

## WA: A Centenary of Change 1918 – 2018

# Western Australia and the World in 1918

1918 was a year of war, peace, reunion, and, so much sadness. Love for the British Empire, had cost the Australian nation much. Out of a population of nearly five million, over 331,780 men and women served in the war, 60,284 were killed and over 152,000 were wounded during the four years of conflict. In 1918 alone approximately 14,000 Australians died due to the war. Over the four years of the Great War 66 Australians were awarded the Victorian Cross for extreme bravery in battle. Throughout the war young men, once fit and eager for adventure, were killed or returned to Australia maimed and wounded. The impact of wounded men and those thousands of soldiers killed in Gallipoli, the Middle East and on the Western Front were like ripples in the pond of their community, touching so many lives – their family, girlfriends, school and work friends.

The year 1918 will be covered here to introduce the resource “WA; A Centenary of Change 1918 – 2018”. A global, national and Western Australian perspective is taken to provide a context for the changes caused by the Great War and the Armistice in 1918.

Australians were fighting in the Middle East and on the Western Front during 1918. The conquest of Gaza and Jerusalem in 1917 enabled that the Allied troops to occupy Lebanon and Syria during 1918. The Allies, including Australian captured Jericho in February 1918 and advanced into Jordan during March, but were counter attacked in May. The final Allied campaign took place in September when the Turks were pushed across the Jordan River and took Damascus by early October. By the 30<sup>th</sup> October Turkey had surrendered ending the war in the Middle East.

On the Western Front the war gathered strength during 1918. From November 1917 all five of the AIF infantry divisions joined to create the Australian Corps, under the British Expeditionary Force. During March 1918 the Germans gathered for a final attack and the Australian Corps was sent to Amiens to support the retreating British troops. By the end of April Australians were involved in the recapture of Villers-Brettonneux and a series of battles, from May 1918, under the command of the Australian General John Monash, which assisted in the defeat of the Germans on the Western Front. These included the Battle of Hamel in July and the capture of St Quentin and Peronne during August 1918. The Australian Corps was withdrawn from the Front in early October.

For details on these battles and the nature of the war on the Western Front see:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/1918/people/genmonash>

<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australians-western-front/australian-remembrance-trail/australian-corps-0> Battle of ‘Le Hamel’.

<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australians-western-front-19141918/australian-remembrance-trail/second-australian>

Mont St Quentin, the key to the strategic town of Péronne on the Somme River

Images of the memorial at Villers-Bretonneux. Note information on the John Monash Centre to be opened in 2018



Image 1 54<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Peronne, September 1918 (AWM03183)

A machine gun position established by the 54<sup>th</sup> Battalion during the morning of the attack on Peronne. The photograph was taken the following day, after the capture of the town, when positions close to it had been taken.

<http://slwa.wa.gov.au/mappingmemory/WWI.html>

<http://slwa.wa.gov.au/mappingmemory/WWI.html>

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/10-photos-of-life-in-the-trenches>

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/10-things-that-could-have-saved-your-life-in-the-trenches>

## War on the Australian Front

William (Billy) Hughes was Prime Minister of the Australia from October 1915 until February 1923. A feisty leader, Hughes was responsible for immense division of Australian society by calling two referenda (votes) on conscription for Australian males. The two national votes, in 1916 and the second in 1917, led to the split in the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and much acrimony in Australian society. The following site provides activities on the conscription debate:

<https://billyhughes.moadoph.gov.au/>

The conscription debate in Australia was just one of many divisive issues caused by the war. Powerful pro-war, pro-British propaganda by the Commonwealth Government caused rifts within the nation. The War Precautions Act contained rules that reduced the freedom of Australian people, especially

those who were seen as “enemy aliens” living in Australia. Germans and Austrian Australians, Irish nationalists, unionists and anti war pacifists were all suspected of undermining the war effort and could be imprisoned for disloyalty. German schools, clubs and businesses were closed down, and many leaders of the German community were labelled as “Huns” and sent to internment camps. Vile images and attitudes circulated, denouncing enemies and shirkers. At the end of the war over 6000 Germans were deported from Australia, many to live in a Germany, a country very foreign to many of them. The once thriving German communities, especially in South Australia and Queensland were destroyed by the war prejudices.

