australia differently if conscription had been introduced? Write a report to outline the possible effects of conscription on the war effort and the home front.

Create

- 14 Put yourself in the role of a business operator during World War I. When one of your male employees enlisted, you employed a young woman who has proved to be excellent. You have spent time and money developing her skills and knowledge. When your former employee returns from the war, he expects to be re-employed. He has lost a leg and is suffering from shell shock. You have to decide what to do. You cannot afford to employ them both.
 - a On a sheet of paper, write all the arguments for sacking the woman and re-employing the man. On the other side, list the reasons why you should keep the young woman and tell the man to look elsewhere.
 - b Write a letter to the one who will not get the job, justifying your decision.



Source 5.61 The Shrine of Remembrance opened in Melbourne in 1934 to commemorate Victorians who gave their lives in World War I. Similar war memorials exist in towns and cities across Australia.

5.4 How is World War I remembered and commemorated?

Since the beginning of recorded history, certain individuals have been recognised for their actions during times of war. Whether they are seen as honourable leaders or bloodthirsty villains, key historical figures like Charlemagne, Attila the Hun, William the Conqueror, Genghis Khan and Napoleon are remembered all around the world for the contributions they made in battle and for the ways in which they altered the course of history.

In the same way, wars can be defining points in the development of nations. For example, the USA was born as a result of the American War of Independence, and the unified nations of Germany and Italy were established following a series of wars in the 19th century.

Symbols, traditions and events that commemorate war are important elements in almost all nations. Well-tended war cemeteries can be found wherever significant battles have been fought. The Australian War Memorial in Canberra is one of the most visited sites in the country. War memorials, avenues of honour and statues of war heroes can be found in virtually every Australian town and city. Events and ceremonies that commemorate the wars in which Australia has fought are held each year on Anzac Day in April and Remembrance Day in November.

The legacy of the war

The legacy of World War I has shaped many aspects of Australian society and culture over the course of the 20th century, both positively and negatively. The restrictions on trade imposed by the war forced Australia to develop new industries.

The War Service Homes scheme was responsible for the development of new suburbs—streetscapes of comfortable Californian bungalows that are so desirable today. New hospitals, including the Repatriation General Hospital established in Hobart in 1921, were set up to care for those who had returned from war with physical or sometimes mental injuries. The Returned and Services League (RSL), established in 1916, continues to provide support and advocacy for the veterans of any war that Australia has engaged in over the past century.

However, the war also left Australia a bitterly divided nation. The conscription debate had reignited sectarianism (disagreement between Protestants and Catholics) and split the Labor Party. The nation was saddled with huge war debts, a rising unemployment crisis, and a series of costly and unsuccessful schemes to convert large parts of the country to agricultural production. The Paris Peace Conference also had a lasting legacy on Australian society. The Australian delegation's refusal to accept the racial equality proposal ensured that the White Australia policy would dominate Australia's interwar immigration policy. It also turned Japan from an ally into a potential enemy.

The Anzac legend

For Australians, commemoration of war has always been closely tied to the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915. Despite more successful or more destructive engagements during World War I, and despite up to 15 war experiences since 1918, it is Gallipoli that symbolises Australia's war experience.

Despite the disastrous landing and loss of life, Australians at home met the news from Gallipoli with a sense of pride. In the first news reports that reached Australia, the soldiers were praised for their courage and gallantry.

