



WINNING WORLD WAR 1: THE WESTERN FRONT DIARIES

A **STUDY GUIDE** BY ROBERT LEWIS



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CAPTION:



OVERVIEW

Winning World War 1: *The Western Front Diaries* (Bill Leimbach, 2008) is a 90-minute documentary that presents an argument for increased awareness and recognition of the Australian experience of the Western Front in the Anzac tradition.

The heroism of the Anzacs in the Gallipoli defeat of 1915 inspired the birth of a legend. This legend now sees huge crowds of young Australians gathering at Anzac Cove in Turkey for the annual 25 April dawn service.

But the power of this legend means that it has overshadowed the AIFs much greater deeds on the Western Front. Five times more troops served on the Western Front than at Gallipoli, 250,000 not 50,000; five times more were killed 46,000 as against 8,709; they fought in five times more battles; they served there for two and a half years, not eight months; were awarded fifty-two Victoria Crosses as opposed to eleven; and most important of all (after that defeat at Gallipoli) the AIF helped the Allied Forces win World War One under the leadership of the brilliant Australian gen-

eral, John Monash. By 1918, although the Australians represented only five per cent of the Allied Forces, they had captured approximately twenty-five per cent of the enemy territory, prisoners, arms and ammunition taken by the Allies. The achievements of the Australian Imperial Force are all the more significant when you consider these 'Diggers' were all volunteers.

The documentary tells the story battle by battle, drawing on photographs, film, private diaries, letters, postcards and photographs of soldiers and nurses. It also features moving interviews with descendents of diggers, who share memories of fathers, grandfathers and great uncles who served in battles, were either killed or wounded or returned home physically and mentally scarred. Other family members are interviewed at battle sites and war graves in France and Belgium where the achievements of the Australian diggers are acknowledged by grateful locals of all generations.

In 2008, the first official dawn ceremony was held at the Australian National War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux. The film argues that it can only become more significant in the future.

CURRICULUM APPLICABILITY

Winning World War 1: The Western Front Diaries is a resource that could be relevant for middle-senior secondary students of Australian history.

The film is structured around the AIF's ten major battles:

1916

- Fromelles
- Pozieres

1917

- The Third Ypres Campaign (Messines, Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde and Poelcappelle)
- Passchendaele
- Bullecourt

1918

- Second Villers-Bretonneux
- Hamel
- Amiens
- Mont St. Quentin and Peronne
- Montbrehain

This study guide suggests ways in which the film can be used in middle-upper secondary history classrooms.

It provides some information and ideas that students can use in critically examining the underpinning arguments of the film, so that they can develop their own informed opinion.

It identifies key aspects of the Western Front experience that are raised in the documentary, and provides teachers with classroom resources that can be used to explore these further.

It is suggested that the film be shown in short segments, with students then responding to each segment to develop further understandings of the Australian experience of the Western Front.

BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM

Activity 1

Brainstorming your knowledge of the Australian experience of World War One

You all know something about the experience of Australian soldiers and nurses in World War One.

- 1 As a class, brainstorm to list as much as you can about this experience. Use the Brainstorm Summary on the next page for

this. Use the headings in column 1 to help organise your information in column 2. You will then be able to test your ideas by watching the documentary *Winning World War 1: The Western Front Diaries*, and recording your findings in column 3.

- 2 Here is a list of the main causes of death among Australian soldiers on the Western Front during the war. Put them in order, from greatest cause of death (1) to lowest cause of death (8). You

will be able to see what the most common causes of death were later in this study guide (p.19).

- Bayonets
- Burial by shell burst, and aeroplane crash
- Fire (flame-thrower)
- Gas
- Hand bombs and grenades
- High velocity bullets (rifle and machine-gun)
- Shell concussion ('shell shock')
- Shell fragments and shrapnel pellets

BRAINSTORM SUMMARY		
1. ASPECT OF AUSTRALIA AND WORLD WAR ONE	2. MY IDEAS	3. WINNING WORLD WAR 1: THE WESTERN FRONT DIARIES
Where		
When		
Why Australia was involved		
Why people were involved		
How many		
Nature of the war		
Types of experiences		
Attitudes		
Behaviour		
Impacts on the people		
After the war		
Commemoration		
Key places		
Key people		

Activity 2

Understanding Gallipoli as a Focus of the Anzac Tradition

The film asserts that Gallipoli is the main commemoration of the war, and of the Anzac tradition. To challenge this, as the film asks of us, means we need to understand why and how Gallipoli has come to have such a place in Australian national identity.

Look at this list of possible contributing factors, and re-organise them into a chronological sequence.



Seventy-fifth anniversary	The seventy-fifth anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli in 1990 and the associated pilgrimages again focused attention on the few remaining Gallipoli veterans.
A need for a myth	Every nation seems to need a myth, or an image of itself, that it can look to with pride and recognition. The message is not necessarily 'I am that person', but rather 'I am part of the society which can produce that person, and I share in those qualities'. The image or myth has to be based in some reality, but that reality need not be common to all those who share in it.
A new people	Australia had no experience on the world stage before 1914. People were anxious about who they were, and how they would stand when tested against the established order.
A representative group	All Australians were involved – while the first army was only 50,000 men, virtually everybody in Australia had some connection – as relative, friend, or work-mate – of someone in that army. So it was a representative body. The soldiers accepted the praise, and it provided a standard for them for the rest of the war – survivors wore a brass A for Anzac on their sleeve for the rest of the war, making it obvious to all that they were considered special.
National holiday	The day became an official national holiday in the 1920s, and school children read about the feats of the Anzacs in their school readers.
Anzac Day 1916	Right from the first Anzac Day in 1916 messages of national identity and pride were being expressed. These sorts of ideas were echoed in <i>The Anzac Book</i> , a collection of drawings and articles from Gallipoli which was sold throughout Australia.
Attendance at ceremonies	Ever since the 1980s, crowds watching the parade have been growing rather than declining, and there are many young people attending dawn ceremonies. The wars are an important and popular part of most States' and Territories' secondary school curricula, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Australian War Memorial have produced many important collections of documents and resources for a study of the wars.
Australia Remembers	The 1995 Australia Remembers year for the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of World War Two also focused attention on Australia's military heritage.
Behaviour of the troops	The soldiers fought with skill and courage. That is the essential element of the Anzac legend.
Post-Vietnam – WELCOME HOME	In 1987 the 'Welcome Home' parade for Vietnam veterans seemed to show a change in attitude towards recognition of Australians' military service.
<i>The One Day of the Year</i>	Then the Anzac tradition began to decline. In the 1960s a famous and influential play by Alan Seymour, <i>The One Day of the Year</i> , brutally represented Anzac Day as an occasion for a few old diggers to make public fools of themselves as they became embarrassingly drunk.
Vietnam War	During the 1970s peace slogans were painted on the Melbourne Shrine on the eve of Anzac Day, and much attention was paid to feminist/pacifist anti-Anzac Day marches.
Western Front	The reputation and qualities that were seen at Gallipoli were seen again on the Western Front. Most Australian soldiers served on the Western front, so the image was not only confined to those relatively few who had actually landed at Gallipoli.
World War Two	In World War Two many of the first recruits were the sons of Anzacs, and they saw themselves as carrying on the traditions. They also provided 'new blood' for the Anzac Day ceremonies and marches.

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Russia fought Austria-Hungary, France would be bound to support Russia. If Austria-Hungary fought, Germany would support it against Russia and France. Germany could not fight a war on two fronts against these powers, so its war plan was to invade France through the poorly-defended Belgium, sweep into Paris, secure the surrender of France, and then focus all its forces on defeating Russia (which would not be ready to fight for several weeks after a declaration of war). Britain had guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium, so a German invasion of Belgium would lead to Britain's involvement as well. On 4 August, Germany did invade France through Belgium, and Britain declared war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. SEE ITEM 1.