Volunteers and a halt to immigration, as well as these later deportations, slowed the growth of Australia’s population. The Commonwealth Statistician (now Australian Bureau of Statistics) had predicted that Australia’s population would reach 5 million in either late 1914, or early 1915. However, the 5 million mark was not reached until September 1918 according to a report in the West Australian on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December 1918: “The years 1915 and 1916 are the first since 1795 in which the population figures for the whole of Australia ...declined.” The population of Western Australia (excluding Aboriginal Australians) was 308,232 in 1918, a decrease of 15,000 since 1914.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/featurearticlesbytitle/F024C642B2B659C7CA256DB800731BB5?OpenDocument>

Throughout 1918 the recruitment officers worked endlessly to encourage volunteers to join the AIF. Rallies, cartoons intended on shaming “shirkers”, images from the war and white feathers were used to increase enlistments. Here is an extract from a speech at a Perth ANZAC Day rally in 1918:

The present fight is for Australia just as surely as if it were being fought on Australian soil. Those who [are] able [to fight] and refuse to fight, refuse to do their duty to their homeland. The Allies’ fight is for civilisation, for the world, and Australia, so we must do our part.”  
*West Australian*, Thursday 25 April 1918, page 5 (Trove)

The heartache of a lost son or husband was still common during the last year of the war. During 1917 Septimus Burt, a Perth lawyer and important member of the Anglican Church, financed the construction of a memorial hall next to St George’s Cathedral in Perth. The hall was dedicated to the memory of the Burt’s son, Lt Theodore Charles Burt who was killed in July 1916 at the age of 23. The Burt Memorial Hall was due for completion in mid 1918. Not long before its completion Burt’s second son, Francis, was killed in France. The dedication plaque at the Hall mirrors the sorrow and tragedy felt by many families in Australia during the Great War.

‘In Aid of the Work of the Church of this Diocese  
This Hall was erected by the sorrowing parents  
as a Gift to the Church and dedicated  
To the Loving Memory of Lieut. Theodore Charles Arthur Burt (Bob)  
RFA Born 12<sup>th</sup> June 1893 - killed in Action 15<sup>th</sup> July 1916  
near the village of Montauban in France-aged 23 years  
And His Brother  
Lieut. Francis Sinclair Burt 13 MG Company AIF  
Born 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 1886 killed in Action 24 April 1918  
Near Villers-Bretonneux in France aged 32 years.  
In The Great War 1914-1918

Eager their King and Country's cause to serve  
All that they loved they left and nobly died  
Enrolled are they for higher duty now  
And serving in the Paradise of God.'  
*West Australian*, Thursday 13 June 1918, page 4

## **The Armistice 11/11/18**

Perth received news of the Armistice at 9 pm on the 11<sup>th</sup> November and the State Government called for shops and schools to be closed on the 12<sup>th</sup> November. Marches and celebrations took place over several days. This description comes from a newspaper report on the 14<sup>th</sup> November:

An urgent appeal is made by the executive [of the Returned Services Association - RSA] to owners of motor cars to place their cars at the disposal of the association for the purpose of conveying nurses and crippled and incapacitated soldiers from the Base Hospital, Stromness Hospital, and Menzies Hospital. About 200 cars are required, and car owners are requested to communicate with the secretary of the R.S.A. by telephone (A3550) any time after 9 a.m. All crippled soldiers, not in hospital, are to be at the Soldiers' Institute at 1.30 p.m. Cars are asked to concentrate at the institute in Perth and the Base Hospital at Fremantle. The following bands have been requested to take part in the procession:—Blackboy, Perth City, Salvation Army, Y.A.L, Y.M.C.A., 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Railways, Scotch Pipers, Irish Pipers, Clontarf Orphanage, Boy Scouts, and Midland Junction Workshops.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/rendition/nla.news-article27495594.txt>

John Curtin, a young socialist political editor for the Labour magazine the *Westralian Worker*, destined to be Prime Minister in the next war, wrote about the Armistice:

'For more than four terrible years the ... flames of war have lit the sky with death ... History has no parallel to the destruction that has been occasioned. The toll demanded of life and limb; the price paid in anguish of spirit and bafflement of high hope; the tears; the suffering; the terrific mortality (death rate) of actual combatants; the actual and potential [weakening] of civilisation itself, is too vast a computation for living men to make .... Tomorrow must assuredly be a better and a fairer day.'" *Westralian Worker*, 15 November 1918.