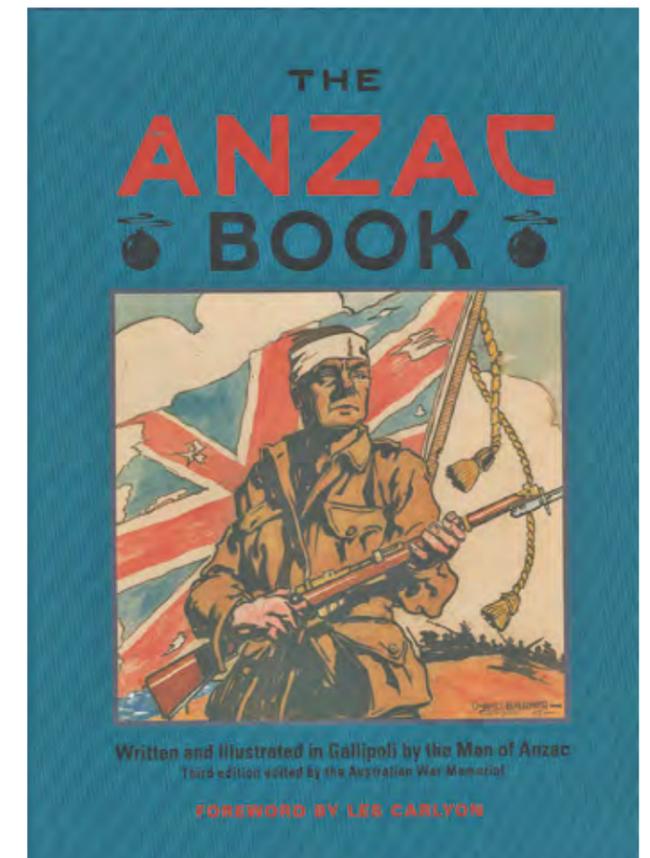
British war correspondent (journalist) Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett wrote of the Anzacs, 'There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and storming the heights, above all holding on whilst the reinforcements were landing.' (*The Argus*, 8 May 1915). His views were echoed by British General Sir Ian Hamilton:

Source 5.62

... History contains no finer record of dauntless bravery than is here described, while the knowledge of the magnificent part taken in this spectacular drama by our own gallant troops will thrill every heart in our own land.

Ian Hamilton, 'Australia's Glorious Day: The Official Story of the Landing and Attack by Our Combined Forces at the Dardanelles'

The greatest praise of all came from King George V, who stated that the diggers had 'indeed proved themselves worthy sons of the empire'.



Source 5.63 Cover of *The ANZAC Book*, a collection of stories, poems, sketches and reminiscences by the Australian soldiers at Gallipoli, edited by CEW Bean (AWM ART90422)



Source 5.64 Dawn service is held on 25 April each year at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli.

Anzac Day commemoration

Anzac Day, 25 April, was made a day of commemoration in 1916, and ceremonies and marches were held all around Australia. A march was also held in London, England, where the Anzac troops were hailed by local newspapers as 'The Knights of Gallipoli'. By 1927, Anzac Day had become a public holiday in Australia, with marches and dawn services held around the country annually.

The events of 25 April 1915, on a peninsula in Turkey, continue to resonate with Australians today. More than any other event in Australia's history, the Gallipoli landing occupies a special place. A legend has developed around Gallipoli that grows stronger as the years pass. Schoolchildren learn about the Gallipoli landing and relish legends such as the story of Simpson and his donkey. Hundreds of thousands of Australians join in or watch Anzac marches through large capital cities and small country towns. Many more take part in commemorations and wreath-laying ceremonies at war memorials throughout the country.

Each year, increasing numbers of young Australians find their way to Gallipoli to be present at the Anzac Day dawn service. It has become something of a rite of passage. Anzac ceremonies, wherever they are held, traditionally conclude with the words from Laurence Binyon's poem 'For the Fallen':

Source 5.65

*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.*

Laurence Binyon, 'For the Fallen'

Origins of the legend

The significance of the Gallipoli campaign, and the origin of the Anzac legend that surrounds it, can largely be linked to the fact that it was the first time that Australians had fought in a war. As a united country, Australia had only existed for 13 years at the time it went to war. Australians at home waited eagerly for accounts of the first encounter of the Australian Imperial Force. When news of the first battles at Gallipoli appeared in Australian papers on 8 May 1915, the fact that the landing had been a failure was almost completely overlooked.

Commentators at the time, and in the years since 1915, have developed the theme that Gallipoli was a defining national experience. It has been said that 'Australia became a nation on the shores of Gallipoli'. Historians have referred to the Gallipoli experience as Australia's 'baptism of blood' or 'baptism of fire'. Australian historian Bill Gammage wrote of the experience, 'The circumstances of a national army,



Source 5.66 Anzac soldiers in the trenches using periscope rifles (AWM A03868)



an arena, a brave enemy ... led three nations, Australia, New Zealand and Turkey, to create national traditions from the Gallipoli Campaign.'

