

Women and war: Additional websites and activities

WEBSITE RESOURCES (ADDITIONAL)

www.culture.gov.au/stories/category.htm#history

(Australian stories: history links)

www.culture.gov.au/articles/anzac/

(ANZAC Day)

www.culture.gov.au/articles/longtan/

(The Battle of Long Tan and the Vietnam War)

www.culture.gov.au/articles/boerwar/

(The Boer War)

www.culture.gov.au/articles/remembrance/

(Remembrance Day)

www.culture.gov.au/articles/anzac/lastpost.htm

(The Last Post)

www.culture.gov.au/articles/mateship/

(Mateship, diggers and wartime)

<http://www.culture.gov.au/articles/music/military/>

(Military music)

www.culture.gov.au/articles/shipwrecks/ww2/

(Second World War shipwrecks in Australian waters)

ACTIVITIES

Mapping

Provide the students with stencils of world maps. Invite them to use books, atlases and the internet to locate the places that Australians have served during times of war. Have students label the countries, the names of the conflicts and the years they took place.

Students could work in pairs to calculate the distances of some of these places from Australia.

Women at home

On the home front, women dealt with the consequences of war — not just managing children and family responsibilities alone, and coping with shortages of resources, but also experiencing fears for the future, and the grief and trauma of losing loved ones. Most women stayed in Australia while the men left to serve their country overseas.

How did the women who stayed home during wartime help in the war effort? Discuss with the students, then ask them to list the wartime activities of women, from working in volunteer organisations, to taking over the jobs of men in certain trades, to knitting socks for the soldiers.

Invite some parent helpers to come in and teach the students how to knit.

Prisoners of war

Allow the class to research the women who were taken as prisoners during the Second World War.

Encourage the students to write a recount of when the women were taken, why they were taken, where they were taken, and the conditions and treatment they received. Invite them to include anything positive to come out of their experiences.

Nurses in the First World War

Help the students find the names of the 4 nurses who received bravery awards in the First World War. Invite the students to work in small groups to research the following topics in relation to one of the medal recipients:

- dates of birth and death
- background information
- achievements in the war
- names of the award/s they received.

Recruitment poster

Ask the students to work with a classmate to design and make a poster aimed at recruiting women to help in the war. Encourage the students to use a catchy slogan as well as an illustration. Offer them the option of hand-drawing the poster or creating it on computer.

Wartime artists

Official war artists were appointed by the Australian government in the Second World War. Display pictures and paintings by Sybil Craig, Nora Heysen and Stella Bowen. Discuss with the class the styles and content of the artworks, and the artists' impressions of war.

Code breakers

Divide the students into pairs. Ask each student to make up a code with a secret message for their partner to solve. Encourage each student to write messages related to women and wartime.

The war today

Provide the students with access to the internet and ask them to find out the following:

- How many Australian women are on active duty at present?
- What different roles are Australian women performing in wars at present?
- What training is required for one particular role (e.g. pilot, navy captain, soldier, etc.)?
- What peacekeeping duties are being performed by women at the present time?

Circle meeting

Provide the students with the topic 'War is no place for women'. Ask them to sit in a large class circle. Go around the circle asking the students to say 'Yes' if they agree or 'No' if they disagree with the topic. Move around the circle again, asking the students to give a short reason for their answer, then around again, allowing them to contribute interesting facts or further opinions.

Inform the students that only one person talks at a time, there are no wrong answers and that they may pass if they choose.

First aid

As a class, set up a hospital tent. Instruct the students how to bandage arms, legs and heads effectively. If any of the students have a parent or family member in the medical profession, ask them to come in and demonstrate plaster and bandaging.

Special guest

Ask the students if they have female relatives who have served in a war. Invite a special guest into the classroom to share their experiences with the class. Encourage the students to write some sensible questions to ask the guest at the end of her talk.