<http://john.curtin.edu.au/diary/editor/1918.html>

West Australians had to wait for "a better and a fairer day" as an influenza epidemic added to the shadows cast by the war. An estimated 10,000 to 12,000 Australians, many young men, died due to the influenza epidemic. Troop ships coming from Europe were forced into quarantine if cases of the flu were reported on board. Mixed with was increased patriotism and growing anti-German attitudes, the "Spanish Influenza" epidemic led to heightened emotions in late 1918. The *West Australian* Newspaper reported the information on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1918.

### **A World Wide Plague**

London, Oct. 28. The outbreak of Spanish influenza is now world-wide. India, South Africa, Argentina, and Scandinavia report the prevalence of the plague. There have been 13,394 deaths in Bombay alone, and of these 1,753 occurred in a week. At Vienna the supply of coffins has run out, and some bodies have had to be kept on ice for weeks, and then have had to be buried in paper sacks. Fifty-eight dead bodies were picked up in the London streets on Saturday and yesterday. A thousand telephone operators in London are off duty in consequence of influenza. The Eastham

Council has closed its elementary schools for a week, and has forbidden the children to attend cinema... entertainments.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27494057/2739318#>

The world-wide death toll of the epidemic was over 25 million – a greater number of deaths than in the First World War. More information on the Spanish influenza can be found in these websites:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/online\\_features/defining\\_moments/featured/influenza-pandemic](http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/influenza-pandemic)

<http://online.wsj.com/ww1/influenza>

There are so many stories associated with this pandemic, which was at its height during 1918 and 1919. Australian nurse Rosa O’Kane was one of its victims. She had landed in Fremantle in early December 1918 on the troop ship *SS Wyreema*. O’Kane was one of twenty nurses from her ship who volunteered to work at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station to care for soldiers from the *SS Boonah*. This troop ship had recently arrived in Fremantle with soldiers suffering from the Spanish Flu. Conditions at the Quarantine Station were poor, with few facilities. Nurse O’Kane, with three other nurses, contracted the influenza and died on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1918. O’Kane was 28 years old and was buried at Woodman Point.

<http://ww1nurses.gravesecrets.net/o.html>

There were over 12,000 deaths caused by the Spanish Flu. In Western Australia the number was limited to 638 dead, reduced because of the strict quarantine regulations.

War had lost its patriotic glow by 1918. The excitement of adventure had worn off, and horror, distrust and a deep sadness replaced it. Many women wore black, newspapers continued to print lists of the Australian dead, and a visit from a church minister was loathed, as he often brought news of the death of a loved one. A newspaper reporter looked out on returned soldiers during a procession of about 2000 soldiers and nurses in Perth at the end of the war and wrote:

“The awed hush that held the multitude at the great appeal of brave men’s sightless eyes and the stacks of crippled soldiers’ crutches was far more impressive and eloquent than the loudest huzzas [cheers]...”

*West Australian* (Perth, WA: 1879 - 1954), Thursday 14 November 1918, page 5.

The sight of a maimed or disabled man in the post war years was commonplace as nearly 50% of the Australian forces who served overseas were wounded.