Why was Australia at war?

Australia in 1914 was still strongly bound by culture to the 'Mother Coun-

Activity 3

Background Briefing

Why was the world at war?

On 4 August 1914, soldiers of the German Empire invaded Belgium and World War One began.

A key underlying cause of the war was the increasing fear by Britain of an expanding German empire, and the growth of German naval power, but it was the system of great power alliances that resulted in actual conflict.

In 1914, a Serbian nationalist assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, in Sarajevo, the capital of Serbia. Serbia was a centre of Slav nationalism, and its government was working to influence the southern parts of Austria-Hungary to join it. The Austro-Hungarian government saw the assassination as a chance to crush this movement, by invading Serbia. Serbia appealed to Russia for help. A system of alliances now meant that other nations became involved. If



ITEM 1



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imports by sea to wage war, to her knees by instituting unrestricted submarine warfare. As the Verdun battle progressed, the French were obliged to pull many of their forces out of the proposed Somme offensive, but they urged the British to go ahead with the attack, to take the pressure off Verdun. It was at this point in the war that the divisions of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) began arriving in France.

The AIF had been sent to Egypt in 1915, and then to fight at Gallipoli as

try', as well as being bound legally to Britain in foreign affairs. So when Britain declared war, Australia was also automatically at war. Regardless of this legal tie, the Australian Government was enthusiastic in its response to the war, and was a willing participant in it.

While the war was fought on many fronts – in Russia and eastern Europe, in Turkey and in the Middle East – the centre of the war was in western Europe, in France and Belgium. This 'Western Front' stretched from the North Sea on the Belgium coast to the French–German–Swiss border near the Swiss town of Basel (Basle). For either side – the Allies (France, the British Empire, the Russian Empire and, eventually, the United States), and the Central Powers (the German Empire, the Austro–Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire) – to win the war, victory had to be achieved on the Western Front.

The early war of mobility in the west, during which Germany tried to deliver a rapid knock-out blow to France, quickly came to an end. The Germans failed to overwhelm the Allies in a series of actions fought in northern France and in Belgium. By late 1914, most of Belgium, except for a narrow strip between the town of Ypres (Ieper) in West Flanders and the coast, was occupied by Germany. Large sections of eastern France also lay in German hands. There now stretched a fortified line between the two sides, from the North Sea to the Swiss border. For the

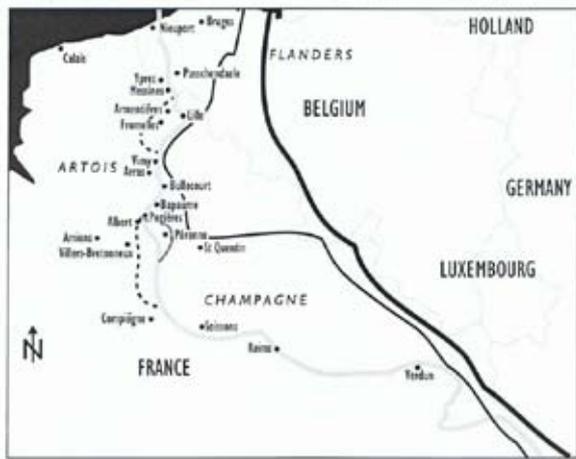


next four years, both sides sought to break through the enemy's positions with a war-winning campaign that would lead to victory in the west.

During 1915 and the early months of 1916, a number of attacks were launched seeking this elusive breakthrough. The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) launched offensives at Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge and Loos, while the French undertook even bigger offensives in Artois and Champagne. None of these attacks gained significant ground, and casualties were heavy. For 1916, Britain and France planned a joint major offensive in the Somme area, but the Germans struck in February with a huge attack on French forts at Verdun. Here, the Germans aimed at nothing less than 'bleeding France white' and bringing Britain, a country which depended on

part of the campaign to take Turkey out of the war. The campaign failed. After the evacuation of Gallipoli in late 1915, the AIF had regrouped and retrained in Egypt. Some of the Light Horse went to Palestine, but in March–April 1916, most of the AIF moved to northern France and went into the line south of the town of Armentières. Here, the soldiers learned about the art and weaponry of static trench warfare – conducting raids, manning trenches, sniping and directed artillery actions. Then on 1 July 1916, the British opened their great offensive on the Somme to the north-east of the town of Albert. The opening attack, which cost 60,000 British casualties, failed to achieve a breakthrough, but because of the need to keep supporting France at Verdun, the British pressed on. The AIF's Western Front experience was about to begin.

Map of the Western Front



TIMELINE AND MAP

This timeline and map will help you see the bigger picture of which the Australian campaigns were a part.



1915	1 January – 30 March	Allied offensive in Artois and Champagne
	6–15 April	French assaults against St Mihiel
	22 April – 25 May	Second Battle of Ypres
	May–June	Second Battle of Artois
	25 September – 6 November	Renewed offensives in Artois and Champagne
1916	21 February – 18 December	Battle of Verdun
	1 July – 13 November	First Battle of the Somme
1917	9–15 April	Battle of Arras
	April–May	Battle of Bullecourt
	16–20 April	Nivelle Offensive
	June–July	British offensive in Flanders
	31 July – 10 November	Third battle of Ypres (Passchendaele)
	20 November – 3 December	Battle of Cambrai
1918	21 March – 5 April	German Somme offensive
	9 April – 8 May	German Lys offensive
	27–30 May	German Aisne offensive
	28 May	First American offensive
	30 May – 17 June	Battle of Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood
	9–13 June	German Noyon-Montdidier offensive
	15–19 July	German Champagne-Marne offensive
	18 July – 5 August	Allied counter-offensive
	8–11 August, 21 August – 4 September	Allied Amiens offensive
	21 August – 3 September	Second Battle of the Somme
	26 September – 11 November	Allied Meuse-Argonne offensive
	27 September– 17 October	Hindenberg Line offensive
	28 September-14 October	British–Belgian Flanders offensive
	7 October-11 November	Allied Sambre-Scheldt offensive



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- trenches on the right, and push them further back. What would you need to do to achieve this?
- Identify the main difficulties you would have in doing this.
 - Who do you think would have the better position in trench warfare – the attackers, or the defenders? Explain your reasons.
 - What do you think conditions would be like for the troops involved in this fighting?

Pozieres

- Watch the section on **Pozieres** (approximately 16:00 – 26:00) and answer the questions that follow. Then add any further information or ideas to your **Argument Summary**. Finally, you might like to explore one of the issues raised in more detail, using the classroom resources provided.
 - According to the official war historian C.E.W. Bean, what was the significance of this battle for Australia?
 - We see glimpses of the lives of several soldiers and nurses:
 - Allan Dow Heggie
 - Stan Thornton
 - The five Porter family members
 - Eric ‘Mick’ Scott
 - The four Lowery sisters
 - Blanche Atkinson
 - Margaret Eldridge
 - Reg Young
 What do we learn from these

EXPLORING IDEAS AND ISSUES IN THE FILM

- Winning World War One: The Western Front Diaries* is a documentary film that presents arguments as well as ideas and information.

Watch the first six minutes of the film and decide what it is saying about the following key elements of the film. Summarise your ideas in the **Argument Summary** on the next page. You will be able to add to this summary as you watch the rest of the film. SEE ITEM 3.

Fromelles

- Watch the section on **Fromelles** (approximately 06:00 – 16:00) and answer the questions that follow. Then add any further information or ideas to your **Argument Summary**. Finally, you might like to explore one of the issues raised in more detail, using the classroom resources provided.
 - Fromelles was Australia’s first experience of the Western Front. Why was it so unsuccessful?
 - We see glimpses of the lives of several soldiers:
 - William Chambers
 - Harry Lamert Thomas
 - Archibald Clavering Gunter

- Simon Fraser
 - Bill ‘Snowy’ Hamilton
- What do we learn from these people’s experiences about the nature of war on the Western Front? Add any ideas and information to your **Argument Summary** and your **Brainstorm Summary**.

