

THE IMPACT OF WWI ON AUSTRALIA

Background Information

World War I considerably changed the future of Australia which led the country to become a member of the League of Nations. When war was declared in 1914, many Australian's rushed to enlist but as the war continued and the list of casualties grew, the list of men wanting to enlist declined. The government called two referendums on conscription, but they were both defeated. By the end of the war, more than 60,000 Australian soldiers had been killed. This provided Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes the leverage required to play an active role in the talks that resulted in the treaty of Versailles. This was a significant milestone and achievement for Australia's foreign policy.



Photo credit: Australian War Memorial

At home, the Australian Government interned thousands of people who had been born in enemy countries like Germany or those who were Australian-born descendants of migrants from these countries. As soldiers began returning from the battlefields, many of them with terrible injuries, organisations like RSL were founded to provide support and camaraderie.

To the historian, images and documents collected during a war are important sources of evidence. Using the images and other supporting documents which can be accessed online, complete the following activities



ANALYSE AND RESEARCH: CHARLES BEAN AND CENSORSHIP

Setting the Scene

The image to the right, depicts Charles Bean, an official war correspondent in the trenches during World War I. Bean was a journalist and not a professional historian. In September 1914, the Australian Journalists Association chose him to become Australia's official war correspondent. He travelled to Egypt with Australian troops and landed on the Gallipoli peninsula on 25th April 1915. Despite suffering a wounded leg at Gallipoli, Bean travelled with Australian troops to the western front where he continued to work in the capacity of official war correspondent.



Right: Charles Bean walking in the muddy trenches of the western front during WWI

Below Left: A soldier carries a wounded medical officer in Ypres, 1917

Below Right: Soldiers walking through the battlefield in Ypres, WWI.

Photo credit: Australian War Memorial



Analyse and compare the images of Charles Bean and the Soldiers at Ypres and then answer the following questions.

Q1 Based on the image and the images of soldiers at Ypres, do you think Bean experienced the same conditions as the soldiers? Why/ Why not?

Q2 Do you think this image of Charles Bean would enhance or strengthen Bean's credibility as a source? Why/ why not?



Google 'Charles Bean Speech' and find the transcript located on the ANZAC Portal. This speech was delivered throughout Australian Schools at the presentation of the Peace Souvenir Medals after World War I. Read the speech and the quote from Ernest Hemingway then answer the following questions.

“

The last [war]... was the most colossal, murderous, mismanaged butchery that has ever taken place on Earth. Any writer who said otherwise lied. So, the writers either wrote propaganda, shut up or fought.

”

Q3 After reading a sample of Bean's work and the quote from Ernest Hemingway, do you feel that Bean had to censor his writing to prevent Australians learning about the horrors experienced by men in the field? Why/ why not?

Q4 Do you think that the work of Charles Bean is credible? Why/why not?





Research Censorship during WWI and investigate the effect censorship has had on Australian Society post WWI.

Q5 Do you think that censorship would have impacted the general population's perceptions of what veteran's experienced on the battlefields of WWI? If so, list some possible impacts that this may have had to Australian society.

Q6 What impact do you think censorship and the work of journalists such as Charles Bean has had on Australian society post World War I?

Q7 Do you think that Charles Bean should be considered a significant individual in the period 1918-1949? Why/ Why not?



RESEARCH: PROPAGANDA, MARKETING AND CONSCRIPTION

Setting the Scene

The number of men volunteering to enlist at the beginning of the war was so great that many were turned away. By 1916, however, the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) needed reinforcements and the number of men enlisting had decreased significantly.

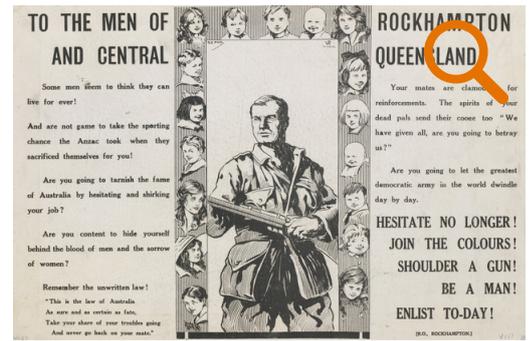
At the time, military training had been compulsory since 1911 but it did not allow for compulsory overseas service. Two plebiscites aimed at introducing conscription for overseas service were held in 1916 and 1917. The 1917 plebiscite was rephrased so that only single men, widowers and divorcees without dependents between the ages of 20 and 44yrs would be conscripted. Both plebiscites were defeated with the defeat of the second closing the issue for the remainder of the war. With the plebiscites being defeated, the government was relying on posters and marketing campaigns to boost the dwindling enlistment numbers.

