Australian Curriculum:

History : Year 10

WORLD WAR II
1939-1945
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Introduction

About the Virtual War Memorial

“Comprehensive coverage of the communities and of the men and women that they gave up to write history in our name”

The Virtual War Memorial Australia (VWMA) is a unique endeavour designed to combine the power of digital technologies with public and private collections to enable unparalleled access to the stories, photographs, audio-visual sources of those who have served Australia since 1899.

The Virtual War Memorial aims to be the definitive resource and repository for anyone wanting to research, study or contribute to the commemoration of South Australia’s and the Northern Territory’s socio-military history, from the Boer War to the present day.

The VWMA founding principles are:

Education - local context for school students studying under the National Curriculum

Commemoration - give greater depth of meaning to our memorial infrastructure

Community Engagement - crowd sourcing of community family and personal information

Accessibility – connect 24/7 anywhere with internet access via mobile devices

This site is unique in its ambition, scope and reach. It complements and will interact with others sites such as the Australian War Memorial and National Archive of Australia sites with whom we are actively collaborating. The Virtual War Memorial is both a repository and a resource for students, family, researchers, teachers, historians, genealogists and communities. It is the research project that will never end, as we strive to make stories as complete as we can.

Our “Virtual Memorials” provide a digital home for all who served, whether or not they are recorded on physical memorials. We also have a feature which, when enabled though mobile devices, will provide relevant streaming digital content triggered by geo-spatial proximity to physical memorials.

About this document

This document is intended to support teachers interested in using the Virtual War Memorial as a resource for teaching the Year 10 Depth Study on World War II. It outlines the links between the Australian Curriculum: History, and the Virtual War Memorial. It also includes opportunities for learning outside of the classroom and a number of support resources. The Virtual War Memorial aims to cater, as much as possible for the needs of teachers, so all feedback and suggestions would be gratefully appreciated.
The Virtual War Memorial and the Year 10 WWII Depth Study

The Virtual War Memorial lends itself particularly well to the Australian Curriculum: History depth study on World War II, and effective use of the Virtual War Memorial can help teachers to foster in students each of the historical skills expected of students at the Year 10 level. The following pages highlight where and how explicit links can be made between the Virtual War Memorial and the Australian Curriculum.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Overview of the causes and course of World War II:

- Identifying key events in the European theatre of war
- Identifying key events in the Asia-Pacific theatre of war.

Through the Virtual War Memorial Schools Program, students:

- Use sources generated from and about those who were directly involved in key events in the European and Asian-Pacific theatres of war.
- Are exposed to the war as seen through the eyes of their individual, families, comrades, commanding officers etc.

The experiences of Australians during World War II:

- Prisoners of War
- The Battle of Britain
- Kokoda – its significance and role in fostering the ANZAC legend
- The Fall of Singapore

Through their research into an individual, students:

- Develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of individuals involved in significant campaigns.
- Who profile a Prisoner of War will also develop a greater understanding of the conditions they faced in battle and internment and, for those who survived, their lives after the war.
The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front:

- The bombing of Darwin
- The Japanese submarine attack on Sydney
- The sinking of ships off the Australian coast
- The ‘Battle of Brisbane’
- The Cowra breakout
- The Brisbane Line
- Changing roles of women
- Wartime government controls – conscription, manpower controls, rationing, censorship

The Virtual War Memorial attempts to illuminate the lives behind the names and service numbers. By developing a profile, composing a biography and discovering the personal stories of the men and women who have served Australia, students are able to:

- Develop their understanding of Australia in the mid-twentieth century and how it was changed by the conflict.
- Investigate individuals involved in events that significantly affected Australia at home, such as the air raids on Darwin in 1942.
- Make a real contribution to our understanding of Australia’s wartime history by compiling a profile which reflects the personal experience of service men and women and their families and communities World War II.