<https://www.carnamah.com.au/edu/first-world-war.pdf>

<http://ww1wa.gravesecrets.net/ha.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/9602114/The-First-World-War-the-war-that-changed-us-all.html>



the 25,000 Australians who were “missing in action”. Clock towers, crosses, honour boards in schools and churches, statues of soldiers, memorial arches and avenues of trees commemorated the war dead. Even captured German weapons were used at memorial sites. Kings Park has a famous Avenue of Honour in Lovekin Drive, modelled on an avenue of 3,771 trees planted in Ballarat between June 1917 and August 1919. In South Perth and Nedlands street names also reach back to WW1: Verdun Street, Bessell Street (Alfred Bessell-Browne), Birdwood Road (an Australian General), Throssell Street (VC winner Hugo Throssell), Hobbs Avenue (General Talbot-Hobbs) and Sadlier Street (VC winner Cliff Sadlier). Your town or suburb may also include a memorial, a hall or names of streets linked to the war.

For the range of memorials dedicated to the Great War see:

<http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/ww1>

Kings Park War Memorial

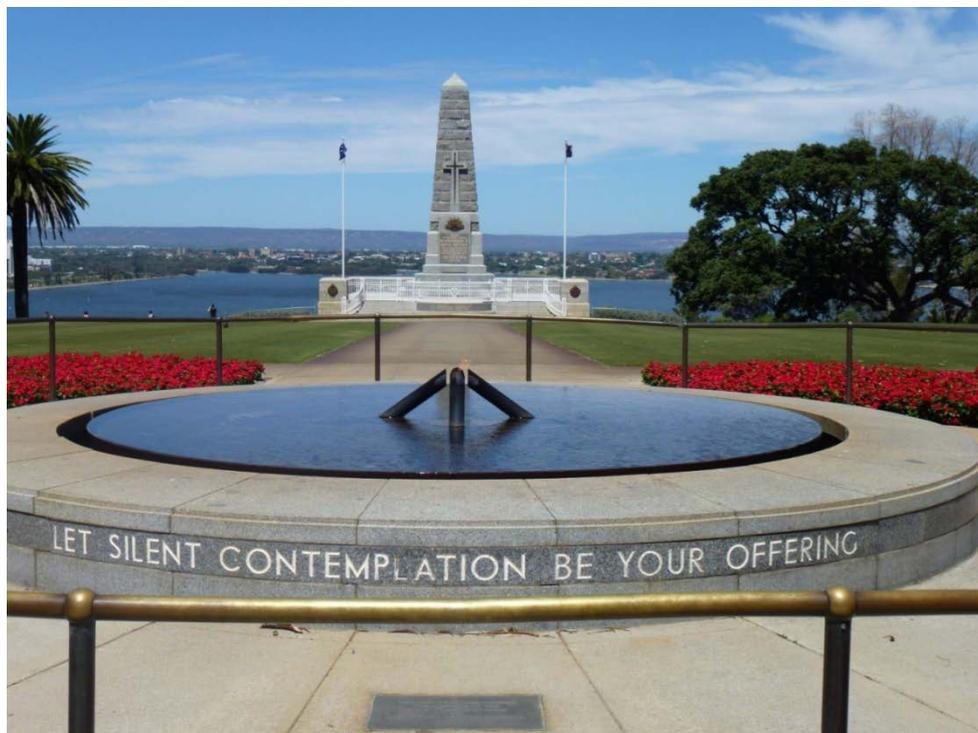


Image 4 The Perth War Memorial overlooking the Swan River (M.Southee)

## The Macedon Cross, Mt Macedon. Victoria



Image 5 Words on the Macedon Cross read: To the Glory of God and the memory of Australia's sons. 1914 – 1918. "Death cannot rob them of their glory, nor time efface the gallantry of their deeds." (Image: M.Southee)

## Changes brought by the war

Of the 23,000 Western Australian servicemen who returned from the war, 15,900 of them were injured. Facial injuries, "broken faces" as the French called them, were common as men whose heads appeared above the trench parapet were an easy target. Other serious injuries included the loss of a limb caused by bullets, shrapnel wounds and infections, damage to the eyes and lungs from poisonous gasses, and, mental illness, called "shell shock" at this time. The use of primitive blood transfusions, antiseptics and surgery saved men's lives, and these altered men returned to a nation that had also been altered. As a consequence, many families in Western Australia and across the nation suffered emotionally for years after the war.

