

World War II: The Australian Experience

Teacher's Notes

Overview

In this activity series, students will learn some of the experiences of Australians during World War II. This includes major events, battles and sieges as well as the changing role of women. This activity series includes the following:

Background Information	Research: Events, Sieges and Battles	Research: The Role of Women in World War II	Extension Activities
Supplementary Activities			

Curriculum Alignment

Learning content and activities align with the Australian Curriculum.

Subject: History
Depth Study: World War II (1939-1945)

Cross Curriculum Priority

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures	✓	Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia
Sustainability		

General Capabilities

✓ Literacy	✓ Personal and Social Capability
Numeracy	Ethical Understanding
✓ ICT Capability	Intercultural Understanding
✓ Critical and Creative Thinking	



Historical Knowledge and Understanding		Historical Skills	
ACDSEH024	Overview of the causes and course of World War II	ACHHS186	Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods
ACDSEH108	Experiences of Australians during World War II (such as Prisoners of War (POWs), the Battle of Britain, Kokoda, the Fall of Singapore)	ACHHS188	Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
ACDSEH109	The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front, including the changing roles of women	ACHHS189	Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources

Learning Goals

Students will learn about:

- The events, sieges and battles that Australians were a part of during World War II.
- The experiences of Australians during World War II including the different conditions experienced by Australians.
- The differences of experiences of Australians on the European Front and the Pacific Front
- The changing role of women in World War II with a focus on employment.
- The introduction of women into Defence Force organisations.

Resources

Teachers and students will require the following resources to complete the activities:

- Computer or device with internet connection for research
- Projector, TV, or Smartboard for the display of WWII the Australian Experience narrated photo gallery.
- Students can complete the handouts digitally on their devices or the student handouts can be printed.

Background Information

The European Front

The end of World War I with the signing of the Versailles Treaty brought limited stability to the continent. Germany was suffering from economic and political instability as well as resentment towards the allied powers and the harsh terms imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty. This combination of uncertainty, instability and resentment fuelled the rise of Adolf Hitler in German politics who became the Fuhrer or supreme leader in 1934. Hitler was of the firm belief that war was the only way to gain enough space for the German race to expand and gain superiority.



By the end of August in 1939, Germany occupied Austria, Lithuania, and Czechoslovakia. On September 1st, 1939 Germany invaded Poland from the West which resulted in France and Britain declaring war on Germany and the official commencement of World War II in Europe. Australia officially entered the war on September 3rd, 1939 with Australian Defence Force units deployed from 1940. Germany was quick to advance across Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Northern Africa. In June 1941, Germany declared war on the Soviet Union.

The Pacific Front

In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, Japan had been gradually increasing its imperial empire. During the 1930's, Japan was focused on expanding its empire and influence throughout Asia and the Pacific region which led to the formation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. This was an imperialistic concept which was distributed to Asian populations who were under western colonial oppression. By 1939, Japanese occupation included: Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria (North China) and the border into the Soviet Union, Inner Mongolia, Parts of Eastern China near the Yellow Sea, the Island of Hainan and Hong Kong.

With Great Britain and France occupied with the European War, the Japanese saw an opportunity to advance into areas of Asia that were under colonial rule by European powers. In 1941, Japan advanced into Indo China which provoked the United States to freeze overseas assets held by as well as to impose sanctions regarding the distribution of oil and oil products to Japan.



Australian Soldiers hoisting the flag at Kokoda

The Pacific Front- Continued

Japan on the quest to expand their empire and to gain greater access to resources such as oil, developed a plan for war with the United States. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour a US Naval base on the Island of Oahu, Hawaii. This surprise aerial attack decimated the US Navy's Pacific Fleet and forced the entry of the United States into World War II. With the Japanese also attacking Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand on the same day, Australia declared war on Japan on 9th December 1941.

