



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

A U S T R A L I A N S I N W O R L D W A R I

AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS



Educational Activities

Australians in World War I • **AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS**

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Educational Activities

Introduction

Australian Flying Corps is the fourth title in a series of books published by the Department of Veterans' Affairs that explores aspects of World War 1. This set of classroom activities is designed to encourage students to become engaged with the text and the rich range of historical sources it incorporates.

A copy of the book was sent to every Australian secondary school in 2011. In addition, the text and images from *Australian Flying Corps* are available online, allowing students to more easily access them.

Overview

This educational resource has five discrete activities, each one focusing on a different theme.

What role did the Australian Flying Corps play in World War 1?

This activity focuses on the essay that forms the written text of *Australian Flying Corps*, assisting students to sequence the events portrayed chronologically and introducing them to key terms and concepts.

What were the experiences of members of the Australian Flying Corps?

This activity encourages students to assess the reliability of sources by identifying their origin, purpose and context. It also assists students to identify, analyse and empathise with the perspectives of people from the past.

How significant was technology to the Australian Flying Corps during World War 1?

In this activity, students explore the ways that new ideas and technological developments contributed to changes that affected the Australian Flying Corps during World War 1.

How did the opposing forces regard each other?

Students explore sources portraying the lives of Allied and German servicemen in World War 1, and analyse the perspectives of men from both sides of the conflict.

How is the contribution of the Australian Flying Corps recognised and commemorated?

In this activity, students explore the range of ways that service by members of the Australian Flying Corps has been recognised and commemorated, and design their own commemorative memorial.

Each activity provides for a range of learning styles and develops lower and higher order thinking skills. Websites to provide for further student research are listed.

Curriculum outcomes

These activities have been developed with specific reference to Year 9 History in the emerging Australian Curriculum, where a depth study of World War 1 is required. Each activity has specific links to the key inquiry questions, historical knowledge and understanding, and historical skills listed at the beginning. The learning content and activities also allow for cross-curricula perspectives and the development of general capabilities relevant to this level.

More generally, the material can be easily adapted for use with other levels and curriculum areas, particularly English, media and technology.

Using the resource

Teachers using these materials are encouraged to adapt them to suit their own purposes. Each of the five activities is discrete, allowing teachers to select and use specific activities or parts of activities. One option would be to have students do the overview in Activity 1 independently before allocating Activities 2, 3 and 4 to different groups. Activity 5 could serve as a culminating activity with a commemorative focus.

All images and written sources used in these activities are from *Australian Flying Corps*. When quotations are used a link is provided to the relevant page from the book. Each image also has a link to an online photo gallery, allowing students to view large digital versions. Further historical information about each image can be found in the captions provided in the hardcopy of the book, or by using the image number provided to access the collection search on the Australian War Memorial website.

Disclaimer

This resource encourages students to explore and interpret a range of historical sources. The Department of Veterans' Affairs cannot be assumed to agree with or endorse any content or opinions expressed in websites or other publications quoted or referred to in this resource.

6. List the variety of tasks performed by the No. 1 Squadron AFC aircraft and crews.

7. How and why was Frank McNamara recognised?

8. Why was the development and delivery of new aircraft so important throughout the war?

The Western Front

9. How many Australian Flying Corps Squadrons had formed by late 1917? Why were men keen to join the Corps despite the dangers involved?

10. What were some challenges faced by new recruits to the Australian Flying Corps? What were the challenges for experienced members?

11. Who was Manfred von Richthofen and why was he significant?

12. Which three Squadrons served on the Western Front? What were some achievements of these Squadrons?

B. Know your terms

Use the text and your own research to write a short definition of the following terms:

Strategically important

British dominion

Allied assault

Western Front

German offensive

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Timeline of WW1 and the role of the Australian Flying Corps

EVENTS	DATES	AFC MILESTONES
	1913	The newly formed Australian Army's Central Flying School is established at Point Cook, near Melbourne
World War I begins	August 1914	
	April 1915	The Half Flight arrive in Mesopotamia and Australia's first experience of military aviation begins
First members of the Australian Imperial Force land at Gallipoli	25 April 1915	
Evacuation of troops from Gallipoli	19–20 December 1915	
First Australian troops sent to France	March 1916	
	March 1916	No. 1 Squadron AFC sails to the Middle East to begin aerial surveillance and mapping, and attacking enemy troops and supplies
	April 1916	Half Flight members taken as Prisoners of War by the Turkish along with other British and Indian soldiers after the fall of Kut
Battle of Fromelles	July 1916	
	December 1916	AFC Squadrons 2, 3 and 4 commence training with British forces in England
Battle of Passchendaele	July–November 1917	
	September 1917	AFC Squadrons 2, 3 and 4 commence action on the Western Front
	Late 1917	New AFC Squadrons, 5, 6, 7, and 8, begin training in England to meet the growing demand for aircraft personnel
Capture of the Hindenburg Line	8 August 1918	
Germany surrenders	11 November 1918	

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B. All in a day's work

The sources below are all from *Australian Flying Corps* (AFC). Use them to explore the life of the aviators of the Australian Flying Corps during World War I.