Plastic surgery had only recently been developed in Europe at the time of the war, so bone, muscle and skin was grafted over horrific facial wounds. Many young men lived out their lives in the shadows of their own homes or hospital wards, not wanting people to see their mutilated faces. During the war the amputation of a limb was often essential to save a soldier. A sturdy split tree trunk with leather straps was used to form a new leg. However, due to the huge demand for artificial limbs, increased collaboration between surgeons the prosthetics makers was essential in enabling advances in the composition and usefulness of new limbs during the 1920s.

Many other changes were propelled by the war. "Modern warfare was revolutionized in those four years. The war began with fighters riding on horseback with rifles and ended with troops armed with machine guns and poisonous gas, on tanks, submarines and bombers." Aljazeera: "Four years that changed the world forever". <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/inside-story/articles/2014/8/5/world-war-i-fouryearsthatchangedtheglobeforever.html>

Radio or "wireless" communication was improved during the war and adapted to the changing mobility of men and weapons. By 1918 radio was used to contact aircraft, tanks and mobile troops. Radio became a popular form of entertainment after the war in Australia. By 1923 the Australian public could pay a licence to a sealed radio broadcasting set. By 1924 the "open" broadcasting

system was introduced and the popularity of the radio in homes took off. By 1929 over 300,000 “wireless” sets were in homes across Australia.

The aircraft industry was revolutionised during the war as aerial photography assisted in map-making and planning artillery attacks on the Western Front. As the frames of the aircraft became sturdier and engines more powerful, machine guns were attached which enabled air-to-air combat or “dog fights” to occur. The Australian flying unit was called the Australian Flying Corps (AFC). One AFC airman who was highly praised was Captain Arthur Cobby. He described one his missions in 1918:

“All this flying was done under 500 feet and our targets were point-blank ones .... The air was full of aircraft and, continuously while shooting-up the troops on the ground, we would be attacked by enemy scouts ... The smoke of the battle below mixed with the clouds and mist above rendered flying particularly dangerous. ... On top of this there were scores of machine-guns devoting their time to making things as unpleasant for us as they could.”

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/first-world-war-flying>

A Western Australian pilot in the Australian Flying Corps, Norman Brearley, was awarded a Distinguished Service Order in 1917 after being shot down over France. After the war, Brearley used his war experience to train pilots in Perth and in December 1921 he began the Western Australian Airways. The airline was significant as it provided regular services between Geraldton and Derby, Geraldton to Perth from 1924, and by 1929, services from Perth to Adelaide. The airline service was sold in 1936 to become part of the Australian National Airways.



Image 6 A print of the first Perth to Adelaide airmail flight in 1929 from a photograph taken in June 1929. Public Domain

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West\\_Australian\\_Airways#/media/File:West\\_Australian\\_Airways\\_6.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Australian_Airways#/media/File:West_Australian_Airways_6.jpg)

Although horses were used extensively on the Western Front and in Palestine, cars were used to drive officers to meet the troops. Automobiles were developed further during the war, and adapted to the demands of war. Rolls Royce, for example, developed an armoured car, while Model T Fords were transformed into field ambulances. Automobiles gained great popularity after the war. For example in 1918, 2,538 cars were registered in Western Australia by 1927 the number recorded was 25,270.

<http://ww1centenary.oucs.ox.ac.uk/machineaesthetic/how-world-war-one-changed-the-car-you-drive-today/>



Image 7 Ford Model T Field Ambulance 1916 canvas on wood frame model used extensively by the British & French as well as the American Expeditionary Force in The Great War

Attribution: WyrLight.com

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See further changes caused by the First World War:

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-modern-weapons-changed-combat-in-the-first-world-war>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/1918/technology>

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/news-and-community/blog/patents-and-innovations-during-wwi-battlefront-innovations>

## Divisions appear in Australia

There seemed to many Australians much to fear after the First World War: the cruel Germans, the bloodthirsty communists who wrenched Russia out of the war, radical trade unions, foreign migrants, pacifists and traitorous Irish Catholics who supported Irish independence ahead of the British Empire. Historian Gerhard Fischer observed:

“How can one explain the Australian home front experience during the Great War: the extraordinary conversion by which an apparently peaceful, largely [British], “optimistic” society with strong traditions of British-style liberal democracy based on constitutional rule of law, turned into a violent, aggressive, conflict-ridden society, torn apart by invisible lines of sectarian [religious] division, ethnic conflict and ...economic and political upheaval?”