It has also been suggested that, although they were enemies, a sense of respect developed between the Anzac soldiers and the Turks. Engraved at Anzac Cove are the words written in 1934 by Kemal Atatürk, Commander of the Turkish 19th Division during the Gallipoli campaign, and the first President of the Turkish Republic, from 1924 to 1938:

Source 5.68

*Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ...
you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country.
Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between
the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side
by side here in this country of ours. You, the mothers, who
sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your
tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in
peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have
become our sons as well.*

Memorial written by Kemal Atatürk, 1934

Source 5.67 'A present from home—"Do they think we're on a bloomin' pic-nic?"', cartoon from *The ANZAC Book*, 1916, edited by CEW Bean, p. 64 (AWM ART00052)



Source 5.69 As this photo (taken on 19 August 1966 during the Vietnam War) indicates, Australian soldiers have maintained the spirit of 'mateship' in battle first evident at Gallipoli 50 years earlier. (AWM FOR/66/0665/UN)

The Anzac legend today

The Anzac legend has not remained static. It was expected that as the last of the World War I diggers died, the significance of Gallipoli would begin to fade. There was some decline in interest in Anzac Day in the decades after World War II, but since the 1980s Anzac Day has grown in significance.

The reasons for this resurgence of interest in the Anzac legend and the Gallipoli story are complex. The attention paid to the declining numbers of World War I veterans combined with the popularity of films such as *Gallipoli* have brought the events of 1915 to the attention of the wider community. The pilgrimage of Gallipoli survivors in 1990, to mark the 75th anniversary of the campaign, brought widespread media and popular awareness of the Gallipoli landing.

Today, interest in Anzac Day has never been stronger. School assemblies, church services, television and radio programs and even sporting events are linked to the commemoration of the Gallipoli landing. In fact, as the nation approaches the centenary of Gallipoli in 2015, the place of the Anzac legend is firmly and securely at the centre of national consciousness.

Nevertheless, the legend is not without its critics. Some have suggested that other war engagements are more deserving of national commemoration. The battles at Pozzières and Villers-Bretonneux in World War I, Tobruk and Kokoda in World War II and the Battle of Long Tan in the Vietnam War (see Source 5.69) have all been suggested as possible replacements for Anzac Day.

Others have argued that the focus on Anzac Day glorifies war and that other aspects of the national story, good and bad, should be recognised alongside or instead of the Gallipoli landing. It is unlikely that this will happen, but it is important to recognise that the Anzac legend is **not static**. As the years progress, its place in Australia will continue to grow and **change**.

focus on ...

significance: Alec Campbell

The last living Australian link to the Gallipoli campaign was lost on 16 May 2002 with the death of Alexander William ('Alec') Campbell, aged 103. Campbell enlisted in the AIF at age 16, after lying about his age to meet the minimum age of 18 requirement. Campbell landed at Gallipoli in November 1915. He carried ammunition, supplies and water to the trenches. He was discharged on medical grounds around a year later. Campbell's funeral was attended by the then Prime Minister John Howard and the chiefs of the defence forces. On this day, around Australia and overseas, flags were flown at half-mast to pay respect to this final link to Gallipoli.

Source 5.70 Alec Campbell



focus on ...

contestability: the Anzac legend

Although Anzac Day is significant in Australian society, opinions on its origins and importance vary. This range of sources clearly indicates that Australians have debated the meaning of the Anzac legend across time.

Source 5.72

Life was very dear, but life was not worth living unless they could be true to their idea of Australian manhood.

CEW Bean, *The Story of Anzac* (1938)

Source 5.73

Soldiers, your deeds have won you a place in the temple of the Immortals. The world has hailed you as heroes. Your comrades in the British Army have claimed you as brothers in arms, and the citizens of the Empire are proud to call you kinsmen.

Prime Minister Billy Hughes, Anzac Day ceremony, London, 1916

Source 5.74

... the beery haze which had settled over the most solemn day in the Australian calendar', wrote Seymour, 'seemed to me then somehow excessive and dangerous in that it tended to amplify the already heady sentimentality of that day.

Alan Seymour, *The One Day of the Year*, 1960

Source 5.75

The Anzac spirit is an integral part of the Australian past and present, and central to the Australian identity. When the first Anzacs swarmed the beaches of Gallipoli, the seeds of a legend were planted ... Everyone who has heard the stories from their parents, grandparents and teachers carries the Anzac spirit inside them.