Research: Events, Sieges and Battles

Setting the Scene

Australians were involved in two fronts throughout World War II. The European front and the threat that was closer to home, the Pacific. The experiences of Australians fighting on these fronts was extremely diverse as Australians fought in vastly different locations against different enemies. Australia faced the possibility of being invaded by Japanese forces with Darwin being bombed several times and midget submarines found in Sydney Harbour. Australians were conscripted into active service for the first time in history and were only allowed to serve in Australia or Australian territories which at the time included Papua New Guinea.

[Go to online resource](#)



Introduction and Engagement

Watch Pictures of significant events provide insights into the experience of the people and events of those times. Watch the video *World War II: The Australian Experience* and then answer the following questions.

After viewing and discussing the stimulus with the group, ask the students to answer the following questions. These questions could be answered as a class, in small groups or individually.

Q1 What events, sieges, battles, and other concepts does the video highlight?

1. Fall of Singapore	6. Bougainville, New Guinea, Borneo, and New Britain
2. Prisoner's of War- Thai Burma Railway	7. Bombing of Darwin
3. Tobruk	8. Changing role of women
4. Kokoda	9. Battle of Britain
5. Allied Bombing of Germany	10. Crete

Q2 Australians served on both the European and Pacific Fronts. Using the images and narration from the video, how do you think the experiences of Australians on the European Front would be different to those on the Pacific Front?

Student answers should draw on specifics identified in the narration and make reasonable comparisons and conclusions. Answers could focus on the following:

- *The geographical locations e.g. Tobruk was clearly fought in a desert like trench environment and Kokoda was fought in a dense mountainous rainforest.*
- *POW's from the pacific front worked on a railway and endured starvation, disease, and brutality and could be compared to the image of soldier's captured on the island of Crete.*
- *Refer to the type of equipment the soldier's have in terms of Soldier's on the European Front and those on the Pacific Front.*
- *Refer to the types of comforts available to those fighting in the Battle of Britain as opposed to those in the Pacific.*

Australians contributed to many significant Events, Battles and Sieges throughout World War II on both the European and Pacific Fronts including:

Research

- Battle of Britain
- Siege of Tobruk
- Battle of Crete
- Fall of Singapore
- Bombing of Darwin
- Thai Burma Railway
- Kokoda
- Bougainville and New Britain
- Allied Bombing of Germany

Research each of these events using the templates provided below and think about the diversity of the Australian experience during World War II. Events highlighted in Green occurred on the European Front. Events highlighted in Yellow occurred on the Pacific Front.



Depending on your time allocation for this activity, this activity could be completed in groups where each group researches an event and presents their findings to the class.



This activity could be done throughout your unit. Students could complete the research for each event, battle, or siege when it is relevant to your learning sequence. Additionally, each one could be completed as a homework activity.

Battle of Britain

When was the Battle of Britain?

10th July to 31st October 1940

Who fought in the Battle of Britain?

Royal Air Force, Britain

*Australians enlisted in the Royal Air Force, Britain
Germany*

Where was the Battle of Britain fought?

Answers to include:

- *Fought in British Air Space*
- *Over southern and South-western England*
- *Great Britain*
- *English Channel*
- *Germany*

How was the Battle of Britain Fought?

Answers to include:

- *The Battle of Britain was fought in the air with German Bombers, German Fighter planes and British fighter planes.*
- *Primarily fought in the air, it included the bombing of British air fields, coastal defences, ports, Radar stations and air fighter production sites as well targeting planes in the air.*

Why did the Battle of Britain occur and what was its significance?

Answers to include:

- *Germany wanted control over the English Channel in preparation to invade Britain*
- *Battle of Britain was the turning point in World War II and was Germany's first loss of the war.*
- *The Battle prevented Germany from gaining control of the English Channel.*

**What would an Australian have experienced in the Battle of Britain?
(include geographical considerations in your answer).**

Answers could include:

- *At least 10 Australian pilots died*
- *Risk of being shot down on land and sea*
- *Risk of air raids and possible bombing on land and sea*
- *Watching other pilots get shot down*



- *Would have had access to ample food and supplies while on base*
- *Would have had access to letters from home and other communications*
- *Loss of life- watching others getting shot down*
- *Risk of being recorded as Missing in Action or Killed in Action if shot down*

Siege of Tobruk

When was the Siege of Tobruk?