<https://theconversation.com/german-experience-in-australia-during-ww1-damaged-road-to-multiculturalism-38594>

In post war Australia the Commonwealth Government, Returned Soldier’s League and Empire Loyalty League and other patriotic organisations emphasised the importance of Australia’s British origins, connections to the British Empire and the importance of “white” people. Nationalism and pride were emphasised so that communists, Irish Catholics and trade unionists were viewed with suspicion. Aboriginal Australians continued to be marginalised in this climate of Britishness.

The boatloads of “diggers” who returned to Australia between December 1918 and December 1919 were greeted with cheers of appreciation at public rallies. They were viewed as heroes, but they were also seen by some as a threat to national progress. As a special group whose experiences set them apart from other Australians, some thought that they could bring new ideas and change to the nation. Because of this, they were encouraged to merge back into civilian life and not dwell on their war experiences. The reality was that they did bring changes– wives from Europe, a new cynical perspective, ideas of socialism, or pacifism, a deep sadness caused by loss and horror, comradeship and so much more.

Civilian life had changed over the four years of war as many women took paid work to fill jobs vacated by enlisted men, served in the Australian Army Nursing Service, joined charitable organisations such as the Red Cross or participated in the Women’s Peace Army , organised local fundraising committees and a multitude of other tasks. After 1918 they were expected to leave the workforce and return to caring for their home and children. There was public outrage at women taking men’s jobs at the end of the war. Not all women could give up their independence, or wanted to. Divorce was a social disgrace, but between 1918 and 1919 divorces in Western Australia increased from 23 to 121. Changed expectations and changed husbands or fiancés contributed to these statistics.

Trade unions were also a source of division in Australia. During the war, Australian trade unions supported campaign against conscription and experienced success following international socialist groups, such as the Industrial Workers of the World. During August and September 1917 over 100,000 transport and wharf workers across Australia went on strike to protest against changing workplace conditions. Price rises and the growth of unemployment from 1918 to 1922, when unemployment reached 9.3% of trade unionists, also encouraged further action. In Perth there was a tram strike from 1918 -1919, while the lumpers (waterside labourers) walked off the Fremantle

wharves in May 1919 leading to several weeks of violence against the use of non-union workers. Guns, iron bars and stones were used, leading to the death of a worker.

The war had exaggerated differences between religious groups in Australia as many Irish-Australians were critical of the harsh treatment of nationalists in Ireland during the Easter Uprising in 1916. Many Roman Catholics in Australia were of Irish decent, so when the vocal Irish Arch Bishop, Daniel Mannix, led the anti-conscription campaigns during 1916 and 1917, a strong sectarian division occurred in Australian society. On one side there were Catholics, many of Irish working class background, and on the other Anglican (Protestant) English people. Propaganda, newspapers and public rallies labelled Mannix and his followers as traitors to the Empire. Sectarianism was a powerful dividing force in Australia throughout the 1920s to 1950s in Australia.

### **Sources of unity and support**

The sheer number of wounded and disabled who returned to Australia after the war necessitated the Commonwealth Government to take action. The Repatriation Department was created in 1917, from the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act. Over half of Western Australia's returned servicemen returned home with injuries. After Gallipoli, War Councils were established to help injured servicemen repatriated to Australia. The Councils provided artificial limbs, vocational training, registration for employment and collection of charity funds. The Commonwealth Repatriation Department took over some of these roles in supplying healthcare and repatriation hospitals for returned soldiers. The department also allocated war pensions, which were around 50% of a male wage. Bobbie Oliver estimated that by 1921 there were 23,235 military pensioners and their families in Western Australia, which was 7% of the state's population (p148). Aboriginal servicemen were not recognised as citizens, nor did they receive many of these benefits as they were expected to obey the harsh restrictions imposed on them under the 1905 Act in Western Australia.

