

Teacher Resource
International Baccalaureate:
Middle Years Programme

INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES



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Introduction

About the RSL 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 (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. (<https://vwma.org.au/>)

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 international conflicts

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 through 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 Middle Years Programme course 'Individuals and Societies'. It outlines the links between the International Baccalaureate curriculum 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.

Please contact the Manager – Schools Program: schools.program@vwma.org.au



Cairo Railway Station, Egypt c1915. Lt R.Ramsay, Automobile Corps and two nurses,

Australian War Memorial, CO5287A.

The Virtual War Memorial and the Middle Years Programme Individuals and Societies

The Virtual War Memorial lends itself particularly well to the Individuals and Societies course in the Middle Years Program 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 Middle Years Level and to prepare them for achievement in the IB Diploma Programme. The following pages highlight where and how explicit links can be made between the Virtual War Memorial and the Individuals and Societies curriculum.

The process of researching an individual who has served Australia allows students to engage with the inquiry, conceptual understanding and global contextualisation that underpin the Middle Years Program in a meaningful way.

Conceptual Understanding

Key concepts

- Change

Each of the conflicts in which Australia has been involved from the Boer War to the present day has shaped the world as much as they have shaped Australia. The conflicts of the twentieth century in particular have had significant political, social and economic impacts on and consequences for relationships between individuals and governments and for the rights of Indigenous people and women.

- Global Interactions

Students will develop deeper understanding from first-hand accounts of interactions he global movement of people and supplies. At an individual level, for many Australians, their involvement in conflicts overseas provided them the first opportunity to experience and interact with very different cultures.

- Time, place, space and systems

Students develop chronologies of individuals and are able to locate them within broader timelines of conflicts and historical periods. They develop their understanding of the relationship between individuals and the political, economic and social systems that irrevocably changed their life through warfare in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Teachers can use the research done and profiles built by students to encourage deeper learning within specific areas relevant to their individuals. For the discipline of history, this may include encouraging students to engage with historical or historiographical debates, such as those in relation to contentious issues.

Global Context

- Identities and relationships

Understanding expressions of individual and collective identity and the way in which Australian's interpreted the distinct cultures they encountered on service.

- Orientation in space and time

Understanding the global movements of people in relation to the conflicts in which Australia was involved, and the role of conflict in precipitating change over time in regions across the world

- Scientific and technical innovation

Understanding the development and impact of technological and scientific innovation through the course of conflict on the individuals involved.

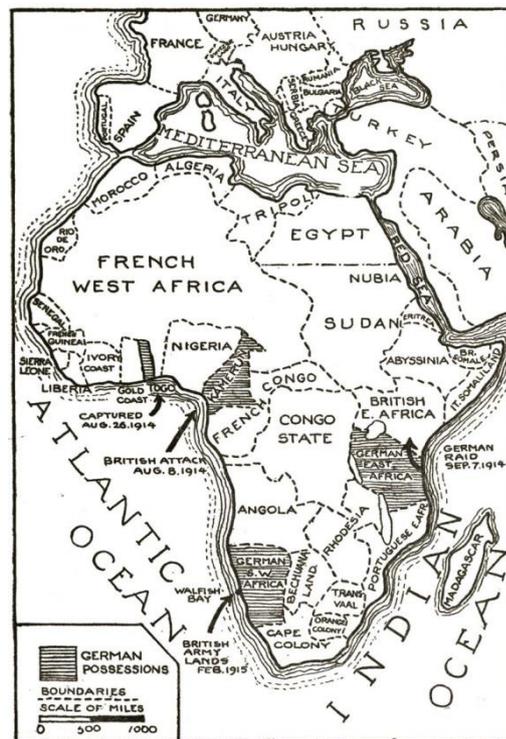
Assessment Criteria

The procedures and outcomes associated with the Virtual War Memorial Schools Program allow students to demonstrate achievement against each of the four criteria.

Criterion A: Knowing and understanding

Students develop factual and conceptual knowledge about individuals and societies.

The Virtual War Memorial Schools Program encourages student to play an active role in developing their understanding of the involvement in and impact of global conflict on individuals and societies in Australia, by researching and developing a profile of a serviceman or woman. Through research and critical analysis and reflection, students will develop a greater factual understanding of the events as well as the individuals. By engaging critically with their research, students will also engage with the key concepts of significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence and ethical understanding seen from the perspective of individuals intimately involved in conflict.



Criterion B: Investigating

Students develop systematic research skills and processes associated with disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Students develop successful strategies for investigating independently and in collaboration with others.

The Schools program is driven by inquiry. Students develop significant skills in relation to historical research including the identification, critical analysis and use of primary and secondary sources to synthesise information about individuals, many of whom have not yet had their stories told. The Virtual War Memorial Schools Program also provides guidance and support to teachers and students with an emphasis on developing in students the autonomy expected of advanced historical research.