Edwina Chestney, Simpson Prize Essay, 2010

Source 5.76

No one can express all that this day means to us Australians and New Zealanders. It is, said Australia's great historian Manning Clark, 'about something too deep for words'. But in the stillness of the early dawn, and in the silence that will settle once more along this shoreline, we feel it in the quiet of our hearts. The sense of great sadness. Of loss. Of gratitude. Of honour. Of national identity. Of our past. Of the spirit, the depth, the meaning, the very essence of our nations. And of the human values which those first Anzacs—and those who came after them—embodied and which we, their heirs, must cherish and pass to the future.

May they rest with God.

Address by His Excellency the Governor-General Sir William Deane at Gallipoli, 25 April 1999



Source 5.71 Australian soldiers in a boat headed towards Anzac Cove, 25 April 1915 (AWM AQ2781)

Source 5.77

Whilst alterations have been made to account for absent voices and crusades, the essential nature and heart of the legend beats to the rhythm of a bygone era. Thus, the essence of the Anzac legend has not changed; rather, it has changed us, collectively as a people.

Lauren McAlary, Simpson Prize Essay, 2010

Source 5.78

It is essential to look again at the overbearing idea that the spirit of the nation was born among the members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on active service on the other side of the world. A significant problem with this proposition is the very uniqueness of their experience. The soldiers were far removed from normal life ... They were in the distinctive situation of being in all-male company for years on end, and even then their associates were drawn from a very narrow male age cohort. We might well ask how such an unnatural society could give birth to a spirit of general relevance. The key premise of the Anzac legend is that nations and men are made in war. It is an idea that had currency a hundred years ago. Is it not now time for Australia to cast it aside?

What's Wrong with Anzac? Henry Reynolds (ed.) and Marilyn Lake, New South Books, April 2010

Remembrance Day (Armistice Day)

Anzac Day is the main day for war commemoration in Australia and New Zealand. However, Remembrance Day, 11 November, is a more general recognition of the sacrifices made in war. This date marks the day and the hour when the Armistice (ceasefire) was signed, bringing an end to World War I.

In many countries, people pause for one minute at 11.00 a.m. on Remembrance Day to remember those who gave their lives in war. Red poppies are worn to symbolise the dead. At these ceremonies, the poem 'In Flanders Fields' is frequently read.

Source 5.79

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow*

'In Flanders Fields', John McCrae (1872–1918)

Check your learning

- 1 What evidence is there that war commemoration is an important part of many nations' histories?
- 2 In what ways do Australians commemorate war?
- 3 Why do you think the Gallipoli landing is such a significant event in Australia's history?
- 4 Why do some Australians challenge the celebration of Anzac Day?
- 5 Why is Alec Campbell considered to be a significant individual?
- 6 How do you explain the fact that there are different interpretations of the importance of the Anzac legend?

bigideas

5.4 How is World War I remembered and commemorated?

Remember

- 1 What was the immediate reaction in Australia to news of the Gallipoli landing?
- 2 According to the legend, what are the main characteristics of the Australian 'digger'?
- 3 Why are red poppies worn on Remembrance Day?

Understand

- 4 Was it significant that the Anzacs were praised by an English journalist, a British general and the King of England?
- 5 The Anzacs were fighting the Turks on their home soil. They could be said to have invaded Turkey. However, there seems to have been a mutual respect between the two peoples, which has grown through the years. How would you explain this?

Apply

- 6 Reread the memorial written by Kemal Atatürk (Source 5.68). Imagine you are one of the mothers whose sons are buried at Gallipoli. Write a letter of gratitude to Atatürk.
- 7 Research one of the war engagements that some suggest should replace Gallipoli as the day of national commemoration (Pozières, Villers-Bretonneux, Tobruk, Kokoda or Long Tan). Write a proposal to the Government suggesting the change and giving evidence to support your proposal.

Analyse

- 8 Why do you think that wars and war experiences are such significant parts in so many national stories?
- 9 Examine the cartoon 'A present from home' (Source 5.67).
 - a What point is it making and how is the point made?
 - b How would a cartoon such as this contribute to the Anzac legend?
- 10 Some have suggested that the Peter Weir film *Gallipoli* (1980) played an important role in the revival of interest in the Anzac legend. View the film and suggest why the film may have had this impact. Refer to specific features of the film (scenes, characters, incidents, symbols and music).