10th April 1941- 10th December 1941

Who fought in the Siege of Tobruk?

Australians
British
Germans
Italians

Where was the Siege of Tobruk and why is this location significant?

Answers to include:

- *Tobruk is in Eastern Libya*
- *Tobruk was the only deep-water port located in Eastern Libya and was essential for a German advance into Alexandria and Suez*
- *Tobruk is surrounded by Desert*

How was the Siege of Tobruk fought?

Answers to include:

- *British Tanks, Artillery*
- *German Panzers*
- *Air Bombardment*
- *Infantry*
- *Built as a fortress there was no cover around the perimeter due to it's flat plateau*
- *Minefields*

Why did the Siege of Tobruk occur and what is its significance?

Answers to include:

- *Important for the German advance into Northern Egypt and the allies defence of Egypt. It would force the Germans to bring their supplies from the port of Tripoli across 1500km of desert which would divert troops from their advance.*



What would an Australian have experienced in the Siege of Tobruk? (include geographical considerations in your answer).

Answers could include:

- Australians who fought at Tobruk were nicknamed 'The Rats of Tobruk'.
- Constantly under siege and under constant artillery and air bombardment
- Were in desert like conditions including stifling heat, sand, rocks and dirt.
- Supplies of Food and Water decreased throughout the siege
- Troops were plagued by flies, fleas, and illness.
- Lived in caves and trenches

Battle of Crete

When was the Battle of Crete?

20th May 1941- 1st June 1941

Who fought in the Battle of Crete?

- *Allies: Australia, Britain, New Zealand, and Greece*
- *Axis: German and Italy*

Where was the Battle of Crete and why is this location significant?

Answers to include:

- *Occurred on the Greek island of Crete in the Mediterranean*
- *After the conquest of Greece, it was the next step for Germany*
- *British planes were operating out of Crete's airfields*

How was the Battle of Crete fought?

Answers to include:

- *German Paratroopers and Glider-borne infantry*
- *Airborne invasion by Germans*
- *Bombing*
- *Infantry*

Why did the Battle of Crete occur?

Answers to include:

- *British planes were operating out of Crete's airfields and the German's feared the British could bomb the oilfields in Romania which was Germany's main source of oil and petrol.*



The Allies lost the Battle of Crete and thousands were forced to surrender to the Germans. What would conditions have been like for these Australians as Prisoners of War?

Answers to include:

- *At first prisoners were held in a transit camp where conditions were overcrowded, poor hygiene facilities and food shortages*
- *Officers were sent to camps in Germany and other personnel went to camps in Austria and Yugoslavia*
- *Soldiers often felt ashamed, depressed, and overwhelmed at being captured*
- *POW's were often treated as being inferior to the Germans*
- *Rations were small.*
- *Non-officers often had to work at heavy labour*

Fall of Singapore

When was the Fall of Singapore?

7th February 1942 – 15th February 1942

Who fought in the Fall of Singapore?

*British
Australia
Japan*

Where did the Fall of Singapore take place and what geographical features were important?

Answers could include:

- *Fall of Singapore took place on Singapore Island which is located between Malaysia and Indonesia*
- *Singapore Island was strategically located in the Asia/Pacific Region*
- *As an Island the only retreat is to the sea*
- *Singapore had one of the largest established harbours in the Asia/Pacific region*

How did the Fall of Singapore occur?