Right: Black and white Australian Commonwealth Military Forces First World War enlistment poster issued by the Recruiting Officer, Rockhampton, Qld.

Below Left: An Australian First World War recruitment poster issued by the Win the War League.

Below Right: A recruitment poster issued by the Queensland Recruiting Committee.

Photo credit: Australian War Memorial



Research the conscription debate during World War I and then answer the following questions.

Q1 Based on the call to enlist posters, which poster do you think would have been the most effective and why?



Q2 Do you think that the censorship of information from the Western Front increased as a result of the enlistment numbers? Why/ why not?

Q3 The topic of conscription is fiercely debated from both sides due to political and socioeconomic factors. Conscription was This topic continues to be debated till this day. List 5 reasons for and against conscription. The reasons should also reflect the time period between 1915-1945.

For	Against
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Q4 If conscription was passed, how would this have impacted Australia from 1917- 1945?



RESEARCH: INTERNMENT CAMPS, IMMIGRATION AND THE EFFECTS OF WWI ON THE GERMAN AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

Setting the Scene

Prior to WWI, German settlers migrated to Australia as early as the 1850's due to the rising nationalist movement in Germany. The most common areas of German settlements included Western Australia, the Barossa Valley in South Australia, the Riverina in New South Wales and South East Queensland. They predominantly started wheat and dairy farms as well as establishing wineries. In 1914, the German community was well-liked and had their own schools, churches, music, food and in some cases place names. However, the growing hostilities overseas and the commencement of WWI changed this once well-liked community to a community that was now facing growing hostility and animosity.

The image to the right is a picture taken of the German internees at Berrima who were interned in Berrima Gaol. Almost 7,000 people were interned during WWI across Australia which included:

- Staff of Merchant Ships and other vessels caught in Australian ports
- Naturalised British subjects who were born in enemy countries such as Germany
- Naturalised and native-born Australians of German descent
- Staff of German companies who were temporarily living in Australia.

The internees were interned in Camps all over Australia with the biggest being Holsworthy in New South Wales.



Photo credit: Australian War Memorial



Research internment camps of World War I and then answer the following questions.

Q1 What do you think motivated Australia to isolate or imprison those of German descent during WWI??

Q2 What happened to the camps and internees at the end of WWI?



Q3 How did WWI and other events prior to 1918 effect Australia's immigration policy at the end of the war?

Q4 The internment camp of Berrima was the Berrima old Gaol. Google Berrima Old Gaol and look at what it looks like now using google street and satellite views. Compare these views with old pictures of the Berrima Internment Camp then write a description of what you think it may have looked like in 1917. Include your research into living conditions experienced by internees and service personnel.

Q5 How did these internment camps benefit the local community?

Q6 Research two internment camps that existed during WWI and then compare the living conditions and treatment at each of these camps.



Q7

How did the outbreak of WWI effect the German Australian Communities?



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RESEARCH: THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WILLIAM 'BILLY' HUGHES

Setting the Scene

The image to the right features William 'Billy' Hughes amongst some Australian Soldiers. William 'Billy' Hughes was Australia's Prime Minister at the end of the war and one of the longest serving Australian politicians. Hughes was opposed to the adoption of American President's Woodrow Wilson's principles for peace negotiations known as the 'Fourteen Points'.

Hughes played a significant role in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. He overcame Wilson's objections to ensure Australia had independent membership of the League of Nations. He was one of the strongest voices arguing that Germany must pay for the costs of the war and pressed for Australian control over former German Territory in New Guinea.

When the American President reminded Hughes that he represented only 5 million Australians, Hughes responded, 'I speak for 60,000 dead!'

Photo credit: Australian War Memorial



Research the life and achievements of William 'Billy' Hughes and then answer the following questions.

Q1 Do you think that Prime Minister Hughes involvement in the Paris peace conference changed the perceptions of Australia as a nation and in what way?

Q2 List 5 of William 'Billy' Hughes achievements and explain what their impact was on greater Australian society.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