Appointment permanent force terminated	—	—	—	—
Appointment citizen force terminated	—	—	—	—
Appointment to reserve	—	—	—	—
Appointment to reserve terminated	—	—	—	—
Transferred to retired list	—	—	—	—

Movements

2.9.42 Missing believed killed air operation. *W.R. 13014*

2.9.42 *Now presumed dead by air Ministry 22/11/42. O.B.R.*

2.9.42 *Now Dead by air Min date shown. Pres. killed. Cas Rep 13014*

Cas Rep. 10/14

Emb Quat 17-7-41

D is emb Sea 19-8-41

Emb Sea 22-11-41

D is emb UK 24-11-41

W.C.A.P. For 13014

PERSONAL RECORD OF SERVICE

1. No. 403562 2. SURNAME DIBBS

3. DATE OF BIRTH 10.1.1919 4. SINGLE

5. CHRISTIAN NAME George

6. CHECKED AT UNIT

7. RELIGION of E.

8. NEXT OF KIN

9. NATIONALITY BRITISH

10. PREVIOUS TRADE & TRADE QUALIFICATIONS Station Hand, Colporteur, Barraba (with father)

11. ENLISTMENTS & RE-ENGAGEMENTS

12. MUSTERINGS

13. PROMOTIONS, RECLASSIFICATIONS, REDUCTIONS AND REVERSIONS

14. SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS

RAAF Record of Service - Dibbs, George Robert, NAA: A9300, Dibbs G R

Criterion C: Communicating

Students develop skills to organize, document and communicate their learning using a variety of media and presentation formats.

One of the key features of the Virtual War Memorial is the provision of a platform for students to communicate the outcomes of their investigation. This is initially done through the completion of a written biography of the individual being researched by the student. Students are also able to communicate their findings through contributions of “Personal Stories”, which allow much more latitude in the medium and style of presentation. Personal stories may be presented in any format and provide students with an opportunity to share their research in a way that engages audiences globally.



153 Squadron aircrew chatting with their ground crew while the aircraft undergoes maintenance. Source: <http://aircrewremembered.com/editorial/resources/chatting-with-ground-crew-w640h480.jpg>

Biography

This biography thanks to Steve Lewis, Bob's biographer in "Chasing Shadows"

Born in Broken Hill in June 1922, from an early age Bob enjoyed a semi-rural upbringing north of Adelaide, where his father, Henry Cowper, worked at Roseworthy Agricultural College. Bob's Father, himself a veteran of World War 1, was one of thousands who suffered horrendous gas burns on the Western Front, and was no doubt an inspiration to the young Bob Cowper.

On the day of his eighteenth birthday, Bob cycled from the family home north of Adelaide to North Terrace in Adelaide City, signalling his intentions to enlist at Number 5 Recruiting Depot of the RAAF.

He was accepted for basic air force training in December 1940 alongside other South Australian volunteers who would ultimately contribute to Australia's reinforcement of the RAF.

Before his nineteenth birthday, Bob graduated from EATS (Empire Air Training Scheme) which he undertook in Western Australia and Canada, and with the extra bonus of a commission (Pilot Officer) was on his way to Scotland for further assessment and ultimately for training as a night fighter.

Decades later, he describes this Atlantic crossing as one of the most harrowing experiences of his eventful wartime career, with freezing weather, overcrowding and the constant fear of attack from German U-boats.

Biography of Robert Cowper, Squadron Leader 453 Squadron, formerly Pilot Officer 153 Squadron

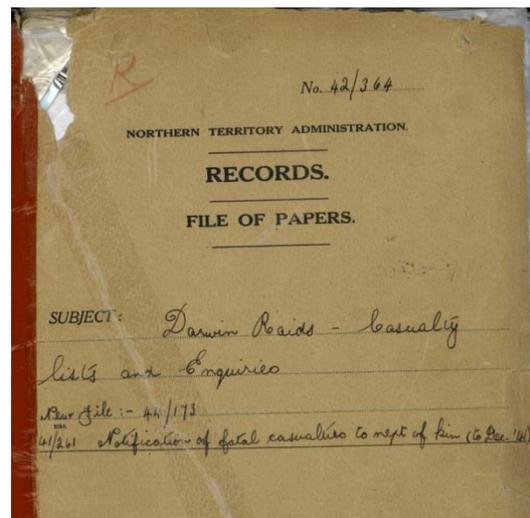
Criterion D: Thinking critically

Students use critical-thinking skills to develop and apply their understanding of individuals and societies and the process of investigation.