Answers could include:

- *Majority of the British defences pointed out to sea as it was thought that the Japanese would attack from the sea. British forces did not believe that the island could be attacked any other way and thought it was unlikely that the Japanese would advance through the Jungle and Mangrove swamps between the Malay Peninsula and Singapore.*
- *Air of complacency around the security and defences of Singapore*
- *Naval Ships and the RAAF were ordered to leave Singapore prior to the attack at the end of January and Early February*
- *Japanese troops moved through the Malaya Peninsula towards Singapore. British troops withdrew from Malaya and formed a 70-mile defensive line on the shore of Singapore. The line was spread too thin to prevent the Japanese advance. The Japanese advanced through the Mangroves and Jungle between the Malay Peninsula and Singapore on the 8th February by the 10th February Japan occupied most of North-west Singapore.*



Fall of Singapore

Why was the Fall of Singapore significant?

- One of the greatest military defeats of the British Empire
- The British Empire underestimated the Japanese force and the Fall of Singapore was a sign of the strength of the Japanese. British believed that the Japanese were only capable of fighting the militarily inferior Chinese.
- Singapore was vital in terms of its strategic location in the Asia and Pacific region as well as its established harbour and port

What would an Australian have experienced during and after the Fall of Singapore?

Answers could include:

- Australians felt that Singapore was not prepared, and the Japanese threat was not taken seriously
- Men were battle weary from fighting in Malaya and many were sick and injured
- Last minute reinforcements were untrained and ill equipped for battle
- Australians and other allied servicemen were murdered during the initial Japanese advance
- Fierce fighting from the Japanese who were taking no prisoners at the start of the battle
- Treated brutally when captured and became Prisoners of War
- Patients at the military hospital were murdered
- 65 Australian Army nurses were told to evacuate but only 24 would return home.
- Hospitals were crowded
- Many men were separated from their units, deserted, and wandered around aimlessly

Bombing of Darwin

When was the Bombing of Darwin?

First Bombing: 19th February 1942
Darwin was bombed 64 times with the last raid on November 1943

Who was involved in the Bombing of Darwin?

Australia
United States
Japan

How did the first bombing of Darwin occur?

Answer could include:

- Four Japanese air craft carriers launched 188 aircraft on the morning of 19th February. The aircraft consisted of light bombers, dive bombers and fighters.
- Japanese bombers attacked Darwin harbour for 30 minutes sinking and damaging multiple vessels.
- Japanese bombers also bombed the civil airfield.
- The second raid occurred 2 hours later and consisted of land-based bombers. These bombers attacked the RAAF base.
- Small dive bombers also attacked two ships off the islands that afternoon.

What were some of the Allied losses from the bombing of Darwin?

Answers to include reports of the following:

- Deaths of over 200 people
- Approximately 300-400 wounded
- Approx. 20 military aircraft destroyed
- Approx. 8 ships in the harbour were sunk
- Majority of Civil and Military facilities destroyed



Bombing of Darwin

Why was the bombing of Darwin significant?

Answers could include:

- It was the largest single attack by a foreign power on Australia
- Loss of most of the cargo ships that were supplying the war effort in Java.
- Created widespread fear of a Japanese invasion of Australia
- Signalled the first attack on Australia by Japan
- Darwin had been significant in the South Pacific Air Ferry route which was designed to avoid the Japanese and allowed bomber reinforcement for the Philippines

What would an Australian have experienced during the bombing of Darwin?

Answers could include:

- Fear of Japanese Invasion
- Widespread damage of buildings and infrastructure
- Looting and disorder
- Deaths of both civilians and personnel were recorded
- Hundreds wounded in the raid
- Loss of essential services such as water and electricity

Thai Burma Railway- Australian Prisoners of War

When was the Thai Burma Railway built?

Between 1942- 1943

Who were Prisoners of War and who were their captors?

POWs: Australians, British, New Zealand
Captors: Japanese

Where was the Thai Burma Railway built?