- 11 Examine the observations in Sources 5.72 to 5.78.

- a Divide them into two categories: those supporting the Anzac legend and those questioning it.
- b How do you explain the fact that there are different interpretations of the Anzac legend?
- c How do you envisage that Anzac Day may be celebrated in the year 2050?

Evaluate

- 12 It has been argued that wars are essential to a nation's development and sense of identity. Do you believe this is true? In your answer, make reference to features of Australia's war experiences at several points during World War I.
- 13 Around the time of Anzac Day, analogies are often made between sport and war. References are made to 'mateship', 'teams going into battle', 'combat', 'courage' and so on. Some suggest that this is appropriate; others say it is disrespectful to the soldiers who gave their lives. What is your view?

Create

- 14 Carefully study the observations on the Anzac legend (Sources 5.72 to 5.78). For each observation, provide an image that reflects its sentiments. You may use photographs, sketches, paintings, cartoons or other images.
- 15 Interview ten people (males and females of various ages and occupations). Use these interviews, plus other material in this chapter, to write an article for your school newsletter or annual. The article is to be titled: 'What Anzac Day means to Australians today'.

connecting ideas

Plastic surgery then and now

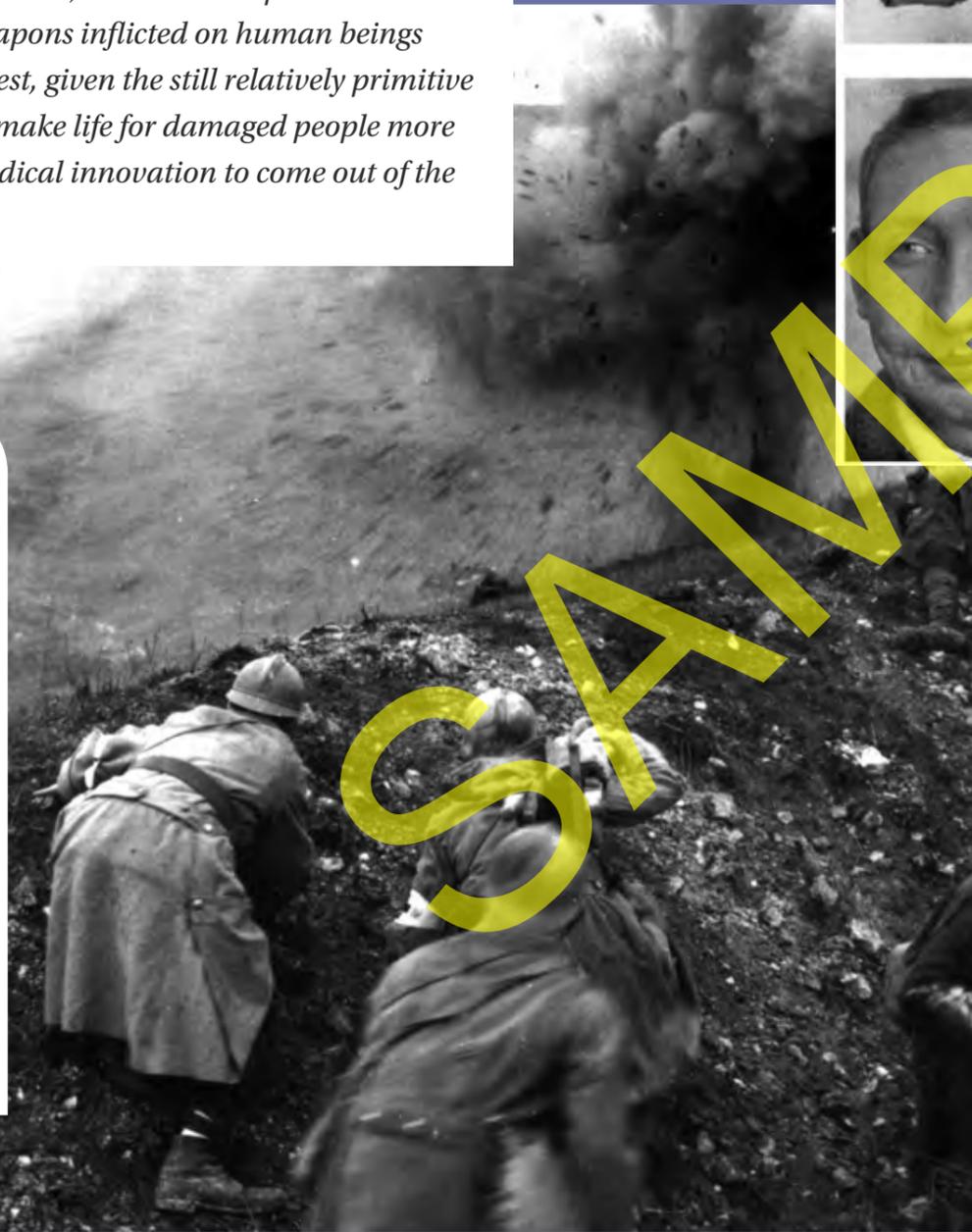
World War I was a brutal war that resulted in the deaths of about 15 million soldiers and wounded about 20 million. Civilians were also horribly affected, with over 7 million killed. Many of these deaths were the result of more effective weapons, such as machine guns, mortar bombs, chemical weapons and flamethrowers. The damage these new weapons inflicted on human beings could be horrific. Medical science did its best, given the still relatively primitive resources and technologies at the time, to make life for damaged people more bearable. Perhaps the most significant medical innovation to come out of the war was plastic surgery.

