



DISTANT LINES

Queensland voices of the First World War



LEARNING NOTES

Pre-visit activities

EXPLORE WHAT STUDENTS ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Have your students fill out a KW chart (Resource 1). As well as ascertaining knowledge base, these charts are useful in the development of student driven inquiry questions.

Brainstorm what words students think of when they hear the word 'ANZAC'. Consider why they think this. Ask them to look for examples to support their ideas throughout the exhibition.

SET THE SCENE

Discuss Australia before the war

What were the key events before the war (federation, the drought etc)?

How were Australia's Indigenous peoples, women and migrants treated before the war?

What was the White Australia policy and how did it shape Australia's population and views?

Complete a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences between Australia at the time and Australia today.

Discuss the British Empire and Australia's relationship with Britain at the time

How did Australia's relationship with Britain shape Australian's view of themselves and their loyalties?

Map the British Empire

At the beginning of the war the rest of the world largely viewed Australia as simply being an outpost of Britain. Due to the bonds Australia shared with Britain, many Australians viewed themselves the same way and looked to Britain for leadership. Economically Great Britain was Australia's largest trading partner, socially most of the population were of British heritage and politically the people of Australia, despite living in a recently federated country, were still considered British citizens until 1948.

Discuss the concepts of imperialism, militarism, alliances and nationalism

How did these concepts lead to the outbreak of the First World War?

Complete a cause and effect chart which details how these led to the outbreak of the First World War (Resource 2).

Map the Triple Entente and the Triple alliances.

At the beginning of the 1900s the five greatest world powers were Britain, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and France. Most were trying to expand or hold onto vast empires (imperialism), most had large armies (militarism), all competed economically and all believed that their country was more worthy than the other (nationalism). As a result they became suspicious of each other and formed alliances which promised to protect each other should one of them be invaded.

On June 28th Arch Duke Ferdinand, a member of Austria-Hungary's royal family, was shot and killed in Serbia. As Germany was in an alliance with Austria-Hungary, Germany saw the assassination as a provocation of war and soon after invaded Belgium and France.

Identify the Australians who fought and where they fought

Where did Australians fight overseas?

Which forces, corps and services served?

Use a world map to map the locations.

Places: Following are locations mentioned in the exhibition.

- Middle East: Cairo, Alexandria, Suez Canal, Sinai Peninsular, Beersheba
- Europe: Western Front, Eastern Front
- Mediterranean: Lemnos, Malta, Greece, Dardanelles, Gallipoli

People: The Australian Imperial Force (AIF), the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Australian Light Horse and the Australian Flying Corps, The Australian Army Nursing Service all fought or served in the First World War.

Introduce exhibition vocabulary

What vocabulary will be encountered throughout the exhibition?

Resource 4 lists key words students will encounter during their visit. Have students write their meanings in the box next to it and use it as a glossary. Bring the glossary with you when you visit, to help students interpret the information.

Complete a Frayer model (Resource 5) of words with which students are unfamiliar.

Don't forget the acronyms... ANZAC, AIF. *The name ANZAC was first used in the First World War. Army clerks in Cairo had to mark boxes being dispatched to the front 'Australian and New Zealand Army Corps'. This proved too long so they abbreviated it to A & NZ AC. This still proved too long to put on a stamp so it was finally changed to ANZAC.*

INTRODUCE AND DISCUSS THE EXHIBITION THEMES AND INQUIRY QUESTIONS

COMMUNICATION between the front and home

How did Australians communicate with each other during the war?

How important was communication from loved ones at home and from the front?

To communicate home, hand written letters and postcards were most common. Postcards were popular amongst those serving because they were quick to write and gratefully received by those at home because they informed the recipients that their loved ones were still alive. Most correspondence was read by censorship officers who were looking for any information that might give away battle details and other war secrets. Australians serving overseas did not speak directly to their families until they returned home.

DISTANCE emotionally and geographically between home and the front

How did distance impact emotionally on those serving and those left at home?

In an era before modern methods of communication and transport technologies were available, the world seemed a much bigger place than it is today. Unlike most people who served, Australians and New Zealanders served far from home in a completely different hemisphere and in places they would never normally have visited during their lifetime. Initially this served to boost the enthusiasm and excitement of those who enlisted. Over time distance became a burden endured by those at home and on the front.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DIVISION

How did propaganda influence public perceptions of the war and recruitment levels?

Why did Queenslanders initially rush to enlist?

Was this enthusiasm sustained during the war?