Answers could include:

- The Thai Burma Railway was built from Ban Pong, Thailand to Thanbyuzayat, Burma where it would link up with existing railways some of which were built by the British Empire.
- It was built as a supply route for Japanese forces in Burma.
- The Thai Burma Railway spanned 415km.

How were the Prisoners of War treated who worked on the Thai Burma Railway?

Answers could include:

- Lived in open sided huts built from bamboo poles and thatched roofs which housed 200 men giving each man a two-foot wide space to live and sleep. There was no floor, just dirt.
- POW's suffered maltreatment, physical abuse, sickness, and starvation
- Unsanitary living conditions
- Allied Air Raids
- Lack or no Medical Attention
- Bottom of the Social System
- Diseases prisoners contracted included: Malaria, Cholera, Dysentery and Tropical Ulcers.
- Severe weight loss
- Many allied POW's died during construction of the Railway



- *Subjected to forced labour*

Why is the Thai Burma Railway significant to World War II?

Answers could include:

- *Between 180,000 to 250,000 Allied prisoners of war worked on the railway and approximately 102,000 died.*
- *The Railway once completed supplied troops, weapons and other supplies for the Burma Campaign of World War II.*
- *Many notable engineering feats were built as part of the railway including the Bridge over the River Kwai and Hellfire Pass.*

What was the other name given to the Thai Burma Railway and why do you think this was?

Answers should include:

- *The Death Railway- due to the number of deaths that occurred during its construction*
- *Siam-Burma Railway*
- *Burma Railway*

Kokoda Track Campaign

When was the Kokoda Track Campaign?

21st July 1942 – 16th November 1942

Who fought in the Kokoda Track Campaign?

*Australia
PNG Locals
United States
Japan*

Where was the Kokoda Track Campaign and why is this location significant?

Answers to include:

- *Papua New Guinea, a territory of Australia at the time of WWII.*
- *The Village of Kokoda was situated in a plateau of dense mountainous forest and was the site of a government station, rubber plantation and air strip.*
- *The Kokoda Track was a foot track that runs southwest from Kokoda through the Owen Stanley Range towards Port Moresby which would be significant to invade Australia.*
- *First time where Australia's security was directly threatened*

How was the Kokoda Track Campaign fought?

Answers to include:

- *Ambushes*
- *Infantry*
- *Guerrilla Warfare*
- *Jungle Warfare*
- *Artillery and Machine Guns*
- *Bombing missions of Rabaul*



Kokoda Track Campaign

Why did the Kokoda Track Campaign occur?

Answers to include:

- *The Japanese believed there was a road from Kokoda to Port Moresby and believed they could do an overland advance from the North coast town of Buna to Port Moresby directly.*

What would an Australian have experienced on the Kokoda Track Campaign?

(include geographical considerations in your answer).

- *Enemy were known to be barbaric with torture, rape and cannibalism features of the Kokoda battle.*
- *Australians became allies with the local people now known as Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels who would carry wounded soldier's to safety and ferried supplies.*
- *Japanese tortured and raped locals which had a negative effect on the mental health of Australians*
- *Australians fought in dense jungle where living conditions were extremely poor.*
- *Captured Australian soldiers were mutilated, tortured, and used for bayonet practice*
- *A lot of men became severely ill with diseases such as dysentery, infected cuts, scrapes and combat wounds which became ulcers. More men died from illness than anything else.*
- *Unfamiliarity with the difficult terrain which was not only mountainous with dense jungle but also featured swamps.*
- *Orders provided to troops were often unrealistic due to the terrain.*

Bougainville and New Britain Campaigns

When did the Bougainville and New Britain Campaigns occur?

New Britain: 15th December 1943- 21st August 1945

Bougainville: 1st November 1943- 21st August 1945

Who fought in the Bougainville and New Britain Campaigns?

Australia

New Zealand

United States

Fiji

Japan

Where were the Bougainville and New Britain Campaigns and why is this location significant?