Unprecedented injuries

The new weaponry of World War I was responsible for entirely new types of injuries. Metal pieces (shrapnel) from exploded bombs, mines or shells mangled and disfigured soldiers' faces and bodies, poison gas burned their skin, and bullets from machine guns shattered their bones or tore off limbs. The injuries sustained by many soldiers were horrific. To allow maimed and wounded soldiers to return to any kind of normal life, new types of reconstructive surgery needed to be developed.

- 1 What were some of the new types of wounds and injuries suffered by soldiers in World War I?
- 2 What kind of obstacles do you think injured soldiers would have had when they returned to civilian life after World War I?

Source 5.80 Devastating new weapons introduced during World War I caused terrible injuries.



A new kind of surgery

At the outbreak of World War I, plastic surgery was still very basic. The development of anaesthetics had made more complicated surgical techniques possible, but those techniques were still not fully developed. As surgeons had to deal with an increasing number of men with horrific wounds, many new techniques were improvised on the spot. Devastating facial wounds (most often caused by gunshots) became a priority for plastic surgeons because they often prevented soldiers from returning to any kind of normal life. Harold Gillies, a New Zealand facial surgeon based in England, pioneered many methods such as skin grafts, complicated 'flap surgery', and 'staged' grafts in order to treat these types of wounds. Gillies founded a hospital for facial wound victims which conducted over 11 000 operations on 5000 men.

- 1 What were some of the plastic surgery techniques pioneered by Harold Gillies?
- 2 What do you think would have happened to the man in Source 5.81 if he had not had reconstructive surgery?

Source 5.81 Four stages of facial reconstruction around the time of World War I

From 'normal' to 'perfect'

After World War I, plastic surgery served a vital role: to allow soldiers with terrible wounds to function in civilian society again. People today who have been disfigured by injuries can also benefit from techniques that had their beginnings in that war. Cosmetic surgery (that is, unnecessary but desirable plastic surgery to alter one's appearance) became more popular in the last half of the 20th century. Today, cosmetic surgery often caters to the modern-day obsession with 'perfection'. In 2010, in the USA alone, an estimated 10 million purely cosmetic procedures were carried out on perfectly healthy men and women aiming to cosmetically improve their appearances. The dramatic increase in the number of procedures worldwide has caused many to question the ethics of surgeons who have much to gain financially. Others argue that the choice to 'enhance' one's natural appearance is a basic right.

- 1 How did the nature of the wounds suffered by soldiers in World War I lead to the development of purely cosmetic surgery?
- 2 What similarities and differences can you identify between the role of plastic surgery in World War I and cosmetic surgery today?



Source 5.82 Jocelyn Wildenstein after her cosmetic surgery



What evidence is there that plastic surgery has become a way for people to 'improve' on nature?