When using historical sources, it is important to first assess their reliability. Analyse each of these sources by considering it in light of the following questions.

- Who created the source?
- When was it created?
- For what purpose was it created?
- Do you consider this to be a reliable historical source? Why?
- Do you consider it to be a useful historical source? Why?

Source 1 is done for you as an example.

Source 1: This source is a photograph taken during World War I. Although I do not know the date or the photographer, it is a reliable historical source as it was taken during the war by someone who was there. It is useful as a source as it shows the number of planes and how close they flew to each other, but the planes and tents are so far away I cannot see much detail which limits its use.

Source 1

No. 1 Squadron aircraft take off on a raid from Mejdal

(Page 56 AFC.) AWM B02050



Source 2

... air fights are a several times daily occurrence now and it is good fun to watch 'em. ... Our latest planes are wonderful; ... to see them go straight up till they stop, then come down tail first, turn a few somersaults, spin around on their own axis, loop the loop ... Oh, blazes, don't I want to be an aviator. I get ... green with envy at times.

Thomas Baker, letter, 1916. (Page 14 AFC.)



Source 3

Inside a No. 1 Squadron barracks

(Page 68 AFC.) AWM P00589.014

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Source 4

Holy Sailor! There loomed out of the sky 6 lovely big fat Albatross scouts. It didn't look too healthy they were about 1000 feet above us which is a big advantage. ... Well it was no good sitting there and being murdered, so we pulled our noses up and went straight into the Hun formation ... they split up all over the sky. I followed two ... Put a long burst into one from my front gun. He put his nose down vertically. I followed him down at about 200 miles an hour. My Ob[Observer] got both guns to bear ... and ripped them into him. ... The Hun burst into flames and crashed in an orchard. Meanwhile his mate had been "looking" at us from a distance. I turned on him and he tooled to the hills with another. I overtook them and they adopted their favourite tactics of dodging in and out of the hills and gullies. ... I circled with them for 15 minutes and had the time of my life ... we put into them nearly 1000 rounds of ammunition and got so close at times that we could see the colour of their eyes. ... I enjoyed it immensely as soon as I got over the first touch of stage fright.

Lieutenant Stan Nunan, letter to family, 1918 (Page 12 AFC)

Source 5

It was the fear of the unforeseen, the inescapable, the imminent hand of death which might ... be ruthlessly laid upon me. I realised ... why pilots cracked up ... nobody could stand the strain indefinitely, ultimately it reduced you to a dithering state, near to imbecility ... always you had to fight it down, you had to go out and do the job.

Cecil Lewis, recollection, 1936 (Page 24 AFC)

Source 6

At first glance the airman's life was a privileged one. The thought that flying would take up a few hours a day leaving the remaining time for rest, safe behind the lines, must have been very appealing. But those long empty hours dragged. Airmen might sleep, go for walks, play tennis or some other game, eat or drink tea but real rest was elusive. Time on their hands meant time to think about the next job, about friends they had seen die or men they had killed. The transition from moments of extreme danger to hours of peaceful existence, sometimes several times a day, kept men in a constant state of exhaustion.

Ian Hodges, *Australian Flying Corps*, Department of Veteran's Affairs, 2010 (Page 18 AFC)



Source 7

Dawn encounter, 4 Squadron AFC and Richthofen's circus, France, March 1918, by David Hammond, 1971, oil on canvas

Page 96 AFC. AWM ART17171

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Source 8

The air is pungent with the smell of cordite; filled with the ... staccato chatter of the Vickers, Lewis and Spandaus. ... Half-rolling, diving, zooming, stalling, "split-slipping", by inches you miss collision with friend or foe. ... stuttering streams of lead, with only tracer bullets, or a crackle or smack in your wings or fuselage to appraise you of where the enemy fire is going, or has gone. A Pfalz flashes by, and down, with a Bristol on his tail ... bullets thud into the tail of the Hun ... (he) zooms, and turns in an endeavour to shake the Bristol off his tail. In vain. There is a wilder, more violent noise. The Hun machine is hurtling earthwards, not diving or spinning. Not trying to evade its pursuer. Hurtling ... Finish.