Answers to include:

- *Bougainville and New Britain are islands located off the East coast of Papua New Guinea and North West of the Solomon Islands.*
- *The Japanese had captured Rabaul, the capital of New Britain in 1942 to prevent the Allies from attacking the Japanese base at Truk in the Central Pacific. Japanese also desired this location to support potential further Japanese offensives in the region.*



How were the Bougainville and New Britain Campaigns fought?

Answers to include:

- Tanks
- Infantry
- Air Attacks
- Mortars, Machine guns and pill boxes
- Jungle Warfare

Why did the Bougainville and New Britain Campaigns occur?

Answers to include:

- New Britain became the headquarters of the Eighth Area Army of Japan
- Allies had a strong focus on capturing or neutralising the Japanese threat at Rabaul in New Britain

What would an Australian have experienced as part of the Bougainville and New Britain Campaigns? (include geographical considerations in your answer).

Answers to include:

- Poor living conditions
- Heavy fighting
- Illness
- In some cases, lack of supplies

Allied Bombing of Germany

When did the Allied Bombing of Germany occur?

1942-1945

Who participated in the Allied Bombing of Germany?

Royal Air Force, Britain
 Australians enlisted in the Royal Air Force, Britain
 United States
 Germany

Where did the Allied Bombing of Germany take place and what was the significance of some of the bombing locations?

Answers to include:

- Significant cities in Germany such as Dresden and Berlin
- Locations of military, economic and political significance including factories.
- Whole areas/towns were also subjected to bombing to destabilise the German war economy and build a lack of confidence in the Nazi regime

How did the Allied Bombing of Germany occur?

Answers could include:

- RAF (British) bombed Germany at night
- USAAF bombed Germany during the day



Why were the allies able to bomb Germany?

Answers could include:

- The RAF used the cover of darkness and changed their bombing strategy to be more area specific as opposed to direct targets
- The USAAF developed and used long-range fighters to provide protection for their bombers
- Introduction of electronic navigation and targeting aids meant that the accuracy of Bomber Command's attacks progressively increased in accuracy.

What would an Australian have experienced as part of the Allied Bombing of Germany?

Answers could include:

- Fear of being shot down
- Shot down behind enemy lines and taken Prisoner of War.
- Continued to be attacked by German fighters in the air

Activity Closure

In closing, discuss the different experiences Australians would have experienced on the Pacific and European Fronts. During this class discussion ask your students why they think the experiences of Australians was so different. Students should also consider the contribution Australians made to war effort in World War II.

Research: The Role of Women in WWII

Setting the Scene

[Go to online resource](#)

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Australian women had limited employment opportunities. Employment opportunities that were available depended on your social class or your socioeconomic status. Middle-class women were often restricted to occupations such as nursing or teaching as they were deemed appropriate. Working-class women, however, often found employment in sales, factories as well as domestic service and continued to work after they were married for financial reasons.

Many Australian men invoked their ANZAC spirit and enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force which created a gap in the Australian workforce. By 1941, more men were required than ever to fight against the two fronts, the one in Europe and the one in the Pacific. While men left their roles and went off to war, women were called up to join the workforce in roles that traditionally were not considered acceptable in society.

With Australians fighting wars on two fronts, the one in Europe and the one in Pacific placing strain on the Defence Force, organisations were formed allowing women to enlist in certain roles pertaining to the defence of Australia. Due to the restrictions on female occupations and employment conditions at the time, women's organisations were set up within the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Research Research the role of Women in World War II and then answer the following questions.

Q1 What was the role of women prior to World War II?



Answers should include the following:

- Employment opportunities were extremely limited and depended on your socioeconomic class/status
- Middle-class women were restricted mainly to training as nurses and teachers
- Working-class women found employment in domestic service (cleaning, cooking etc), factory work or sales. They also continued their jobs when they married as they could not afford to not work
- Depending on your class, once you were married you were expected to be in the home.

Q2 How were women recruited into work and the Defence Force organisations?