- Why, according to the film has this battle been ‘played down’?

Exploring Further: The Nature of Trench Warfare

- SEE ITEM 2. Assume you are in the trenches on the left. You want to defeat the enemy in the

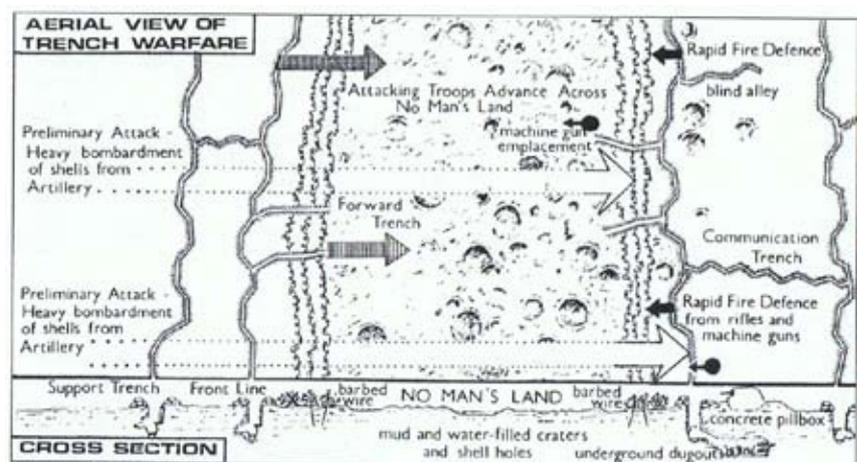


Illustration by David Simkin, *Contemporary Accounts of the First World War* by John Simkin, Tressell Publications, 1981 and in John Laffin, *Western Front 1916-1917, The Price of Honour*, Time-Life Australia and John Ferguson, Sydney, 1987, page 18.

ITEM 2

ARGUMENT SUMMARY

1. Australians' awareness of the Western Front as part of the World War One experience.

2. The behaviour, qualities and experiences of the Australian forces involved.

3. The continuing impact of the experience on family members today.

4. The place of the Western Front in the Anzac Tradition, and the place of Gallipoli.

5. The role and significance of the Australians on the Western Front in the outcome of World War One.

people's experiences about the nature of war on the Western Front? Add any ideas and information to your **Argument Summary** and your **Brainstorm Summary**.

- 3.3 The question is raised: who would suffer the greater loss – a family where several men die, but some return, or a family where the only son dies? Explain your ideas.

Exploring Further: The Nurses

About 2200 Australian women served overseas as nurses during the war. Look at the following information about two women's experiences, and answer the questions that follow.

(i) *When I commenced my work, I hardly knew where to begin. My first patient was a dear Scotch lad with his skull and right leg fractured, his left leg and one arm amputated. Minor wounds covered his body. He talked to me as I attended him, but never uttered a word of complaint. When the ordeal was over, I stood for a moment, feeling his pulse. He said:*

'How is it, sister?'
'Fine. How do you feel now, laddie?'
'I feel fine, too, thanks, sister.'
 Next morning he died.

(ii) *Conditions were primitive, compared with the ordered life of hospitals in England, but the sense of adventure, of being at the forefront of things, with the possibility of meeting one's own loved ones, more than compensated for the hardships endured.*

For several hours each day I assisted in the acute gassed wards. Most of the poor boys died, but those who still lived, to die later, suffered intensely. This mustard-oil gas burned their bodies. Such frightened expressions met our eyes as we bent over them, working to relieve the pain, bathing their poor, smarting eyes with bicarbonate of soda and inserting cocaine to relieve the agony. We kept them dark with pads and bandages. A sister



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worked, one on each side of the ward, continuously. As soon as she reached the lower end, she commenced at the top again, while two more sisters endeavoured to relieve their distressed and difficult respirations by administering oxygen for ten minutes every half-hour. ... We were unable to work for any length of time in these gassed wards. Stooping over our patients, we soon became affected by inhaling the gas. Our throats became sore and set us coughing, while our eyes became weak and watery. The odour of the ward was in our nostrils for weeks.

(iii) *When we switched on our torches, we found the floor literally covered with a mass of wounded; men being sick, moaning in pain, or crying out for a drink; pleading to remove their boots which, in some cases, had not been off their feet for over a week. The stretcher-bearers were carrying them in out of the pouring rain and rushing away again. We set to work, lifting the stretchers into some sort of order and searching for cases of haemorrhage, while the wounded held the torches to guide us.*

As the bearers brought in patients, we lifted stretchers out ready for them to carry away again the urgent cases requiring immediate surgical attention. It was bending work, and when

our backs refused to hold us up any longer, we sat on the floor and cut the boots and socks off the stone-cold and swollen feet, wrapping them in bundles of cotton wool and bandages. The patients used their boots or tin hats as pillows while they patiently and uncomplainingly waited to be attended to. ... [In the operating theatre] there were twelve operating surgeons, with theatre teams, working on six tables continuously for twenty four hours. The theatre staff worked the longest hours; the routine was sixteen hours on and eight off duty.

(i) - (iii) May Tilton, *The Grey Battalion*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1933, pp.198-9, 254-5, 259-63.

(iv) *I could hear nothing for the roar of the planes and the artillery. I seemed to be the only living thing about. ... I kept calling for the orderly to help me ... but the poor boy had been blown to bits. ... [While trying to put a delirious patient back to bed] 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 putty on it. One of the orderly's legs which had been blown off and had landed on the patient's bed. Next day they found the trunk up a tree about twenty yards away.*



Exploring Further: Aboriginal Soldiers

Read the following information and then answer the questions that follow.

(i) *In theory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were not allowed to enlist in the AIF. This did not stop a number of Indigenous people from doing so.*

During the course of the war, as recruits were needed, the law was changed to allow 'half castes', the term used to apply to indigenous people who had one parent of 'white' race, to enlist.

Why did Aboriginal people serve? The men and women interviewed for this book state various reasons: service, particularly overseas, offered a chance for travel, adventure, comradeship, regular pay, a disciplined life, a home, a life away from the river bank or mission, a chance to prove oneself as the white man's equal. It was in the armed forces that many aboriginal people experienced equality with whites for the first, and perhaps only, time. And there was the expectation that a grate-

Sister Alice Ross King received a Military medal for her bravery under fire. Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, OUP, Melbourne, 1992.

- A Why do you think nurses joined the Army?
- B What qualities do these women show?
- C What impacts do you think their experiences would have had on them?
- D Would you say that they are part of the Anzac tradition? Explain your reasons.

- 4.3 One relative asks if the young people are likely to be interested in the events in the future. What answer do the Golden Kangaroos give?
- 4.4 What answer would you give?
- 4.5 The letter from the officer on the death of Edric Newman says he was a brave soldier who went to death laughing, and with no fear of the enemy. Do you believe him?
- 4.6 Why might a person write to relatives in such a way?

Bullecourt

4 Watch the section on **Bullecourt** (approximately 26:00 – 38:00) and answer the questions that follow. Then add any further information or ideas to your **Argument Summary**. Finally, you might like to explore one of the issues raised in more detail, using the classroom resources provided.

- 4.1 Bullecourt was the first use of tanks. Why was this weapon not successful?
- 4.2 We see glimpses of the lives of several soldiers:
 - Edric Newman
 - Douglas Grant
 - Allan Power

What do we learn from these people's experiences about the nature of war on the Western Front? Add any ideas and information to your **Argument Summary** and your **Brainstorm Summary**.



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ful government would ensure that full citizenship rights and social equality would follow them into civilian life.

Alick Jackomos and Derek Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes*, Victoria Press, Melbourne, 1993.

(ii) Henry Thorpe, Reg Rawlings and John Firebrace were Aboriginal soldiers.