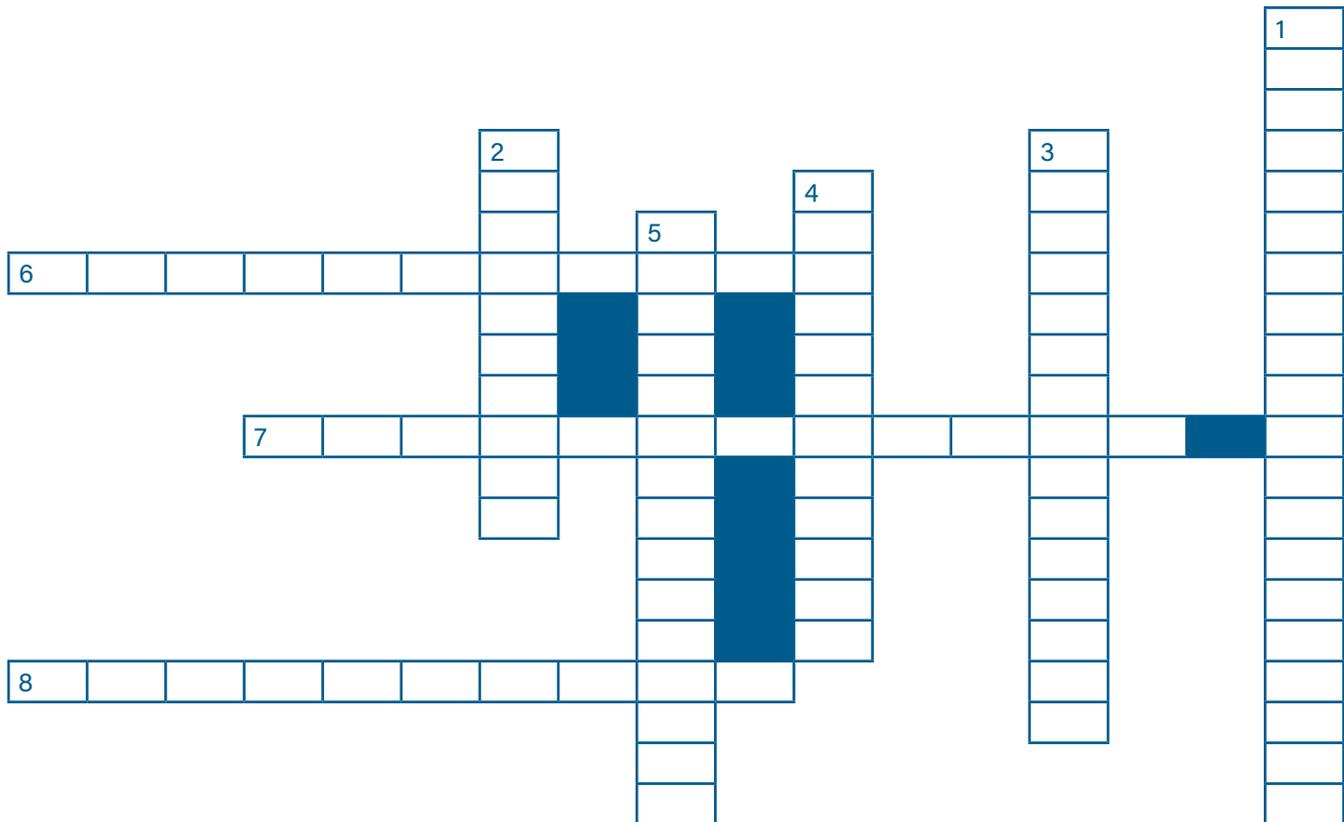
Q3 William 'Billy' Hughes was given a nickname by ex-servicemen. What was this nickname and why do you think he was given this special nickname?

Q4 Do you think that William Hughes should be considered a significant individual in the period 1918-1949? Why/ why not?



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CLUES

Across

- 6. The name of Australia's first official War Correspondent
- 7. Nickname given to William 'Billy' Hughes by Australian Soldiers
- 8. The suppression of information that is considered politically unacceptable, a threat to security or sensitive in nature.

Down

- 2. The biggest Internment Camp in Australia during WWI.
- 3. German Australians and other German Nationals were forced to live here during WWI in Australia
- 4. Referendums were held about this fiercely debated topic during WWI.
- 5. William Hughes pushed for Australia to have independent membership into this after WWI



WORD SEARCH



WORD LIST

Internment Camp

Duty

Propaganda

Foreign Policy

Little Digger

Conscription

White Australia

Call to Enlist

Holsworthy

Immigration

Charles Bean

Berrima





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**TO THE MEN OF
AND CENTRAL**

Some men seem to think they can live for ever!

And are not game to take the sporting chance the Anzac took when they sacrificed themselves for you!

Are you going to tarnish the fame of Australia by hesitating and shirking your job?

Are you content to hide yourself behind the blood of men and the sorrow of women?

Remember the unwritten law!
"This is the law of Australia
As sure and as certain as fate,
Take your share of your troubles going
And never go back on your mate."



**ROCKHAMPTON
QUEENSLAND.**

Your mates are clamouring for reinforcements. The spirits of your dead pals send their cooee too "We have given all, are you going to betray us?"

Are you going to let the greatest democratic army in the world dwindle day by day.

**HESITATE NO LONGER!
JOIN THE COLOURS!
SHOULDER A GUN!
BE A MAN!
ENLIST TO-DAY!**

[R.O., ROCKHAMPTON.]

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