1. Darwin Raids - Casualty Lists and Enquiries, NAA: F1, 1942/364

2. The HMAS Swan (left), SS Mauna Loa (centre) and HMAS Warrego (right) - Unlike the SS Mauna Loa, the sloops HMAS Swan and HMAS Warrego survived the Japanese bombing raids on Darwin in 1942 but 3 of the HMAS Swan’s crew were killed and another 19 were wounded, AWM P05303.021
Historical Skills

**Chronology, terms & concepts:**

Students develop their understanding of World War II chronology, terms & concepts:

- compiling individual timelines of life and service
- developing familiarity with conflict timelines and the chronology of campaigns
- interpreting military terminology from a range of primary sources
- examine contemporary perspectives of a number of contested concepts specific to conflict studies including invasion and remembrance
- key historical concepts covered include:
  - significance
  - evidence
  - continuity & change – at personal, communal and global levels
  - cause & consequence – as seen through the perspective of individuals
  - ethical understanding – developing historical empathy
**Historical questions & research:**

The process of developing a profile of a service man or woman enables students to develop their research skills through:

- Developing their own questions of historical inquiry
- Evaluating & developing these questions
- Identifying and locating a range of primary and secondary sources through the resources provided by the Education Portal and links to digital and physical collections, archives and museums.

**Analysis and use of sources:**

In order to build a successful profile, students:

- Analyse a wide range of primary and secondary sources on or through the Virtual War Memorial website to help them contextualise the life of a service man or woman
- Use these sources as evidence and synthesise information about an individual
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of these sources in developing a biography.

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3. RAAF Record of Service - Dibbs, George Robert, NAA: A9300, Dibbs G R
Perspectives & Interpretations:

Students are introduced to multiple, and sometimes competing, perspectives from varied sources. Through their research and development of an individual’s profile, students:

- Investigate the role of human agency in the course of war
- May also be led to investigate the role of human agency in technological, social and political developments on the front and at home
- May be introduced to a range of differing accounts of events and can analyse these in the context of differing historical interpretations.

Explanation & Communication:

As part of their involvement in the Schools Program, students communicate their research through the profile they compile and enter onto the Virtual War Memorial website. Students:

- Construct a biography of an individual who served in World War Two, using evidence from a range of sources to support their interpretation.
- May also present “personal stories” related to the life of the individual in variety of communications forms, including audio-visual formats.
Teaching Resources

The following resources have been developed to help teachers guide students through the process of researching and writing about an individual who has served Australia. We have also provided source analysis worksheets tailored to the sources students are likely to encounter in their research. If there are any resources that you would like to see provided by the Virtual War Memorial to support student education, please do not hesitate to contact us.

These resources are updated regularly. For the most up-to-date version of each item, please visit our site and download a copy of the relevant resource.

Schools Program Manager
Direct Dial Number | 8100 7318
Email | schools.program@vwma.org.au
Virtual War Memorial Australia
YEAR 10 - TEACHER RESOURCES

Researching an Individual

This fact sheet will guide you through researching an individual and uploading information to create a profile on the Virtual War Memorial.

More information may be found in the histories of the unit and in the unit war diaries in the Australian War Memorial Collections. See the Research page on the Virtual War Memorial website for details.

1 Virtual War Memorial

Start here to find out what information the Virtual War Memorial already has about an individual. Search by last name, first name and service number. You can filter by conflict, unit, campaign and home town.
https://vwma.org.au/explore/people

2 Australian War Memorial

Search for a Person will search the Roll of Honour, the Nominal and Embarkation roles, records of Honours and Awards.

3 The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Use the Find War Dead search for those who were died during World War II.
http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx

4 The National Archives of Australia

Click on the Name Search tab at the top of the page, select Australian Defence Force personnel records from the drop-down menu for Category of records. After you click Search, refine the search using first name or the service number.
http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au

5 Trove Australia

A searchable collection of newspapers. Use Advanced Search, type the person’s name into Keywords. Under Limit your results select a range of years to make your search easier.
http://trove.nla.gov.au/?q&adv=y
Extending Your Research

This page is for those who want to take their research to the next level. The following resources will help you to develop a better understanding of the experiences of your serviceman or servicewoman.