In October 1917 Thorpe 'displayed great courage in mopping up enemy dugouts and pillboxes. In the capture of Battalion Objective he was conspicuous for his courage and leadership, handling his men with skill and materially assisting his Company Commander. By his splendid example and disregard of all danger he inspired those under him'.

Citation for the Military Medal.

In July 1918 'during the attack on enemy system [Reg Rawlings] had the responsible position of first bayonet man in a bombing team which ... routed the enemy and established a block in the trenches. Pte Rawlings displayed rare bravery in the performance of his duty killing many of the enemy, brush-

ing aside all opposition and cleared the way effectively for the bombers of his team. His irresistible dash and courage set a wonderful example to the remainder of the team.'

Rawlings, Thorpe and Firebrace were all killed on the same day, 9 August 1918, and lie buried in the military cemetery at Harbonnieres, France. Another member of the Firebrace family was killed in action a few days later.

Alick Jackomos and Derek Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes*, Victoria Press, Melbourne, 1993.

- A Why do you think Indigenous men joined the Army?
- B How do you think they would have been accepted by their fellow soldiers? Explain your reasons?
- C What impacts do you think their experiences would have had on them?
- D How might their service have influenced their fellow non-Indigenous soldiers?
- E How do you think returned Indigenous soldiers might have been treated after the war? Explain your reasons.

Third Ypres Campaign

- 5 Watch the section on the **Third Ypres campaign** (approximately 38:00 – 48:00) and answer the questions that follow. Then add any further information or ideas to your **Argument Summary**. Finally, you might like to explore one of the issues raised in more detail, using the classroom resources provided.
 - 5.1 What was the main aim of these campaigns?
 - 5.2 We see glimpses of the lives of several soldiers:
 - George Esplin
 - Patrick Joseph Bugdan
 - James Dodimead
 What do we learn from these people's experiences about the nature of war on the Western Front? Add any ideas and information to your **Argument Summary** and your **Brainstorm Summary**.
 - 5.3 Relatives talk about their pride, but also the sense of utter waste of lives. Do you think the soldiers would have seen their service as an utter waste? Why?

Exploring Further: The Enemy

The film several times shows us glimpses of the enemy. Look at these documents and answer the questions that follow.

(i) *Prisoners we are not troubled with now for we kill every bosche [German] at sight.*

(ii) *There was a chap, a big, tall man, you know, and he had his jaw shot away, and he's got another bloke with broken legs or something and he's got this chap on his back. He's staggerin' back along the road, and when they saw me, they had to [salute]. It made me very near cry to think of it. And I used to go up and pat 'em on their back, and then they'd point to their big bottle that they had and it was full of coffee and cognac and I'd have a drink of this ... and give them some, and then they'd sit down and pull out their post-cards and they'd show you their photos of their wives and their children and the farms they were in. And when I saw all these things I thought, well blimey, what's it all about? ... It's all right for people that are victorious, to march in, but think of the defeated people going back, to the horror of it all.*

(iii) *To-morrow we hope to be on the road to Berlin ... we are ready, fit, and well, and with God's help we will punish the Bosch [Germans] for his cruelty to the weaker races.*

(iv) *I accounted for 5 or 6 Germans with bombs and we had orders to bayonet all wounded Germans and they received it hot and strong.*

(v) *Staggering through the gloom we saw a man ... Poor beggar I have seen worse looking mess-ups but he was bad enough – his left eye was gone ... he was a mass of blood and looked as if he had been through a sausage machine. He pleaded something in German ... it was a moan, or a prayer – so I gave him my hand to hold and said as nicely as I could 'All right old chap.' ... The thought struck me 'How can men be so cruel' ... and we*

helped him along.

(vi) *In one trench I saw three or four Germans pinned in. The side of the trench had closed in pinning them as they stood. The tops of their heads were blown off with machine guns. It was a horrible sight. Blood and brains had trickled down their faces and dried ... I was filled with delight to see so many Huns killed and could not help laughing.*

(vii) *This afternoon we got 15 German Red Cross prisoners, they were marched down & searched & 13 of the dogs were found to be carrying daggers and revolvers they [were] promptly put against the wall & finished.*

(viii) *Strike me pink the square heads [Germans] are dead mongrels. They will keep firing until you are two yds. off them & then drop their rifle & ask for mercy. They get it too right where the chicken gets the axe. ... Its good sport father when the bayonet goes in and there eyes bulge out like prawns.*

Extracts from Bill Harney, *Harney's War*, Currey O'Neil, South Yarra, 1983 and Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1990.

- A List some words that describe the attitudes of the Australians to the Germans in these extracts.
- B Discuss the variety of attitudes and behaviour that they show. Suggest reasons to explain why a variety of attitudes and behaviour might exist among the diggers towards the enemy.
- C Many accounts of the behaviour of the Australian (and other) soldiers during the war do not mention atrocities and brutality. Is it important to stress all elements of people's behaviour in war? Explain your reasons.

Passchendaele

- 6 Watch the section on **Passchendaele** (approximately 48:00 – 56:00) and answer the questions that follow. Then add any further information or ideas to your

Argument Summary. Finally, you might like to explore one of the issues raised in more detail, using the classroom resources provided.

- 6.1 Why was Passchendaele called 'hell'?
- 6.2 We see glimpses of the lives of several soldiers:
- Edward Stewart
 - Albert James Jones
- What do we learn from these people's experiences about the nature of war on the Western Front? Add any ideas and information to your **Argument Summary** and your **Brainstorm Summary**.
- 6.3 The Menin Gate ceremony is performed every day of the year. What does it tell us about the need to remember and to commemorate?

Exploring Further: The Nature and Experience of War

Look at the following extracts from soldiers' letters and diaries about their war experiences, and answer the questions that follow.

- (i) *I can't sleep now because – Six shells are bursting around here every minute
Guns are belching out shells, with a thunderous sound each time
The ground is shaking with each explosion
I am wet and the ground on which I rest is wet
My feet are cold, in fact I'm all cold with my two skimpy blankets
I am covered with dirt
I am hungry
I see no chance for a better tomorrow.*
- (ii) *The mud was so bad that last time we were here one of our officers rode into a shell hole and he disappeared. He had to be pulled out by ropes.*

(iii) *I am on my way to hospital suffering trench feet due to being up to my knees in water for 72 hours.*

(iv) *The country around here is very much knocked about by Artillery and*

shell holes are the worry of our lives – one cannot walk 10 metres in the dark without tumbling into one. Barbed wire entanglements are scattered about, and at night we have to keep our eyes open, otherwise we get caught in it. ... Grave yards are everywhere and no matter where one looks he sees little white crosses.

(v) Private William Harold Aundrick, Private Arthur Corbett, Private Hubert Allen Nason, all 25th Battalion, 11 November 1916

During attack on German position North of FLERS during 5th and 6th November, 1916 these men upon orders given, worked continuously for 30 hours carrying in wounded from NO MAN'S LAND despite heavy machine gun, shell and snipers' fire. They showed great determination under most trying circumstances working mostly in daylight. They are suffering still from their exertions. Military medal each.

(vi) 24/8/16

Dearest Beat and Bill,

Just a line you must be prepared for the worst to happen any day. It is no use trying to hide things. I am in terrible agony. ... Tomorrow I shall know the worst as the dressing [on my wounded leg] was to be left for 3 days and tomorrow is the third day it smells rotten. I was hit running out to see the other officer who was with me but badly wounded. ... I got two machine gun bullets in the thigh. ... The Stretcher Bearers could not get the wounded out any way other than over the top and across the open. They had to carry me four miles with a man waving a red cross flag in front and the Germans did not open fire on us. Well dearest I have had a rest, the pain is getting worse and worse. ... So cheer up dear I could write on a lot but I am nearly unconscious. Give my love to Dear Bill and yourself, do take care of yourself and him.

