



# VIRTUAL WAR MEMORIAL AUSTRALIA

## WRITING A BIOGRAPHY

A biography is the story of a person's life, told by someone else. You have already completed the difficult task of collecting the information. Now, the aim is to convert that information into an interesting story people will want to engage with!

### Step 1 – Gather your information

Bring together all the information you have discovered on your person. You may have completed this in your serviceperson research guide template. You will need to complete a reference list so ensure you have all the details you need.

Is anything missing? Could there be letters, diaries, oral histories, interviews available? A general internet search might help.

### Step 2 – Prepare an outline and consider how to present your work

Presentation: Do you want to present your work in a written or audiovisual format?

Create a **timeline** of your person's life – which events would you like to talk about in more detail? Which events sound more interesting or exciting? Plan your work.

If preparing an audiovisual presentation gather the images, you will use to complete it.

**Remember!** A biography is a recount – events need to be in **chronological order** and in the **past tense**.

### Step 3 - Prepare the biography

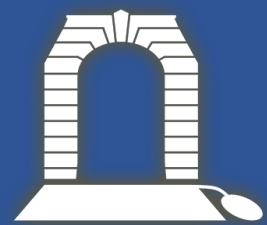
If preparing a written biography, complete it in Word to assist with the checking of spelling and grammar. Tell a story using continuous prose with short paragraphs, rather than using dot points. There is no need to have titles in your biography, but you can use them if you wish.

#### What to include:

##### Life Before the War

Birth, parents, siblings, and residence. Relationships to others who served Australia are also helpful.

School records and previous employment help set the scene of your person's life before the war. Did they serve in the cadets or militia before going to war?



# VIRTUAL WAR MEMORIAL AUSTRALIA

## WRITING A BIOGRAPHY

### Life During the War

Enlistment, embarkation, re-assignment (where and when it took place). Many soldiers embarked with one unit and ended up in another.

Absences such as illness, courses/training and detachment to other units are generally recorded in the service record. Before you assume that they were involved in a particular battle, check to make sure that they were not absent.

Any decorations (Honours or Awards)? These are a great opportunity to tell the story of why your person was awarded that honour.

### Life after the War

Did your person make it home? If not, what were the events surrounding their death?

If they did make it home, what kind of life did they lead after the war? Did they get married, have children, start a business, serve in another war or conflict?

### **Step 4 - Added Extras**

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

**Personal details** are a great way to add depth to your biography. Some questions to consider:

- 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?
- Who did they leave behind?

### **Checklist – Have I...**

Written the biography as a recount using past tense?

Kept to the verifiable facts?

Referenced the sources used to write the biography?

Uploaded links to documents and sources you used?

Uploaded the photographs and images you have found with referencing?



AWM A00714 – Australian 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Headquarters at ANZAC