Answers should include the following:

- Newsreels
- Movies
- Posters
- All advertising materials showed pictures of women happily completing tasks in factories, farms etc.

Q3 Once women were recruited, what were some of the employment conditions?

Answers should include the following:

- Paid less than men for the same work
- Expected to leave their job and return to 'home duties' post-war.
- Must be available to work full-time for the full duration of the war

Q4 List at least 5 of the women's organisations/ auxiliaries that became a part of the Defence Force.

Answers should include the following:

- Royal Australian Naval Nursing Service (RANNS)
- Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS)
- Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS)
- Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAF)
- Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS)
- Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS)
- Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS)



Q5 What are 2 women's organisations that were not a part of the Defence Force?

Answers should include the following:

- Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA)
- Women's Emergency Signalling Corps (WESC)
- Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment
- Entertainment groups
- Women's Australian National Services (WANS)
- Women's Air Training Corps (WATC)
- National Emergency Services (NES)
- Red Cross Letters Association
- Australian Comforts Fund

Q6 What benefits did women who worked for the Australian Women's Land Army not receive compared to those in the Australian Women's Army Service?

Answers should include the following:

- AWLA members did not receive medals or commendations as it was not considered military service
- Not entitled to pensions
- Not entitled to deferred pay or bonuses

Q7 What were some of the eligibility criteria and conditions for employment or enlistment?

Answers should include the following:

- Expected to leave employment or enlistment and return to 'home duties' post-war
- Were often paid less than men for the same work
- Were restricted to certain roles and responsibilities
- Eligibility criteria for enlistment included some of the following:
 - Satisfactory medical examination and Xray
 - Aged between 18 and 40 (extended to 50 under special circumstances)
 - Ability to commit to full time military service for the duration of the war
 - Security check and clearance by Manpower authority
 - Character testimonials signed by a clergyman or municipal councillor

Q8 How many women enlisted in the Army, Navy and Air Force and how did they compare to the numbers of men that served?

Answers should include the following:

- More than 66,000 women enlisted
- Women comprised of just under 7% of the 1 million Australians who served during WWII.

Q9 What was the lasting impact in terms of the changing roles of women post WWII?



Answers could include the following:

- Women started to be seen as equally capable as men in providing essential and technical services
- Opened more employment opportunities for women
- Some women organisations were combined into the greater Defence Force organisations

Q10 Throughout World War II, there were several women’s organisations that were formed both in the civilian and defence sectors. Match the organisation with its relevant civilian or defence affiliation.

Answers include:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Royal Australian Naval Nursing Service | Navy |
| 2. Australian Women's Army Service | Army |
| 3. Australian Army Nursing Service | Army |
| 4. Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force | Air Force |
| 5. Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service | Air Force |
| 6. Australian Army Medical Women's Service | Army |
| 7. Women's Royal Australian Naval Service | Navy |
| 8. Women's Emergency Signaling Corps | Civilian |
| 9. Australian Women's Land Army | Civilian |
| 10. Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment | Civilian |
| 11. Women's Australian National Services | Civilian |
| 12. National Emergency Services | Civilian |

Activity Closure

At the completion of the research activity, discuss how the roles of women in World War II have influenced today’s society and what assumptions could be made about the perceptions of women in World War II.



Extension Activities

Activity 1: Influential Women of World War II

There were several influential women who played significant roles at home and overseas during World War II. Some of these influential women include:

- Colonel Sybil Howy Irving
- Nancy Grace Augusta Wake
- Vivian Bullwinkel
- Clare Grant Stevenson
- Florence Violet McKenzie

Using their devices, ask students to research one of these women and create a profile outlining their contribution to World War II. This could include their background prior to the war, their journey throughout the war as well as significant achievements.

Supplementary Activities

Contact your local RSL Sub Branch and organise a visit from a veteran. A veteran visiting the classroom can provide a different perspective to events and key topics.