Your loving husband
Bert.

[Lieutenant H.W. Crowle died a few

hours after writing this letter.]

(vii) I shall never forget the mad intoxication one seems to be in [during battle] ... you see absolutely no danger & will do almost anything, for the roar of the guns are ringing in your ears, & you can smell the salty fumes from the powder stinging your nostrils, & ... the shouts of the boys & the ... ghostly lights of the many colored flares ... these are moments when I reckon a man lives 10 minutes of this seems to be at the time worth a year of ordinary life, but the reaction sets in afterwards & nearly all men feel a faintness come over them ... but this don't last long either & you are soon itching for another smack at the rotten Hun.

(viii) Falling everywhere & the boys struggling through the mud bogged nearly to the knees ... [In the German wire, I] got badly cut all over & ended up by getting hung up in the staff for all the world like a sack of wool chucked onto a heap of barb wire, but I felt nothing at the time for my blood was running hot & we only thought of getting in their trench, the fighting by this time was very fierce, shells, mortars, & worse than all liquid fire bombs were falling among us like hail ... I had one of the most thrilling minutes of my life for I was rushing ... down a shallow trench ... when ... a Hun rushed out at me & made a desperate lunge at my body. ... his bayonet slid down my rifle & stuck in the fleshy part of my leg ... a sharp stinging pain went through my body ... but I kept my block & before he could draw his rifle back for another attempt I shot him dead.

(ix) All day long the ground rocked & swayed backwards and forwards from the concussion ... men were driven stark staring mad & more than one of them rushed out of the trench over towards the Germans. any amount of them could be seen crying and sobbing like children their nerves completely gone ... we were nearly all in a state of silliness & half dazed but still the Australians refused to give ground. men were buried by the dozen, but were frantically dug out again some dead and some alive.

(x) There were dead and wounded everywhere ... I had to sit on top of a dead man as there was no picking and choosing ... I saw a shell lob about twelve yards away and it ... lifted [two men] clean up in the air for about 6 feet and they simply dropped back dead ... one or two of the chaps got shell shock and others got really frightened it was piteous to see them ... One great big chap got away as soon as he reached the firing line and could not be found ... I saw him in the morning in a dug out and he was white with fear and shaking like a leaf. One of our Lieuts. got shell shock and he literally cried like a child, some that I saw carried down out of the firing line were struggling and calling out for their mother ...

(xi) You have no idea of the hell and horror of a great advance, old fellow, and I hope you never will have. We fought and lived as we stood, day and night, without even overcoats to put on at night & with very little food. The place was not littered but covered with dead & as we were under continuous fire & were moving about a lot, and when still were in very narrow, shallow trenches, we could do no burying. The last meal I had was one I shook from a dead German.

(xii) One feels on a battlefield such as this one can never survive, or that if the body lives the brain must go forever. For the horrors one sees and the never-ending shock of the shells is more than can be borne. Hell must be a home to it.

(xiii) The Australian casualties have been very heavy – fully 50 per cent in our brigade, for the ten or eleven days. I lost, in three days, my brother and two best friends, and in all six out of seven of all my officer friends (perhaps a score in number) who went into the scrap – all killed. Not one was buried, and some died in great agony. It was impossible to help the wounded at all in some sectors. We could fetch them in, but could not get them away. And often we had to put them out on the parapet to permit movement in the shallow, narrow, crooked trenches.

The dead were everywhere. There had been no burying in the sector I was in for a week before we went there.

(xiv) One or two of my friends stood splendidly, like granite rocks round which the seas stormed in vain. They were all junior officers. But many other fine men broke to pieces. Everyone called it shell shock. But shell shock is very rare. What 90 per cent get is justifiable funk, due to the collapse of the helm – self-control.

(xv) My battalion has been at it for eight days and one-third of it is left – all shattered at that. And they're sticking it still, incomparable heroes all. 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, 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.

(xvi) Shrapnel, minewerfers, whizz-bangs, bombs, lachrymose shells, gas shells, – and thousands of gaping dead. The stench, and the horridness of it can but be mentioned. I have sat on corpses, walked on corpses and pillaged corpses. I got many interesting German souvenirs and could have secured cartloads from their trenches, but I lost most that I took, and usually was too busy to pick up anything. I lost nearly all my equipment and clothes and with them my curiosities but I brought back one bonzer souvenir that I did not expect to bring back – myself.

(xvii) So I got up and galloped one way and somebody's galloping another. It was just like when you throw a kerosene tin among a lot of fowls: they're just headin' in all directions. And this is us, the great charge. You've often heard the story. You see pictures of the great lines where they advance and another line. Well, that might be allright for daylight, but in the night, you just don't know where you are.

Extracts from Letters of Lieutenant

John A Raws, AWM 2DRL/0481, Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1990; KM Lyall, *Letters From an Anzac Gunner*, KM Lyall, 1990, *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 11 October 1917.

- A Are there any aspects of these experiences and reactions that surprise you? Explain your reasons.
- B Were all soldiers brave? Did all show courage? Discuss your ideas.
- C For soldiers who survived the war, what problems can you anticipate they might face after the war?
- D How can you explain the fact that most soldiers did not break, but faced the realities of war day after day?

Villers-Bretonneux

- 7 Watch the section on **Second Villers-Bretonneux** (approximately 56:00 – 1:06:00) and answer the questions that follow. Then add any further information or ideas to your **Argument Summary**. Finally, you might like to explore one of the issues raised in more detail, using the classroom resources provided.
 - 7.1 How was the fighting at Villers-Bretonneux a different type of fighting to trench warfare?
 - 7.2 We see glimpses of the life of one soldier:
 - Jack Graham
 What do we learn from his experiences about the nature of war on the Western Front? Add any ideas and information to your **Argument Summary** and your **Brainstorm Summary**.
 - 7.3 Villers-Bretonneux is the site of the Australian National War Memorial for the whole of the Western Front. Why do you think Australia wanted to have a special national memorial on the Western Front?
 - 7.4 Why do people attend the anniversary memorial services?

Exploring Further: The Australian National War Memorial

The memorial at Villers-Bretonneux contains the graves of men who died in the area, and also the names of those who do not have a known grave. Look at the following information and answer the questions that follow.

(i) *We dug on and finished amid a tornado of bursting shells. ... I was buried twice and thrown down several times – buried with the dead and the dying. The ground was covered with bodies in all stages of decay and mutilation, and I would, after struggling free from the earth, pick up a body by me to try to lift him out with me, and I find him a decayed corpse. I pulled a head off – was covered with blood. The horror was indescribable.*

AWM Letter from John Raws to his sister, 8 August 1916.

(ii) *The carnage in our little sector was [such that] I saw never a body buried in ten days. And when I came on the scene the whole place, trenches and all, were spread with dead. We had neither time nor space for burials. ... The stench of that battlefield spread for miles around. And the sights – the limbs, the mangled bodies, and stray heads. We lived in all of this for 11 days.*

(iii) *Letter from: – No. 1957 Cpl. .Mowat, 47th Battn. A.I.F., France.*

Re Pte. Ingle. He was a friend of mine, I knew him before enlisting, and all the time over here we were scarcely ever apart till he got killed at Passchendaele on 12.10.17. I saw him a few hours after he was killed and two of my pals buried him just behind the parados. There was no Cemetery any where near to bury him in, and one could not show above the parapet in day-light, so he was buried just where he fell. We put up a little cross to mark his grave. We nailed a piece of board with his No. Name and unit on to his entrenching tool handle and put that over him. This was about

a mile in front of Passchendaele and I should think some where about 2 or 3 hundred yards to the right of the railway line. The Canadians took over from us a few days later, but that spot is now in the hand of the enemy.