6 AWM – Unit Diaries

These record the daily activities of headquarters, formations and units. You will need to know the unit and class (eg. Infantry) in which your individual served.


7 AWM – Collections

The AWM holds thousands of sources including photographs, letters and personal diaries. Even if your person did not leave a record, there may still be evidence about them in the records of others. Check records linked to their unit


8 State Library of South Australia

The State Library holds a large collection of books, digital resources and private collections. Use the advanced search to find out more about the unit and perhaps uncover a personal collection


Need More Help?

The Virtual War Memorial has a range of links to help you research individuals and the units in which they served. https://vwma.org.au/

Other Useful Links

AWM Research Guide – guides you through the research process using sources held by the Australian War Memorial.

AWM Memorial Glossary – explains military abbreviations and acronyms

State Records of South Australia – holds state and local government records as well as photographs of South Australian service men and women from World War II.
Virtual War Memorial Australia
YEAR 10 - TEACHER RESOURCES

**Building a Profile**
From the homepage of the Virtual War Memorial Australia, type the last name, first name and service number of the individual into the “Find a Person” search box.

**UPDATING DETAILS**
Click the “Update Details” button in the top right corner to add information or a biography.

**Please Note:** If you are not already registered, complete and submit the online registration form. You will be sent a “Confirmation Instructions email. Click the “Confirm my account” link in the email.

If you are registered, you will be asked to sign in and will be taken to an edit screen for your individual

**STEP 1. DETAILS**
Fill in the form with as much information as you have about:

- Birth, Schooling, Occupation, Home Town
- Enlistment, Honours, Service Outcome, eg. killed in action
- Place of Death, Place of Burial

Click **Next**

**STEP 2. BIOGRAPHY**
Add a biography of the individual you have been researching. There is information to help you on the screen, and the profile of Lyell Keith Swann (2156) is a good example.
Type directly into the text box or copy and paste from a document.
Click **Next**

**STEP 3. REASON & EVIDENCE**
Provide the reasons and evidence you have used to make changes to the profile, eg. family or community knowledge. Please make sure you understand the terms & conditions of posting, and our moderation policy as we may need to make changes to the information you have uploaded. Click **Submit**

**ADD A PICTURE, LINK OR PERSONAL STORY**
Return to the profile page to add a picture, link or a personal story to the profile.

- Click **Upload a Picture**
- Select the file
- Click **Open**

- Click **Add a Link or Resource**
- Select the appropriate option
- Paste the URL or select the file
- Name it by typing in the **Link Text** or **Name** fields
- Click **Submit**

- Click **Add my story**
- Insert the title
- Paste text into the **Content** box
- Click **Submit**
# Written Source Analysis Worksheet

**Title of Document:**

**Type of Document:**
- [ ] Service Record
- [ ] Letter
- [ ] Unit Diary
- [ ] Personal Diary
- [ ] Newspaper
- [ ] Other: ___________________  

**Date Written:**

**Author:**
*Include name, relationship to your person (eg. your person’s commanding officer, rank/service number if appropriate; a journalist; a relative or friend of your person; another person in their unit.)*

**Intended Audience:**
*For whom do you think the document was written?*

**Further Questions:**
*After completing the next page, what questions have not been answered about your person and their experiences? How could you find the answers?*
Photo Source Analysis Worksheet

**STEP 1: OBSERVATION**

1. Record your overall impression

2. Divide the photo into four sections (quadrants) and look carefully at each one.
   
   *Record the people, objects and activities you observe in the table*

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<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Objects</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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**STEP 2: INFERENCE**

*What might you infer from this photograph? Try to list at least three things.*

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**STEP 3: QUESTIONS**

1. What questions does this photograph raise?

2. How could you find answers?
Primary Source Organiser

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>(Eg. honour roll, service record, letter)</td>
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When adding a biography, try to tell a story of a life and not repeat data that is already known. Avoid a string of dot points or date related information that is already on the record. A narrative is always easier to read. Readers will want you to ‘tell the story’.