In Western Australia several charitable groups supported returned servicemen including the War Patriotic Fund and the Ugly Men's Voluntary Worker's Association, both established in 1917. The War Patriotic Fund helped to pay medical expenses for disabled soldiers and organised a wide range of fund raising events for that purpose. Uniquely western Australian, the Ugly Men's Association had a significant influence on Western Australia during the years between 1917 and the mid 1930s. The aim of the Association was to raise funds to support poor families and returned servicemen or their families. Membership of the Association included businessmen who helped raise funds, and working class men who applied practical skills to build and repair homes for war widows or disabled soldiers. By the 1920s there were 21 Ugly Men's Association branches across Perth. There were annual Uglieland carnivals in both Perth and Fremantle to raise money for their causes. The popular amusement Park in Perth, White City, was called "Uglieland", as it was administered by the Ugly Men's Association on several occasions during the 1920s. There was also an Uglieland fairground in Fremantle. Funds from these activities were also used to finance the Ugly Men's employment bureau and a farm training school for ex servicemen.

Image8 White City- Uglieland



[http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/swan\\_river/living\\_with\\_the\\_land/white\\_city](http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/swan_river/living_with_the_land/white_city)

Other groups which supported returned soldiers and their family included Legacy, established in 1923, Red Cross and Edith Cavell Trust Fund.

The Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) was established in May 1916 with three key aims: to protect and assist injured returned servicemen, to build loyalty to the British Empire and to preserve war records. Western Australia entered the League in 1918 and a national organisation was incorporated in 1919. There have been a range of titles for this national organisation over the past 100 years including the Returned Services League of Australia and the Returned & Services League of Australia Limited. With these various titles the RSL has maintained its aims and continued to be an important pressure group on the Federal Government. . Laws attributed to the RSL campaigns included payments for War Service Leave, War pensions, Vocational training programmes in the forces, the provision of War Service Homes and the promotion of Anzac Day as a national day of commemoration. That the RSL was an agent of unity is contestable. The RSL focussed on loyalty to the British Empire and added to the anti-Irish and anti-German attitudes which influenced much of the discussions during the 1920s.



Image 9 Returned and Services League Badge on an RSL building in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria (M.Southee)

In recognition of the sacrifice of Australian servicemen, a land settlement scheme was developed during the war in South Australia. After the war 23,000 farm lots were allocated across Australia in the joint Commonwealth-State Government scheme. There were two requirements to participate in the Soldier Settlement Schemes – the soldier had to have served overseas, and have been discharged honourably from the services. In some states the soldiers had to be interviewed by a Qualification Board for fitness and farming skills.

An eligible soldier received a low interest loan from the State Government, as well as support in buying farming essentials such as seed, stock, farm equipment and building materials. Some farmers borrowed 100% of the value of the property. They could pay back their loan when they became established and earned sufficient money. In Victoria over 11,000 men took advantage of the scheme, whereas in Western Australia there were around 5,000 original soldier settlers.

Western Australian Walter Thomas White (Tom), who had served at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, became an early soldier settler. In 1921 White selected a property of just under 1000 acres (404 hectares) in Carnamah, north of Perth. The properties in this region were developed from large estates, with names such as Winchester, Carnamah and Yarra Yarra, bought by the State Government and divided into farming lots. White grew feed for horses and went on to develop a successful wheat and sheep farm. By 2018, the farm covered 37,000 acres (just under 15,000 hectares) and was still owned by the White family. Many other soldier settlers were less successful. Of the 5,000 soldier settlers in Western Australia by 1929 about 70% remained on their farms. In Tasmania the failure rate was 61%, while in Victoria only 17% of the soldier settlers had left their farms by 1929. Falling crop prices, poor seasons, inexperience and poor quality of land contributed to these problems. However, across Australia today families continue to prosper on farms that came into existence as part of the Soldier Settlement scheme.

More information about the Soldier Settlement scheme and Tom White's experience can be found at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-04-23/remembering-soldier-settlers-a-window-to-agricultural-past/6408988>

<https://www.carnamah.com.au/bio/walter-thomas-white>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-04-23/remembering-soldier-settlers-a-window-to-agricultural-past/6408988> Scroll down to Farm Expansion Brought Settler Success and the interview with Bruce White.