AWM, Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files

(iv) Date: 2 May 1917

Evidence: 2nd Lieut. L. L. Coulsen, 46th Battalion AIF states:

On the night of 10th August 1916, I was Sergeant in charge of a covering party in the front line of trench at Pozieres. At 10.30 p.m. the order to withdraw was given. During the withdrawal a shell exploded amongst three men. After withdrawal a roll call was made and Pte Drosen who had been a member of the party was missing. I immediately made a search in the company with two other men in the vicinity of the explosion and found a trunk of a body which was still warm and quivering. There was nothing on the trunk which could establish identity, but one of the three men mentioned above, Pte Clark, H., at present away from the Unit, told me at the time that he was speaking to Pte. Drosen when the shell exploded. I had the trunk buried 48 hours later. The trunk was that of a man of the build of Pte. Drosen

AWM, Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files

(v) A headstone in a cemetery in Tasmania:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
OUR DEAR MOTHER
AMELIA STEVENS
DIED JAN. 14. 1921. AGED 63 YEARS
THY WILL BE DONE
ALSO OUR DEAR BROTHER ARTHUR
KILLED IN ACTION AT PASHENDALE
FRANCE DEC 4 1917
AGED 26 YEARS.
SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE YOU ARE
SLEEPING ARTHUR, IN A GRAVE WE
MAY NEVER SEE. MAY SOME TENDER
HAND IN THAT DISTANT LAND LAY A
FLOWER ON YOUR GRAVE FOR ME.

- A Why were there so many men who had 'no known grave'?
- B Does this mean they were not buried?
- C Many graves were marked when men were buried. Why might these details have been lost?
- D Why would many Australian soldiers be in graves 'we may never see'?
- E Why were military cemeteries and memorials created on the Western Front?

Hamel, Amiens, Mont St. Quentin, Peronne and Montbrehain

- 8 Watch the sections on **Hamel** (approximately 1:06:00 – 1:11:00), **Amiens** (1:11:00 – 1:16:30), **Mont St. Quentin, Peronne** and **Montbrehain** (1:16:30 – 1:30:00), and answer the questions that follow. Then add any further information or ideas to your **Argument Summary**. Finally, you might like to explore one of the issues raised in more detail, using the classroom resources provided.
- 8.1 How significant was the role of General Monash in these battles?
- 8.2 We see glimpses of the life of several soldiers:
 - John McCubbing
 - Basil Helmore
 - Leslie Lucas
 - Lyall Howard
 - George Spencer

What do we learn from the experiences of these men about the nature of war on the Western Front? Add any ideas and information to your **Argument Summary** and your **Brainstorm Summary**.

- 8.3 The film shows that there were 800 Americans who were under Monash's control at Hamel. Earlier the filmmakers had spoken about Australians 'teaching the Americans how to fight'. Do you think this exaggeration is acceptable?
- 8.4 Why were there no Australian troops in action at the time of the Armistice?

Exploring Further: The Language of Commemoration

At the end of the war every family who suffered a war death was able to nominate a short inscription to be placed on that person's headstone. These inscriptions can tell us about the feelings, attitudes and values of the grieving families.

- A Look at these inscriptions, and decide what they tell you about the soldier, and his family's response to his death in war. See if you can find these ideas or values or attitudes in the inscriptions.

- BITTERNESS
- BRAVERY
- CIVIL DUTY
- DIVISION
- FAITH
- FAMILY
- LONELINESS
- LOSS
- LOVE
- MATESHIP
- MEMORY
- NATIONAL IDENTITY
- PATRIOTISM
- PEER PRESSURE
- PRIDE
- RELIGIOUS BELIEF
- SACRIFICE
- SELF-SACRIFICE
- SHAME

HE DIED FOR AUSTRALIA
HIS NATIVE LAND
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
Private E. A. Newton, 26th Battalion,
22.4.1917 (24) (France)

BELOVED ONLY SON
OF P. & S. O'SHANNASSY
OF HASTINGS
AN ANZAC
Private Alan O'Shannassy, 58th Battalion, 15.7.1916 (21) (France)

ALSO IN MEMORY OF HIS BROTHER
6679 PRIVATE G. W. JACOB
50TH BATTALION 25.9.1917
(DIED AT SEA FROM GALLIPOLI)
Private J.G. Jacob, 50th Battalion,
7.7.1918 (22) (France)

I GAVE MY SON
HE GAVE ALL HIS LIFE
FOR AUSTRALIA AND EMPIRE
Private I.D. Hart, 60th Battalion,
27.11.1916 (30) (France)

GAVE HIS LIFE
TO BRING IN
WOUNDED COMRADE
DEEPLY MOURNED
Private L.C. McMurdo, 31st Battalion,
26.9.1917 (17) (France)

FOR GOD, FOR KING, FOR COUNTRY
Corporal H.G. Rourke, 56th Battalion,
20.7.1916 (33) (France)

HE FOUGHT AND DIED
FOR HIS WIFE AND LITTLE SON
AND TO SAVE HIS COUNTRY
Private C.H. Dunstan, 12th Battalion,
17.4.1918 (?) (France)

A GOOD SON, A GOOD BROTHER
AND GOOD SOLDIER
Private J. Tarrant, 30th Battalion,
29.9.1918 (28) (France)

DEEPLY LOVED DEEPLY MOURNED
YOUNGEST OF
FOUR SOLDIER BROTHERS
Private W. H. Moore, 39th Battalion,
10.9.1918 (25) (France)

WITH CHRIST
WHICH IS FAR BETTER
Lieutenant H. Q. Ridley, 48th Battalion,
12.10.1917 (34) (Belgium)

HE HEARD THE DISTANT COOEE
OF HIS MATES ACROSS THE SEA
Private W.C. Durrant, 25th Battalion,
17.7.1918 (40) (France)

MY ONLY CHILD DIES
THE EMPIRE LIVES
A LONELY MOTHER MOURNS
Private W. H. Hicks, 53rd Battalion,
8.12.1916 (?) (France)

ONLY THOSE
WHO HAVE LOVED AND LOST
CAN UNDERSTAND
WAR'S BITTER COST
Gunner T. Pentney, Field Artillery,
12.9.1918 (39) (France)

REST HERE IN PEACE
YOUR PARENTS' HEARTS
ARE BROKEN
MUM AND DAD
Private H. R. Barron, 3rd Battalion,
9.4.1917 (19) (France)

LOVING DADDY OF KENNETH,
MARJORIE AND JOYCE
Lieutenant M.A. McGuire, 11th Battalion,
19.7.1918 (32) (France)

DURING THE GREAT WAR
SHE GAVE HER LIFE
FOR SICK AND WOUNDED
AT ROUEN
Louisa Riggall, Australian Red Cross,
31.8.1918 (?) (France)

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
Sister H. M. Knox, Australian Army
Nursing service, 17.2.1917 (33)
(France)

I MUST GO
I AM ASHAMED TO BE SEEN
WITHOUT A SOLDIER'S UNIFORM
Private A. K. Mallyon, 48th Battalion,
3.5.1918, (?) (France)

IT IS MEN
OF MY AGE AND SINGLE
WHO ARE EXPECTED
TO DO THEIR DUTY
Private W. H. Rickard, 28th Battalion,
4.10.1917 (25) (Belgium)

In John Laffin, *We Will Remember Them*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1995.

Statistics

Analysing the AIF statistics of deaths will help you to understand the nature of the war on the Western Front. Look at these statistics and answer the questions that follow. SEE ITEM 4 (ON PAGE 18) AND ITEM 5 (ON PAGE 19).

- A What was the most dangerous weapon of the war?
- B In what months was fighting most intense? Suggest why.
- C Are there any statistics that surprise you? Explain why.
- D How do these statistics challenge or confirm your initial hypotheses

about the nature of the war experience? Explain why.

International Statistics

SEE ITEM 6 (ON PAGE 19).

- E How significant was the Australian contribution to the war numerically?
- F How can we estimate what it was in quality?