Leslie Sutherland, recollection, 193? (Page 12–13 AFC)

Use your analysis and interpretation of the previous 8 sources to prepare a written reflection on the experiences of airmen who served in the Australian Flying Corps. You may like to consider questions such as:

- Why were young men attracted to being Australian Flying Corps aviators?
- What skills did they need?
- How did they spend their time?
- What were the challenges they faced?

C. Writing home

Take on the role of an airman in No. 1 Squadron AFC serving in Palestine in 1918. Photocopy and cut out the greetings postcard and use the back of it to write a message to your family in Australia telling them about your experiences.

To help with this task visit www.australiansatwar.gov.au to explore the stories, told through letters and documents, of Australian men and women who served in various wars. You may like to look up members of the Australian Flying Corps.

Page 77 AFC. (AWM P01726.003; photographer Oswald Coulson)



Activity 3: How significant was technology to the Australian Flying Corps during World War I?

<p>Year 9 History Key inquiry question: How did new ideas and technological developments contribute to change in this period? Depth study: World War I</p>	
<p>Historical knowledge and understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I The impact of World War I, with a particular emphasis on Australia 	<p>Historical skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence events chronologically to demonstrate the relationship between events in different periods and places Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods

A. The aircraft of the Australian Flying Corps

Use the book *Australian Flying Corps* to find an image of each of the following aircraft used by the Australian Army's Central Flying School, the Mesopotamian Half Flight and the Australian Flying Corps leading up to and during World War I. Create a digital visual presentation which tells the story of technological progress during these years. Draw on what you can learn from the images, and your own research, to provide captions for each image.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Boxkite | R. E. 8 |
| Maurice Farman | Bristol Fighter |
| Caudron | S. E. 5a |
| B. E. 2c | Sopwith Camel |

B. Cause and effect

Use *Australian Flying Corps* to find evidence to support each of the following statements. List examples to support each statement.

<p>World War I accelerated the pace of technological development in aviation.</p> <p><i>Aircraft needed to be improved to deal with the harsh climate in the Middle East.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Advances in aviation technology changed the way that World War I was fought.</p> <p><i>Planes could carry photographic equipment to map enemy territory.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Analyse your responses. Which statement has the stronger supporting evidence? Discuss how these two statements relate to each other.

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C. The distant enemy

Read this extract from page 13–14 of *Australian Flying Corps* and then answer the questions below.

Within hours of the offensive beginning Australian aircraft were flying over the battle, reporting the withdrawal of Turkish forces while also bombing and machine-gunning men and animals below. Flying in relays, Australian and British airmen killed relentlessly in what one called '*a day of slaughter.*' More such days followed. Surrounded on three sides and with only one avenue of retreat large numbers of Turkish troops tried to cross the Jordan but the columns of humanity, animals and vehicles made easy targets for marauding airmen. Twenty thousand Turks on the Samaria-El Afule road faced fliers bent on their slaughter and when Australian Light Horsemen came upon them later in the day the traumatised survivors surrendered without a fight.

Flying dawn patrol on 21 September Nunan and Allen Brown reported large numbers of Turks retreating along the narrow cliff-flanked road through the Wady Fara gorge. Having bombed the lead vehicles the pilots and observers turned their machine guns on the trapped column from just metres away. Clive Conrick, Nunan's observer, saw the impact of his bullets on the terrified men clambering up the roadside cliffs. Then Nunan raked the column, remembering later the 'abject terror' on his victim's faces. Their ammunition exhausted they fled from the scene as more Bristols appeared to continue the killing. Sutherland, in one of these machines, called it '*a bomber's, a machine-gunner's paradise.*' The Australians destroyed the column's rear vehicles and for the rest of the day bombed and machine-gunned the trapped men and horses in relays until '*the road was a shambles ... littered with the bodies of the dead and dying ...*'

Some Turks waved white cloths in a gesture of surrender but airmen could not take prisoners and the slaughter continued into the next day. When infantry arrived expecting to meet a large enemy force they '*were absolutely appalled ... they took a hundred prisoners – all that were left.*' Writing in the 1930s Sutherland described the killing at Wady Fara as '*not so much war as cold-blooded, scientific butchery*' saying '*I feel sick even now when I think of it.*' (Page 13–14 AFC)

How did you feel after reading this extract?

What does it tell you about the impact that technology had on warfare and on the people involved?

Are there lessons that could be learnt from this incident?

Can you think of examples of similar incidents from more recent conflicts?

D. Taming technology

Technological advances in equipment and weaponry continue to the present day. Research the Geneva Protocol, the Ottawa Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other conventions and guidelines that have been developed by the United Nations (UN) to ensure that humanitarian perspectives are taken into account when decisions are made about deploying technology during conflicts.