Many turning points occurred in Western Australian society, and the wider world, during 1918. The German, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish empires fell, while the new communist regime in Russia was struggling to survive a vicious civil war. The boost to technology – radio, flight, motor and medical technologies amongst many others, were all spurred on by necessity of war. Countless grieving families across the world were forced to come to terms with loss. About 60,000 young Australians were dead, leaving a generation of widows, unmarried women and unimaginable heartache for so many loved ones. Memorials were built on the main streets of towns across Australia, and farms and villages in Europe and the Middle East. They contained the names of faceless young men and have become a focus of commemoration services on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. New organisations such as the RSL and community groups emerged to focus energy to support those damaged by the war. In Western Australia, as in the other states and many nations, the war and events during its final year became a turning point in the lives of the survivors and their families.

## Resources:

Gregory, J. and Gothard, J (ed.), 2009 *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*. UWA, Crawley.

McKernan, M, 1984 *The Australian People and the Great War*. Collins Press, Sydney.

Oliver, B. 1995 *War and Peace in Western Australia* UWA Press, Crawley.

Stanley, P. 2017 *The Crying Years Australia's Great War* National Library of Australia, Canberra  
Contains a clear summary of the years 1914 to 1919 with excellent cartoons, photographs and a range of other primary sources.

## Western Australians in WW1- HTAWA Resource

DVA, 2006, Australians on the Western Front (Online resource)

DVA, 2013, *Australian Light Horse PALESTINE 1916–1918* (Online resource)

DVA, 2013, Indigenous Service

DVA, Women in War Part 2

Discovering ANZACs

Newspaper clippings

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27598042>

An article on Soldier Settlement and repatriation (March 1919)

<https://theconversation.com/german-experience-in-australia-during-ww1-damaged-road-to-multiculturalism-38594>

<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/research/home-page-archives/the-road-to-damascus>

A useful summary of events in the Middle East theatre of war

[http://bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2017-01/joan\\_beaumont\\_australia.pdf](http://bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2017-01/joan_beaumont_australia.pdf)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-05/world-war-i-germany-fighting-the-huns-on-the-home-front/5638066>

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/teachersresources/case-of-the-enemy-aliens-secondary-education-kit/index.html> Video resources

<http://online.wsj.com/ww1/>

100 years – legacies of the First World War –excellent to stimulate topic choices for an inquiry

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/first-world-war-flying>

Aircraft in World War One

[http://www.nma.gov.au/online\\_features/defining\\_moments/featured/influenza-pandemic](http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/influenza-pandemic)

Good images and detail on the nature of the Spanish Flu epidemic.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-04-23/remembering-soldier-settlers-a-window-to-agricultural-past/6408988>

Scroll down to Farm Expansion Brought Settler Success and the interview with Bruce White.

<https://www.carnamah.com.au/first-world-war>

Contains war experience of individuals from Carnamah and some excellent images

<http://slwa.wa.gov.au/mappingmemory/WWI.html>

A visual story of experiences of First World War soldiers

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-04-23/remembering-soldier-settlers-a-window-to-agricultural-past/6408988>

Stories of individual soldier settlers. Includes information on Tom White

[http://www.nma.gov.au/online\\_features/defining\\_moments/featured/soldier\\_settlement](http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/soldier_settlement)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-04-23/remembering-soldier-settlers-a-window-to-agricultural-past/6408988>

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/featurearticlesbytitle/72BB159FA215052FCA2569DE0020331D?OpenDocument>

Soldier settlement land allocations to 1924

## Video resources

<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/war-that-changed-us/>

A docu-Drama aired on the ABC in April-May 2017

<https://www.roninfilms.com.au/feature/491/pozieres.html>

Hard hitting and effective suitable for year 6 and older. Includes a study guide

<http://online.wsj.com/ww1/propaganda>

Includes a 2 minute film showing European propaganda during the First World War.

<https://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/australia-in-france-part-one/clip1/>

A series of three video clips