Stories from the World War I collection

Back to all Stories

Curator's picks

- Exhibition [1]
- Literature [1]
- World War I [1]

World War I diaries [2]
by Peter Cochrane

The Library’s collection of World War I diaries offers a glimpse into the life of Australians at war.
Armistice and peace: ‘now that the war is over we realise what we’ve been through’ [3]

by Elise Edmonds

‘The Armistice – agreeing to cease hostilities’ was signed between Germany, France and Britain at 5 am on the morning of 11 November.
Frank Hurley's WWI photography

by Alison Wishart

Hurley's photographs of the western front in 1917 and the Middle East in 1918 are arresting and iconic.
Quick march! The children of World War I [5]

by Elise Edmonds

To mark the centenary of the peace year, 1919, we take an intimate look at the lives of children during the ‘war to end all wars’.

-
In the early 1920s, an exhibition of war photographs toured Australia, attracting crowds and enthusiastic reviews. Many of the photographs had been taken by Australian servicemen and were enlarged and coloured at Colarts Studios.
Antarcticans and the war [7]

by Steve Martin

Adventure, patriotism, or the call of friendship: many people who had experience in Antarctic exploration volunteered to serve in the World War I.
Mother Country [8]

by Brendan Atkins

A century ago most Australians were swept up in the second conscription plebiscite of December 1917.
One hundred years after troops landed at Gallipoli, the Library commissioned five professional photographers to document how the people of New South Wales spent 25 April, 2015.
Diarists’ stories

- Biography [1]
- Exhibition [1]
- World War I [1]

Writing at Gallipoli [10]

by Elise Edmonds

First hand accounts of the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915.
Louis Vasco: artist on the troopship

Louis Vasco enlisted as a Sapper, or engineer, but his calling was art.
Henry C. Marshall, 1890-1915

Henry Marshall was working in the Grace Brothers photographic studio in Sydney when war was declared.

Grief and mourning: Terence Garling and the Fry brothers

by Elise Edmonds
In 1916 the first statues of soldiers began appearing in Australian towns and the names of the fallen were engraved on monuments to the war dead.
Wesley Choat and his two brothers enlisted in 1915.

George Bell, prisoner of war

George Bell was a bank officer from Port Headland, Western Australia.
Internee collections: diaries of ‘enemy aliens’ [16]

by Anna Corkhill

During the First World War nearly 7000 ‘enemy aliens’, mainly of German and Austro-Hungarian origin, were interned in camps in Australia. The Library’s collection of papers of ‘enemy aliens’ interned in Australia during WW1 contains around 40 handwritten diaries written by internees.
Further reading

- World War I [1]

Australia's conscription debate [17]

by Steve Martin

The issue of conscription – compulsory enlistment for military service, particularly for overseas service – has been and remains a contentious issue in Australian life.
They began arriving in France in late spring 1916.
Leaving home [19]

It was a six-week journey by sea from Australia to Egypt and after the excitement of enlistment, training and farewells some feelings of boredom were inevitable among the troops.
Mapping the war [20]

The Library holds hundreds of maps documenting the progress of the war.
Woollen comforts from home [21]

It is estimated that over one million pairs of socks were knitted by Australian women and children during the war.

---

War’s lexicon [22]

by Susan Butler
Susan Butler, Editor of the Macquarie Dictionary explores the Digger Dialect.

3rd Australian General Hospital [23]

by Elise Edmonds
Albert William Savage was a professional photographer from Moore Park in Sydney.

- [23]

- [23]

  - Biography [1]
  - History [1]
  - World War I [1]

**Jackson and the Paper VC** [24]

In Sydney in 1918 a shy, one-armed man from the tiny town of Gunbar was selling kisses for 5 shillings each.
Learning activities and excursions Curriculum-linked programs and resources for students and teachers.

Battle of the Wasser [25]

Students consider a number of accounts of the Battle of the Wasser from different primary sources and consider what effect this event might have on the Anzac legend.
The Fry Family Story - Service and Sacrifice [26]
Through analysis of a collection of sources related to the lives of Alan and Dene Fry, students consider the motivation of soldiers to enlist and fight in WWI, and the impact of the war on the families left behind.

- [26]

Women and War [27]
Students investigate a range of primary sources in order to better understand the changing lives of the Australian women who served in World War I.

- [27]

Anzac War Memorial Sydney [28]
Students explore, recognise and appreciate the history of their local area by examining remains of the past and considering why they should be preserved.

-
World War I - The Western Front [29]

Students examine World War I diary extracts, pictures, photographs and written sources to locate and describe the nature of warfare on the Western Front.
Gallipoli - AE2 [30]

Students locate and sequence the places where Australians fought in WWI. They examine sources to understand the nature of warfare during the Gallipoli campaign.
Hands On World War I

A white gloves experience for Year 9 History students, investigating WW1 artefacts.