*What did the person like, and dislike? What did others think of them, what was important to them? Why did they sign up for service?*

Letters, diary notes and oral histories / interviews all add a personal dimension and, if you can, they should be included. First-hand accounts are a lot more compelling than retrospective speculation. Personal impressions of the situation they were in add to the depth and substance of the narrative.

**The aim of this site is to be more than a presentation of data. We want to tell a story and give life to the name...**

**Process**

- Assemble your sources and collate the information. [In Word files on your computer or on paper in a folder.]
- Prepare an outline of your biography and use headings if it helps to organise your ideas and information.
- Write your biography in Word. Check the spelling and grammar before uploading to the site.
- Try and tell a story - use prose rather than dot points but keep paragraphs short.

**What information should I include?**

1. **A timeline based narrative** is probably the best. There is usually a typed chronology of the soldier’s service in their service record – it is a basis to work from.

2. It is always useful to start from the beginning! **Birth, parents, siblings and residence.** Relationships to others who served Australia are also good to include. A clue is to search the [National Archive](#) service record by entering the name of next of kin.

3. **Growing up** - school records are terrific if you can find them – check out Arthur Harris' school cadets photo!

4. **Pre enlistment** employment and /or service in the cadets or militia etc adds context to life before conflict.

5. **Enlistment, embarkation, re-assignment** (where and when it took place). Many soldiers embarked with one unit and ended up in another. Working out whether they were involved in particular campaigns is a bit more difficult.
6. Absences such as illness, courses / training and detachment to other units is generally recorded in the service record. So before assuming they were involved ‘in’ a particular battle or event, it is best to see if they were definitely ‘out’.

7. Decorations are often best treated as “stories” – what they were awarded for – action place date, are more important that when they were gazetted or actually presented. Check on the AWM Honours and Awards site.

8. As far as post service life, that is where family records or perhaps “Trove” kicks in.

Writing Tips

1. Keep it concise – if it’s too long, people won’t stick with it.

2. If there is a lot of information, look for key or quirky events - they serve as the ‘hook’ to keep people reading

3. An appropriate point of focus might be a particular incident or some distinguishing characteristic of his/her service.

Added Extras

1. Photos with multiple people - those people who are help us to build biographies and stories of other men and women who served - and yours might be the only photo that exists of them!

2. Quotations are great evidence of your individual’s life and service – but one or two are generally enough, so pick the best ones.

Don’t Forget...

1. Captions and attributions are necessary for any images - respect Copyright and acknowledge the source.

2. Tell us if photos are from a personal collection.

Additional quotes can be added as stories. We found an absolute gem - a letter from WWI Private Max Allan’s Platoon Commander Sergeant John Ponton, addressed to none other than Miss Vera Deakin - the founder of the Red Cross Missing investigations.
Personal Stories

What is the difference between a personal story and a biography?

A personal story can be anything that gives us a glimpse into the life and character of an individual who served.

While a biography narrates the events of a person’s life, a personal story allows you more freedom to help us understand your individual. A personal story could include a story passed down through generations, a poem or, as in the case of Flying Officer Tom Tobin, it could come from their own personal records of service, in which their individual character shines through.

Personal stories:

- Stories can be found anywhere. Look for letters, postcards, art work, sketches, poems, oral histories or audio recordings, personal objects, diaries or memoirs, newspaper articles, magazine articles, artefacts, memorabilia, maps, government publications and reports.
- Stories do not need to be very long to give us a sense of the person they are about.
- Stories can be updated and added to at any time. The more stories about an individual, the easier it is for us to begin to understand who they were.