Students will develop and call upon their skills for critical thinking in compiling and interpreting sources to complete a detailed biography of an individual who served. They may come across sources with conflicting information and will need to contextualise the sources they use to build an accurate picture of the individual's life before, during and, if appropriate, after service.

Through the Virtual War Memorial Schools Program, students:

- Use sources generated from and about those who were directly involved in key events in global theatres of war, discovered through the research resources provided by the Education Portal and links to digital and physical collections, archives and museums.
- Are exposed to war as seen through the eyes of their individual, families, comrades, commanding officers etc. with a particular emphasis on the experiences of Australians.
- Develop a greater understanding of twentieth- and twenty-first century Australia and how it has been changed by conflict, including changing roles of women, government controls and events such as the bombing of Darwin
- 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.



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



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

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.

Schools Program Manager

Direct Dial Number | 8100 7318

Email | schools.program@vwma.org.au

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 RSL VIRTUAL WAR MEMORIAL

Start here to find out what information the RSL 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://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people>

Enter last name... Enter first names... Enter service no...

Showing 10 people of interest

WILLIAMS, Ronald George
Service number TX2146
Lieutenant
2nd/40th Infantry Battalion
2nd AIF WW 2
Born 7 Aug 1920

DURDIN, Ar
Service numbr
Lieutenant
27th Infantry
AIF WW1
Born 26 Mar

2 AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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

<https://www.awm.gov.au/people/roll-search>

Search for a person

If you are looking for a family member, friend or relative who served, this will guide you to the relevant areas of our website that contain information.

Name:

Service number:

Unit name:

Conflict:

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>

Find War Dead Find a Cemetery

Casualty name

[Advanced Search](#)

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>

NameSearch

Family name

Category of records

Use exact spelling

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>

Advanced search

Enter search terms in at least one of the fields below

Keyword:

Title:

Creator:

Subject:

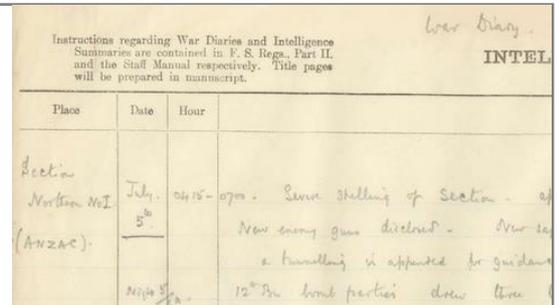
Extending Your Research

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.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/awm4/>



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

<https://www.awm.gov.au/people/roll-search>



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

<http://www.catalog.slsa.sa.gov.au/search/X>

State Library of South Australia

[New search](#) [Contact us](#) [Help topics](#)

[Advanced keyword search](#)

Enter search terms

Need More Help?

The Virtual War Memorial Australia site 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.

Building A Profile

ACCESSING THE PROFILE

From the homepage of the Virtual War Memorial, 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.

Upload a Picture

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

Add a Link or Resource

- 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**

Add my story

- 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

TITLE/DESCRIPTION/NUMBER:

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

People	Objects	Activities

STEP 2: INFERENCE

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

STEP 3: QUESTIONS

1. What questions does this photograph raise?

2. How could you find answers?

Primary Source Organiser

TITLE OF SOURCE	TYPE (Eg. honour roll, service record, letter)	AUTHOR	DATE	SUMMARY

Writing a Biography

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 in, 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 than 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

More detail can be added as a **Resource** in your individual's profile, eg. a standalone document such as memoir.

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.



1 Malaya, an A.I.F. anti-tank gun crew, 03/1941, AWM 006372

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.

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.

Personal Stories



2 Tom Tobin after he was commissioned with the rank of Pilot Officer, probably August 1944, Jane Eblen (nee Tobin) private collection

Tom Tobin's Log Book

Tom kept an exquisitely detailed log book of his flying career, together with memorabilia such as maps, photographs and the like.

His log book is now in the possession of his daughter, Jane. He recorded in great detail and in very fine neat hand writing every mission he flew.

These will be recorded progressively on this site.

He also kept track of the tail numbers of the aircraft he flew and their eventual fate. Lancaster 642 was the aircraft in which he flew most of his missions.

One evening in March 1945, he and his crew were due to fly but his navigator called in sick and rather than split the crew, they were stood down and another crew took 642. It didn't return. No wonder flight crews had a reputation for being superstitious.

He is mentioned repeatedly in the 153 Squadron website as one of the characters (and survivors) of the Squadron.

At war's end his grateful crew (he had brought them home safely 30 times) presented him with a beautiful scale replica of their aircraft. On its base is inscribed the targets of the 30 missions he 'skipped'. It is now in the possession of his grandson Heath Eblen.

From information provided by Jane Eblen, Tom's daughter.

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 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.