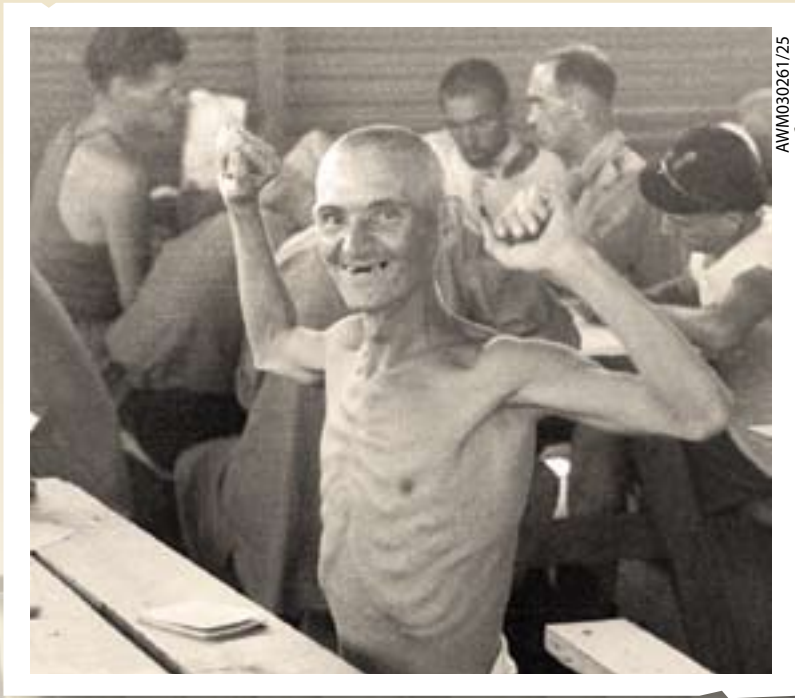




Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

# AUSTRALIAN PRISONERS OF WAR



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# CONTENTS

## Introduction for teachers

*Using Australian Prisoners of War in the classroom*

PAGE

2

## TOPIC

1



## The History of Australian prisoners of war

*Captivity in war is a difficult and confronting experience, regardless of the particular conflict*

PAGE

9

## TOPIC

2



## Capture

*It was a terrible feeling*

PAGE

31

## TOPIC

3



## Life in the camps

*We all helped break the boredom*

PAGE

43

## TOPIC

4



## Guards, civilians & internees

*We became quite matey, actually*

PAGE

55

TOPIC

5



## Humour & mateship

*Every one of us had someone to care for us*

PAGE

65

TOPIC

6



## Food, conditions & treatment

*I saw life at it's best and it's worst*

PAGE

75

TOPIC

7



## Despair, hope, secrets & escape

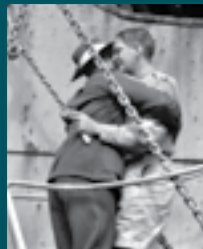
*We never had any other thought but to get out tonight*

PAGE

87

TOPIC

8



## The end of the war, coming home & reflection

*It was one of the great feelings of life*

PAGE

99

# Introduction for teachers

## *Using Australian Prisoners of War in the classroom*

### The resource

*Australian Prisoners of War* has been produced by the Department of Veterans' Affairs as an introduction for both teachers and students in Australian secondary schools to the wealth of primary source material available in the *Australians at War Film Archive*.

### Educational aim

The aim of this educational resource is to provide teachers and students with self-contained classroom-ready materials and teaching strategies to explore the firsthand experiences of Australian prisoners of war (POWs). Through the use of filmed interviews from the Archive as the core of the resource, it provides a unique collection of information and evidence for developing students' knowledge and ideas about those experiences and encourages students to share and discuss their reactions to the stories behind the statistics and the history.

### Components

This resource comprises three elements:

- a **DVD** comprising eight chapters, each one of which is between 12 – 15 minutes duration;
- a **Teachers' Guidebook**, with classroom-ready documents, worksheets and suggested teaching strategies to complement each of the DVD chapters; and
- a **CD-ROM** containing interview transcripts and archival film footage and photographic stills for students to further enhance their knowledge of both the veterans interviewed on the DVD and the Australian POW experience.