How did the conscription referenda contribute to social division during the war?

When Britain declared war on Germany, enthusiasm for the war in Queensland was initially high. Many Queenslanders thought it was their duty to support Britain in her time of need and young men rushed to enlist. Australians saw this as their first opportunity to show the world that we were much more than just a country full of people descended from convicts, however not all Queenslanders agreed with supporting Britain. Following are some prominent views of the day:

Many Australians were of Irish descent and many had relatives living in Ireland. At the time Britain and Ireland were locked in their own battles. Ireland wanted home rule. The British were refusing to give it to them. As a result many Irish Australians did not want to go to war for Britain.

At the time the White Australia policy reflected the attitude of many non-Indigenous Australians. Some thought that if they lost the majority of their young men to war, the way would be open for non-British people to move in or worse still, invade.

Queensland's support for the war was largely reflected through recruitment levels and the divisive conscription debate. The concepts of duty and pride ran strongly through Queensland at the time. Most political parties, churches, newspapers and community leaders supported Britain's role in the war and actively encouraged young men to volunteer.

Initially when word of allied losses and casualties reached home, recruitment numbers grew, however as the war endured community enthusiasm waned. Australia had promised Britain that it would fulfil its quota of men. Australia already had national service which meant that young men could be conscripted to defend the nation, but this did not apply to service overseas. With voluntary enlistment falling, one way Australia could fill its quota was through conscription.

Prime Minister Billy Hughes strongly believed in conscription but needed to change the Defence Act to make it a reality. To do this he required a majority in the Senate but votes fell short. In an effort to convince Parliament that the Australian public supported the notion of conscription, Hughes called for a referendum on the topic. Queensland in particular was against conscription. Instead of bringing the nation together, the referendum heavily divided it with a very small majority voting against conscription. As the war progressed and casualty numbers rose, Hughes tried again. This time the 'No' vote won by a clear majority.

LEGACY AND COMMEMORATION

How did the Gallipoli Campaign and the First World War contribute to the development of the ANZAC legend?

What is the purpose of ANZAC Day?

How do Queenslanders celebrate ANZAC Day?

In Queensland an official ANZAC Day commemoration committee was established as early as 1916. In this same year ANZAC Day like parades were common. Initially intended largely as a recruitment tool, parades also served to heighten national pride as well as encouraging Queenslanders to remember the bravery and sacrifices of those who had died fighting overseas. Crowd control was often a problem at these events. After the war Australians wanted a place and a time when they could come together and remember the men and women who did not return. Memorials with the names of those who had died sprung up in towns all over Queensland and quickly became the focal point for communities wanting to express their gratitude and grief. April 25, the day the ANZACs first landed at Gallipoli was chosen as a day of commemoration, and the national ANZAC symbols and services we are so familiar with today were quickly adopted and used across the nation.

PATRIOTISM

How did Australia's involvement in the war contribute to National Identity?

In an effort to keep morale up at home, the first newspaper reports coming out of Gallipoli grossly understated the true result of the landings and the continuing campaign. The first reported casualty lists fell well short of the real numbers of the dead and injured. When Australians finally learnt the truth, they had to find something positive to make sense of such a senseless loss. The ANZAC legend began to take shape soon after Empire Day speeches held in Queensland in May 1915 touted April 25 as 'the birth of the nation'. Ideas such as this supported the myth of the brave, Australian Digger who displayed great courage under fire and who developed mateships that endured beyond life. Stories and ideas such as these helped Australians deal with the enormous loss of life and moulded the shape of our national identity today.

COMMUNITY CARE AND SUPPORT

How did Queenslanders support those serving during and after the war?

While the war waged, those back home were required to support those at the front. Women were encouraged to join organisations such as the Australian Red Cross Society, Australia's Comfort Funds, Voluntary Aid Detachments, Citizen's War Chest and the Cheer Up Society. These organisations contributed in a variety of ways, from sending parcels of food and clothing through to raising money to fund the war effort.

For those serving, the efforts of these organisations were greatly appreciated and reminded them that they were not forgotten. For those at home in Queensland, it kept them busy and helped everyday Queenslanders feel as if they were contributing to the war.

After the war, many of these organisations continued to support returned soldiers and families adversely affected by the war.

OTHER PRE-VISIT THINGS TO DO

Familiarise students with work books and any onsite activities they need to complete.

Introduce any post-visit assessment pieces and discuss what students need to complete during their visit in order to finalise the assessment following the visit.

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