After the War

- 1 Look at the following evidence and use it to comment on how the war affected:
 - Returned individuals
 - Families of returned soldiers
 - The economy
 - Social cohesion
 - National identity
 - Aboriginal rights
- (i) In the late 1930s:
 - 257 000 Australians being assisted by a war pension
 - 3 600 receiving service pensions
 - 1 600 men still in hostels and homes for the permanently incapacitated
 - 23 000 outpatients in repatriation hospitals each year
 - 20 000 children had received educational assistance
 - 21 000 homes built
 - 4 000 artificial limbs fitted
 - 133 000 jobs found for returned servicemen
 - 28 000 had undergone training courses
 - 40 000 placed on the landThe cost of this was just under one-fifth of all Commonwealth expenditure.

Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, pp.83-4.

- (ii) *The Wounded Man Speaks*
I left an ear in a dug-out
When a shell hit made us dance
And at Belleau Wood where mixing was good
I gave up a mitt [hand] for France ...

AUSTRALIAN BATTLE STATISTICS, WESTERN FRONT 1916															
1916	KIA	DOW	DOGP	WIA	SS	GAS	POW	TBC	DOD	DOOC	SICK	AI	SIW	TNBC	TOTAL
March	5	1	0	16	0	0	0	22	0	0	38	2	0	40	62
April	59	34	0	187	2	0	0	282	14	8	1,690	4	4	1,720	2,002
May	161	73	1	609	7	1	22	874	15	4	1,629	14	5	1,667	2,541
June	193	70	1	913	41	8	2	1,228	22	12	2,080	20	14	2,148	3,376
July	4,094	624	7	10,843	141	83	569	16,361	26	5	3,532	21	19	3,603	19,964
Aug	2,895	851	3	9,193	245	52	243	13,482	12	10	3,373	56	20	3,471	16,953
Sept	688	241	0	1,347	52	5	86	2,419	11	7	3,647	51	16	3,732	6,151
Oct	216	137	1	854	39	14	10	1,271	15	7	4,768	41	16	4,847	6,118
Nov	1,293	355	4	2,952	75	60	55	4,794	22	6	12,073	39	21	12,161	16,955
Dec	344	189	1	977	11	7	5	1,534	94	9	12,113	41	11	12,268	13,802
Total	9,948	2,575	18	27,891	613	230	992	42,267	231	68	44,943	289	126	45,657	87,924

AUSTRALIAN BATTLE STATISTICS, WESTERN FRONT 1917															
1917	KIA	DOW	DOGP	WIA	SS	GAS	POW	TBC	DOD	DOOC	SICK	AI	SIW	TNBC	TOTAL
Jan	335	163	0	1,164	24	4	16	1,706	51	10	10,261	71	14	10,407	12,113
Feb	619	295	6	2,285	19	44	60	3,328	64	13	9,546	80	13	9,716	13,044
March	652	350	0	2,370	44	28	101	3,545	37	13	8,058	76	13	8,197	11,742
April	1,890	459	3	4,218	34	69	1,829	8,502	32	7	7,420	107	17	7,583	16,085
May	1,908	531	3	6,744	136	159	61	9,542	12	5	6,280	113	17	6,427	15,969
June	1,449	424	2	5,951	77	526	22	8,451	9	26	6,310	70	18	6,433	14,884
July	535	198	1	2,183	20	292	50	3,279	8	6	7,092	80	20	7,206	10,485
Aug	335	181	3	1,325	12	97	10	1,963	13	8	6,031	38	6	6,096	8,059
Sept	2,570	666	3	9,067	255	332	25	12,918	5	7	5,906	32	15	5,965	18,883
Oct	4,411	1,233	28	12,378	245	1,675	91	20,061	11	7	8,299	36	23	8,376	28,437
Nov	323	205	34	1,032	26	1,086	12	2,718	9	10	6,142	17	15	6,193	8,911
Dec	135	85	1	431	3	150	18	823	17	19	6,401	33	15	6,485	7,308
Total	15,162	4,790	84	49,148	895	4,462	2,295	76,836	268	131	87,746	753	186	89,084	165,920

AUSTRALIAN BATTLE STATISTICS, WESTERN FRONT 1918															
1918	KIA	DOW	DOGP	WIA	SS	GAS	POW	TBC	DOD	DOOC	SICK	AI	SIW	TNBC	TOTAL
Jan	100	47	2	288	7	178	6	628	22	4	7,538	22	11	7,597	8,225
Feb	79	44	3	365	2	328	12	833	16	9	6,473	27	13	6,538	7,371
March	570	192	33	2,311	12	1,756	32	4,906	17	11	7,720	34	40	7,822	12,728
April	1,908	725	74	6,629	37	2,411	330	12,114	16	20	5,748	88	96	5,968	18,082
May	618	404	34	3,034	11	2,120	71	6,292	15	14	7,354	305	63	7,751	14,043
June	604	310	23	2,603	25	474	9	4,048	11	14	7,491	385	42	7,943	11,991
July	738	323	18	3,561	21	1,265	12	5,938	19	16	5,626	464	66	6,191	12,129
Aug	2,095	790	7	9,210	1	1,957	56	14,116	12	19	5,563	517	29	6,140	20,256
Sept	1,202	556	10	5,817	0	742	21	8,348	15	21	4,034	436	20	4,526	12,874
Oct	378	252	16	1,859	0	560	5	3,070	127	7	4,343	234	4	4,715	7,785
Nov	5	21	1	13	0	13	1	54	186	14	4,609	49	4	4,862	4,916
Dec	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	84	15	3,058	27	0	3,184	3,189
Total	8,297	3,669	221	35,690	116	11,804	555	60,352	540	164	69,557	2,588	388	73,237	133,589

GRAND TOTALS 1916-1918															
KIA	DOW	DOGP	WIA	SS	GAS	POW	TBC	DOD	DOOC	SICK	AI	SIW	TNBC	TOTAL	
33,407	11,034	323	112,729	1,624	16,496	3,842	179,455	1,039	363	202,246	3,360	700	207,978	387,433	

KIA = Killed in Action • DOW = Died of Wounds • DOGP = Died of Gas Poisoning • WIA = Wounded in Action • SS = Shell Shock • GAS = Gassed
 • POW = Prisoners of War • TBC Total Battle Casualties • DOD = Died of Disease • DOOC = Died of Other Causes • SICK = Sick
 • AI = Accidentally Injured • SIW = Self-Inflicted Wound • TNBC = Total Non-Battle Casualties

AIF CASUALTIES APRIL 1916 – MARCH 1919		
SOURCE	NO. CASUALTIES	% OF TOTAL CASUALTIES
High velocity bullets (rifle and machine-gun)	48 309	33.93
Shell fragments and shrapnel pellets	72 513	50.93
Hand bombs and grenades	2 714	1.90
Bayonets	396	0.28
Burial by shell burst, and aeroplane crash	Nil	Nil
Fire (flame-thrower)	Nil	Nil
Gas	16 822	11.82
Shell concussion ('shell shock')	1 624	1.14
Total	142 378	100.00

ITEM 5: (Figures from A.G.Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services*, Vol 2, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1940 and <<http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/~rmallett/AIFcasualties.html>>.