We recommend lesson formats where students view a chapter of the DVD and then respond using one or more of the activities suggested. Many of the ideas in this resource will no doubt also act as springboards for activities you devise for your own classes.

### Eight Topics

This resource primarily investigates the experiences of Australian POWs from World War Two and the Korean War. It provides students with resources for studying the major themes of these experiences through the on-screen memories and words of former POWs, framed by accompanying narration and images which place those memories in an historical perspective. The titles of the Topics are:

- 1. A short history of Australian prisoners of war**
- 2. Capture**
- 3. Life in the camps**
- 4. Guards, civilians and internees**
- 5. Humour and mateship**
- 6. Food, conditions and treatment**
- 7. Despair, hope, secrets and escape**
- 8. The end of the war, coming home and reflection**

Each topic begins with a summary of the accompanying DVD chapter, brief background material and suggested research that can be undertaken by students before viewing the DVD. There is also a set of reproducible pages that contain further information and evidence as well as key questions and classroom activities. The worksheets can be photocopied and used 'as is' in the classroom or for homework assignments. We have also suggested a list of questions that can be used as a stimulus for discussion or developed into student activities that could be completed in a single teaching period or over a number of sessions.

### Methodology

The resource uses an inquiry approach – students are provided with a variety of interviews, evidence and information and encouraged to analyse this material to form their own conclusions about the nature of the experiences of Australian POWs.

### Curriculum outcomes

The resource and its materials have been shaped around the History/SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment) curricula in all states and territories with an emphasis on achieving essential learning outcomes. It should be noted that the interviews contained in the resource can go beyond History into the English classroom, the Personal Development areas and the exploration of the Australian character and experience in many different school curriculum domains of learning.

### Curriculum Levels

The resource has been designed for use with students from all secondary levels.

### Understanding this resource

The material you will see, hear and read about in this resource deals with what has been referred to as a 'difficult and confronting experience'. When people are held in captivity during wartime many of the usual forms of acceptable behaviour drop away by both captors and the captured.

The interviews that are contained here are a vital part of our national story. The oral history collection that is the *Australians at War Film Archive* contributes greatly to our historical understanding of Australia's wartime past, in particular the POW experience, through first hand accounts of what happened. This resource facilitates a direct link between you and the people who suffered at the hands of their captors. One implication of this is the rawness of some of the material. You will very occasionally hear language you may consider offensive. You will certainly hear difficult stories.

The POW accounts here reveal moments of cruelty and heartbreak. There are also accounts of acts of humanity, of personal sacrifice and humility, and examples that give clarity and meaning to our understanding of the concept of 'mateship'.

Some of the exercises will encourage students to empathise with the former prisoners of war. This is not done to sensationalise or trivialise their experiences but rather to enhance the learning experience. It is not intended to upset or confront students. Rather it is hoped that by taking tentative steps to empathise with the topic students will develop an understanding of what it meant to be a POW, while studying in a safe and supportive environment.

Topics such as death, ill-treatment and disease are inevitable in this resource. By hearing about them directly from the interviewees, you cannot help but be affected by their experiences. These are not statistics or secondary accounts of what happened. These are the viewpoints of veterans who experienced a period of their life unimaginable to us today.

The interviewees are showing us the greatest respect by allowing their memories to be recorded and used for educational purposes. It is important we treat those memories with similar respect. Students should listen to the interviews but

not judge. The events discussed took place in a different time and place. It would be unfair to try to judge the veterans and the other interviewees by our standards of behaviour or what we regard as acceptable. Instead, students need to listen and learn.

It is a common desire amongst former POWs that nobody else should ever have to undergo what they experienced. These POWs have allowed their memories to be recorded and brought to the surface so that others will understand the POW experience. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to study history with this collection. These are the words of the people who were actually there.

### A disclaimer

The inquiry approach which is the guiding methodology of this resource requires students to be exposed to a range of views, interviews and evidence for them to develop their own conclusions. Teachers should keep in mind that some materials may contain offensive language or negative stereotypes reflecting the culture or language of a period or place. Teachers may find that, while most students will be able to manage the material comfortably, some sections of the resource could be disturbing to others. Teachers are urged to preview the material and to adapt the resource to suit their own teaching style and to meet the students' needs.

