RSL EDUCATION

WORLD WAR I RESEARCH GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The research project helps you research a person who served in the Navy, Air Force or Army.

Many towns and suburbs in Queensland feature a cenotaph or war memorial. These are monuments that honour local people who risked their lives in places where there were wars. You can research the military history of people whose names appear on a memorial or cenotaph.

First, you need to choose a person to research. Look at the names on the memorial. You might choose someone who has the same name as you or fought in a particular war. If you're not sure who to choose, it is a good idea to select someone who has an uncommon name. Note down all the information you can about the person.

To research your 'subject', you will need a computer or mobile device that lets you use the internet. It is also a good idea to ask your teacher to contact your local RSL Queensland Sub Branch. There are many RSL Queensland members who served in the Defence Forces and would like to help you.

Related content:

- www.rsleducation.com.au/ Themes/Commemoration/ years-3---6/World-War-I
- RSL_Edu_2.5_LearningGuide.pdf
- www.awm.gov.au
- www.naa.gov.au
- www.cwgc.org

ONLINE RESEARCH 1:

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

1. Go to the website of the Australian War Memorial www.awm.gov.au
2. On the homepage, select Search.
3. Enter the full name of the person you are researching in the Search field.
4. Select the People box underneath the Search field (a tick will appear).
5. Select Advanced Search.
6. You are likely to see several responses for your search. If you look carefully, you will see that some of them are for the same person (check the Service Numbers … some might be the same).
7. If you're not sure which is the correct entry, select the person's name and review the record. Does it match the details you recorded at the memorial?

Some of the details you might be able to find about your subject are:

- Service number
- Birth date and place of birth
- The highest rank achieved e.g. Private, Sergeant, Sapper
- The unit in which your subject served
- When your subject embarked on a ship to travel overseas.

You might be lucky enough to find a picture of your subject.

Subjects who did not survive their service should have a 'Roll of Honour', which will supply many more details.

You can also find information about the places where your subject served.

1. Select the unit e.g. 49th Australian Infantry Battalion, 14th Australian Field Ambulance, 1st No. 457 Squadron, HMAS Australia
2. Look for Places, Events and Battle Honours. These are the places where your subject might have served.

Keep exploring the record. You might information about any medals, awards or honours your subject received.

ONLINE RESEARCH 2:

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

The National Archives of Australia maintains documents about people who served their country in war. Their records are very helpful.

1. Go to the website of the National Archives of Australia www.naa.gov.au

2. Enter the full name of the person you are researching in the Search field.

3. Select the magnifying glass (the Search icon).

4. Look through the records that are returned. Can you find one that might be your subject?

5. When you think you've found your subject look at the Digitised Item column (third from the end). Is there an If so, select it.

6. You should be able to see a series of documents relating to your subject, beginning with the 'Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad'.

7. Use the next button to find more documents e.g. Field Service, Medical Examination record, Casualty Form. These are fascinating documents that tell you a great deal about your subject. Take your time and read them carefully.

ONLINE RESEARCH 3:

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

If the person you are researching is no longer alive, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission might have information about where your subject is buried or commemorated.

1. Go to the website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission
    www.cwgc.org
2. Enter the full name of the person you are researching in the Search field.
3. In the drop-down menu, select War Dead Records.
4. You can filter your returns by checking the boxes under Refine Results. For example, you can select First World War, Australian, Army. This will reduce the number of returns and help you find your subject more easily.
5. Look through the records that are returned. Can you find one that might be your subject?
6. When you think you've found your subject, select the arrow at the end of the row.
7. You should be able to see information about your subject. Scroll down to see where your subject might be buried or commemorated.
8. You can view details about the cemetery, grave registration and details on the headstone.

RSL QUEENSLAND SUB BRANCH

By now, you should have gained some information about the person whose name you found on your local cenotaph or memorial. Again, speak to your teacher about contacting your local RSL Queensland Sub Branch. You can discuss your subject with RSL Queensland members and find out whether any of their family members take part in the ANZAC Day March.