COUNTRIES	TOTAL MOBILISED	KILLED & DIED	WOUNDED	PRISONERS & MISSING	TOTAL CASUALTIES	CASUALTIES AS % MOBILISED
Allied Powers						
Russia	12 000 000	1 700 000	4 950 000	2 500 000	9 150 000	76.3
France	8 410 000	1 357 800	4 266 000	537 000	6 160 800	76.3
British Empire*	8 904 467	908 371	2 090 212	191 652	3 190 235	35.8
Italy	5 615 000	650 000	947 000	600 000	2 197 000	39.1
United States	4 355 000	126 000	234 300	4 500	364 800	8.2
Japan	800 000	300	907	3	1 210	0.2
Romania	750 000	335 706	120 000	80 000	535 706	71.4
Serbia	707 343	45 000	133 148	152 958	331 106	46.8
Belgium	267 000	13 716	44 686	34 659	93 061	34.9
Greece	230 000	5 000	21 000	1 000	17 000	11.7
Portugal	100 000	7 222	13 751	12 318	33 291	33.3
Montenegro	50 000	3 000	10 000	7 000	20 000	40.0
Total	42,188,810	5,152,115	12,831,004	4,121,090	22,104,209	52.3
Central Powers						
Germany	11 000 000	1 773 700	4 216 058	1 152 800	7 142 558	64.9
Austria-Hungary	7 800 000	1 200 000	3 620 000	2 200 000	7 020 000	90.0
Turkey	2 850 000	325 000	400 000	250 000	975 000	34.2
Bulgaria	1 200 000	87 500	152 390	27 029	266 919	22.2
Total	22 850 000	3 386 200	8 388 448	3 629 829	15 404 477	67.4
Grand Total	65 038 810	8 538 315	21 219 452	7 750 919	37 508 686	57.6

ITEM 6: *Includes England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Newfoundland. The figures for Australia are: 331 000 / 61 919 / 155 000 / 4 044 / 221 000 / 66.7 (AWM). <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWdeaths.htm>>

*They certainly spoiled my beauty
And my leg is a twisted curse
They busted me up like a mangled pup
But – THEY DID NOT BUST MY
NERVE*

*And no pussy-footing sissy
Shall grab my one good hand ...
Just to make himself feel grand
For I'm damned if I'll be a hero
And I ain't a helpless slob
After what I've stood, what is left is
good
And all I want is – A JOB*

Quoted in Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, pp.106-7

(iii) In 1938 a Victorian doctor reported:

A very strong impression ... that very many children present a problem in behaviour ... traceable to ... the state of tension existing in the household, usually owing to the lack of complete harmony and co-operation between the parents ... in many cases attributable to ... a nervous irritability or instability of the husband traceable to war service ... I fully realise the terrible effects of the Great War on the physical, nervous and mental condition of the soldiers ... it would be almost impossible to exaggerate the tragic effects of war on the health, happiness and prosperity of the whole community. There is no doubt that those who served and their immediate relations bore the brunt of the strain and will carry the effects to their graves.

Quoted in Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, pp.204-5

(iv) *We children of the nineteen-twenties and thirties ... were the generation whose fathers, uncles, and sometimes elder brothers were either dead, or 'returned' men ... We grew up in a wrenching dichotomy of deep pride and bewildering discomfort; we lived in a world of proud April days when we wore our fathers' medals to school, in moments of thrilling, chilling excitement*

*as the Last Post died away, the bugle silenced, and we stood with bowed heads beneath our family names on the ugly stone memorial in our little towns.
...*

We lived in a world where men were called 'Hoppy', 'Wingy', 'Shifty', 'Gunner', 'Stumpy', 'Deafy', 'Hooky', according to whether they lost a leg, an arm (or part of one), an eye, their hearing, or had a disfigured face drawn by rough surgery into a leer. ...

And we listened through the thin walls when our parents came home from visiting a 'returned' uncle in hospital: 'I can't stand it. I can't go again.' It is mother. Your father's voice comes, strangled, like hers. 'You'll be alright.' 'No, but the smell. When he coughs ... and breathes out ... it's ... oh, I'm going to be sick.' But she goes back next Sunday and the next until the day you go to school with a black rosette on your lapel, and the flag is flying half-mast for your Uncle Dick who was gassed.

You are small, and you go into a room unexpectedly, at night, because something has disturbed you when you are visiting Grandmother and she, that fierce little old lady, is kneeling on the floor, her face turned up to the family portrait taken in 1914, and you know she is praying for Jack, the beautiful boy, and Stephen, the laughing roly-poly, her sons, who were 'missing' at Lone Pine, August 1915, although she never mentions it to a living soul. (Except the night World War Two was declared and she suddenly says, 'Wouldn't it be funny if they found the boys wandering round – and they got their memories back!' And none of us look at her.)

You are sent to take soup to a family down on their luck during the depression. You hate going: once you saw the husband's leg being 'aired' when you entered without their hearing your knock, and you tried to avoid him ever after, and sometimes took the soup home and lied to your mother, 'they were not home', rather than smell that smell again. And the hook instead of a hand, the 'Stumpy' in a wheel chair;

one man even skating along on a little trolley, his hands taking the place of his absent legs; the man who shook and trembled and the other one who stuttered from 'shell shock' and regularly had to be 'put away'.

They were the flotsam and jetsam of war but no one told you. This is what the world is, was all your child's mind knew; we had no way of knowing that it was the world only for some of us. ...

Patsy Adam-Smith, *The Anzacs*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1978, pp.2-7.

(v) Letter from William Cooper, Aboriginal activist, 1933, to the Australian Government

I am father of a soldier who gave his life for his King on the battlefield and thousands of coloured men enlisted in the AIF. They will doubtless do so again though on their return last time, that is those that survived, were pushed back to the bush to resume the status of aboriginals ... the aboriginal now has no status, no rights, no land, and ... nothing to fight for but the privilege of defending the land which was taken from him by the white race without compensation or even kindness. We submit that to put us in the trenches, until we have something to fight for, is not right. My point ... is that the enlistment of [Aborigines] should be preceded by the removal of all disabilities. Then, with a country to fight for, the aborigines would not be one whit behind white men in value.

Quoted in Alick Jackomos and Derek Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes*, Victoria Press, Melbourne, 1993, pp.9-10.

(vi) Letter to the South Australian Government

30 - 11 - 37
Robe SE
Mr Sexton,

Being a half Caste fisherman of Robe I had very much pleasure of reading the paragraph in the news of 20-11-37 of aboriginals such as my self being classed Australian natives I myself

was born in the year 1870 & at the age of 45 years 1915 I enlisted to serve King & Country I served 3 years & was wounded and gassed & invalided home in [1918].

Now I humbly plead to you & others who take such interest in us to give me my right to be classed as an ordinary Australian citizen, with Australian rights. Foreners such as Italians ect. can live here for a certain term & be naturalized & have Australian rights: so why can't I who have been classed good enough to fight for my King and Country have these same privilages instead of being classed as just an ordinary Abo.

In Bill Gammage and Peter Spearritt (eds), *Australians 1938*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Sydney, 1987, p.88.

Coming to conclusions

1 You can now make your own judgement about the arguments being put forward in *Winning World War 1: The Western Front Diaries*. Complete your notes in

- the **Argument Summary** table, and formulate your conclusion.
- 2 The film uses a variety of elements to help you understand and empathise with the nature of the war experience. Comment on how each of these elements contributes to the overall impression created in the film:
- archival film
 - archival photographs
 - Narrative
 - Music
 - Editing
 - Interviews with family members
 - Western Front location interviews and footage
- 3 Do you believe that the Western Front will continue to grow in Australians' consciousness? Explain your reasons.
- 4 Do you think it will replace Gallipoli as our focus of national commemoration? Explain your reasons.
- 5 How good do you think the film is in telling the story of the Australian experience of the Western Front? What would you now say

were its main strengths and the main weaknesses?

OTHER RESOURCES

- Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1990.
- John Laffin, *Western Front 1916-1917: The Price of Honour*, Time-Life Books in association with John Ferguson, Sydney, 1988.
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- Jonathan King, *The Western Front Diaries*, Simon and Shuster Australia, Sydney, 2008.
- Peter Pederson, *The Anzacs. Gallipoli to the Western Front*, Penguin, Melbourne, 2007.
- Richard Pelvin, *Anzac*, Hardie Grant Books, Melbourne, 2008.
- Department of Veterans' Affairs, *Australians on the Western Front*, 2006.

<http://www.anzacday.org.au>
<http://www.diggerhistory.info>



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