The interviews presented in this resource are the memories and reflections of the person being interviewed. The material is presented in good faith, but does not reflect the considered views of the Department of Veterans' Affairs or *The Australians at War Film Archive*. Nor can it be assumed that the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the *Australians at War Film Archive* agree with or endorse any content or opinions expressed in websites or other publications quoted or referred to in this resource.

## Further Resources

There is a large collection of available resources about Australian prisoners of war and the wars in which they were involved. These are some resources that teachers and students will find useful.

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Vansina, Jan *Oral tradition as history*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

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The Australians at War Film Archive  
[www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au/](http://www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au/)  
Search under Categories for prisoners of war

Gallipoli and the AE2 Submarine  
[www.anzacsite.gov.au](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au)

Australians on the Western Front - World War One  
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[www.awm.gov.au/thestoloneyears](http://www.awm.gov.au/thestoloneyears)

# Introductory Activity Worksheet 1

## What do I know about Australian POWs?

1. What do you already know about the Second World War, the Korean War and the experiences of Australian prisoners and civilian internees during these wars? Try and set out ten things you know about each of these subjects in the **What do I know about?** table below.
2. Share your answers with the rest of the class. Add other student's answers to your table in the **What do others in the class know?** column.
3. Keep this sheet and as you watch each chapter of the DVD, add the new facts you will discover to the **What have I found out?** column in your table.

Subject	What do I know about?	What do others in the class know?	What have I found out?
Second World War	1 .....	1 .....	1 .....
	2 .....	2 .....	2 .....
	3 .....	3 .....	3 .....
	4 .....	4 .....	4 .....
	5 .....	5 .....	5 .....
	6 .....	6 .....	6 .....
	7 .....	7 .....	7 .....
	8 .....	8 .....	8 .....
	9 .....	9 .....	9 .....
	10 .....	10 .....	10 .....
The Korean War	1 .....	1 .....	1 .....
	2 .....	2 .....	2 .....
	3 .....	3 .....	3 .....
	4 .....	4 .....	4 .....
	5 .....	5 .....	5 .....
	6 .....	6 .....	6 .....
	7 .....	7 .....	7 .....
	8 .....	8 .....	8 .....
	9 .....	9 .....	9 .....
	10 .....	10 .....	10 .....
Australian prisoners of the Germans	1 .....	1 .....	1 .....
	2 .....	2 .....	2 .....
	3 .....	3 .....	3 .....
	4 .....	4 .....	4 .....
	5 .....	5 .....	5 .....
	6 .....	6 .....	6 .....
	7 .....	7 .....	7 .....
	8 .....	8 .....	8 .....
	9 .....	9 .....	9 .....
	10 .....	10 .....	10 .....

# Worksheet 2

Subject	What do I know about?	What do others in the class know?	What have I found out?
<b>Australian prisoners of the Japanese</b>	1 .....	1 .....	1 .....
	2 .....	2 .....	2 .....
	3 .....	3 .....	3 .....
	4 .....	4 .....	4 .....
	5 .....	5 .....	5 .....
	6 .....	6 .....	6 .....
	7 .....	7 .....	7 .....
	8 .....	8 .....	8 .....
	9 .....	9 .....	9 .....
	10 .....	10 .....	10 .....
<b>Australian prisoners of the Chinese</b>	1 .....	1 .....	1 .....
	2 .....	2 .....	2 .....
	3 .....	3 .....	3 .....
	4 .....	4 .....	4 .....
	5 .....	5 .....	5 .....
	6 .....	6 .....	6 .....
	7 .....	7 .....	7 .....
	8 .....	8 .....	8 .....
	9 .....	9 .....	9 .....
	10 .....	10 .....	10 .....
<b>Australian civilian Internees</b>	1 .....	1 .....	1 .....
	2 .....	2 .....	2 .....
	3 .....	3 .....	3 .....
	4 .....	4 .....	4 .....
	5 .....	5 .....	5 .....
	6 .....	6 .....	6 .....
	7 .....	7 .....	7 .....
	8 .....	8 .....	8 .....
	9 .....	9 .....	9 .....
	10 .....	10 .....	10 .....