Geneva Protocol

Ottawa Convention

Convention on Cluster Munitions

Other UN conventions and guidelines

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Activity 4: How did the opposing forces regard each other?

Year 9 History

Key inquiry question: What was the significance of World War I?

Depth study: World War I

Historical knowledge and understanding:

- An overview of the causes of World War I and the reasons why men enlisted to fight in the war
- The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I

Historical skills:

- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations

A. Serving their country

Compare and contrast the images from *Australian Flying Corps* below. List the similarities and differences between the skills, experience and perspectives of the men in these images.



Australian ground personnel turn an S. E. 5a's propeller to start the engine



German pilots, including Manfred von Richthofen



'A' Flight, No. 4 Squadron, stand in front of their Sopwith Camels



German aircraft mechanics at a Turkish aerodrome

B. Allies and enemies

Explore the images and captions from *Australian Flying Corps* below. Reflect on how the Allied and German airmen regarded each other's skills. How do you think the men depicted in each of the images may have defined 'the enemy'?



Source 1

'A crackerjack pilot, and a splendid shot', said one Australian pilot of German ace Gerhardt Felmy, seen here (on right) with No. 1 Squadron's Lieutenant Claude Vautin. Vautin, seen diving towards the sea with two German scouts on his tail, managed to land with his controls shot away and was taken prisoner. A German airman dropped this photograph and a note from Vautin over the Australian's airfield to confirm that he was unharmed.

Page 60 AFC. AWM A03757



Source 2

Lieutenant Jack Potts and his observer, Lieutenant Vincent Parkinson, were on patrol in January 1918 when a British R. E. 8 seeking to avoid a German scout crashed into their aircraft. Parkinson survived the ensuing crash but Potts, aged 20, was killed. His body lies beside his aircraft while German soldiers study the wreckage. Not long afterwards a German aircraft dropped a photograph of Jack's grave over No. 1 Squadron's aerodrome.

Page 63 AFC. AWM B02136



Source 3

Manfred von Richthofen shot down eighty aircraft before he was killed in 1918. Australian soldiers carry his body from the wreck of his Fokker triplane.

Page 99 AFC. ART02495

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Source 4

Australian soldiers and airmen gathered around the remains of Manfred von Richthofen's Fokker triplane at No. 3 Squadron's aerodrome; as soon as they discovered the dead pilot's identity they stripped the aircraft for souvenirs.

Page 100 AFC. AWM K00048



Source 5

No. 3 Squadron personnel fire a volley over Richtofen's grave on 22 April 1918.

Page 101 AFC. AWM K00044

C. German journal

Take on the role of a German pilot in 1917. Write a one page entry in your personal journal where you reflect on a day of action and your encounters with and thoughts about the enemy.

Notetaking:

Activity 5: How is the contribution of the Australian Flying Corps recognised and commemorated?

Year 9 History

Key inquiry question: What was the significance of World War I?

Depth study: World War I

Historical knowledge and understanding:

- The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I
- The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac Legend.

Historical skills:

- Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument
- Develop historical texts, particularly explanations and historical arguments that use evidence from a range of sources

A. Recognising service

During the war 460 officers and 2,234 men served in the Australian Flying Corps and 178 were killed. Brainstorm and list all of the ways that the contribution of members of the Australian Flying Corps and other Australians who served in World War I has been recognised, acknowledged and commemorated. For example:

- granting soldier settler blocks of land
- Remembrance Day

In more recent times, the records of individual Australian servicemen have been made available electronically by the government to commemorate their lives. Many individual members of the Australian Flying Corps are mentioned in the book *Australian Flying Corps*. Select one of these men and find out more about him by visiting the Department of Veterans' Affairs website at www.dva.gov.au and searching the World War1 nominal rolls. You may also find service records at the National Archives of Australia website www.naa.gov.au (Records for the AFC are found in the 'Army – WW1' section)

Commemorate the contribution of the person you choose by writing an account of their life and service.

B. Lest we forget

Take on the role of a sculptor or designer and create a draft design for a memorial to commemorate the service of the Australian Flying Corps.

Begin by listing the six values and/or attributes that you believe best epitomise the service of the members of the Australian Flying Corps. Define the six terms in your own words and explain why each of these personal attributes was significant to the work of the Australian Flying Corps.

Incorporate these words, and the imagery that you think represents the service of the Corps, into a design sketch of your memorial. Write a short rationale explaining your design concept and justifying the approach you have used.

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Australian Flying Corps memorial design

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email: commemorations@dva.gov.au

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