A Possession Forever

A Guide to Using Commemorative Memorials and Monuments in the Classroom

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND
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Acknowledgment of Country

The authors wishes to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to the land, culture and community. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live and work, and where the book was written. We acknowledge the cultural diversity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay respect to Elders past, present and future. We celebrate the continuous living cultures of First Nations Australians and acknowledge the important contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have and continue to make in Australian society.

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

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Introduction

This open textbook is funded by a University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Open Educational Practice (OEP) Grant and informed by this institution's social justice plan. It is divided into three parts. **Part A** offers an introduction to memorials and monuments and discusses the choices made by artists and designers and their use of design elements and principles in the creation and siting of memorials and monuments. These choices assist and inform viewers in their 'reading' of monuments and memorials which is further informed by their inherent symbolic, aesthetic, historical and political dimensions. **Part B** explores commemorative monuments and memorials, counter memorials and monuments, and how an understanding of conflict – and at times the ignoring or denial of it – has shaped national understandings of democracy, human rights and social justice. **Part C** offers educators and students a practical guide to using monuments and memorials as learning resources to enhance their understanding of social justice through: content mastery; tools for critical analysis; tools for social change; tools for personal reflection; and an awareness of multicultural group dynamics (Hackman, 2005, p. 104).

This open textbook will guide educators and students through the process of using local monuments and memorials to contextualise, interrogate and extend their knowledge of historical events at a national and international level. Students will learn how to use local history to create an organic patchwork of local stories, interviews, photographs and artefacts contributed by, and for, the community and contextualised nationally and internationally. Through this process they will assume the role of historians rather than passive consumers of dominant ideologies and understand how historical events have shaped diverse views, including their own, of issues such as social justice, democracy, human rights and citizenship. This will be undertaken through focusing on the symbolic, aesthetic, historical and political dimensions of memorials and monuments in relation to their socialcultural and political contexts. Engagement in these processes will contribute to the participants' roles as future educators who are well-informed, critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and collaborators, ethical and engaged professionals and citizens, and culturally capable individuals.

Open Educational Resources (OER) provide access to reliable, engaging and affordable historical sources and are a response to the substantial financial burden faced by students when purchasing traditional textbooks (Boissy, 2016). Open textbooks adopt an 'open' copyright licence, which allows the materials to be freely accessed, shared and adapted. Costello et al. (2018) argue that the tradition of open education goes back several centuries in various forms. Peter and Deimann (2013) frame this argument in a broader sense and contend that increasing access to education is a public good and part of a broader social change. Petrides et al. (2011) argue that open textbooks can enhance interactivity between educators and students and enhance learner-centred and self-directed learning. They also found that students felt empowered to pursue their own line of enquiry using open textbooks. Most importantly, students can be actively involved in the development of OER as co-creators of the material which is evidenced in the contribution of USQ students and the university and wider community to this open textbook initiative.

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PART I

PART A

1. Introduction to Memorials and Monuments

In 1841, the British historian Thomas Carlyle posited that the history of the world was really the biography of great men. Ten years later he argued that when an individual seeks to commemorate one of these great men, it reveals as much about them as it does about the object of their veneration: 'Show me the man you honour, I know by that symptom, better than any other, what kind of man you yourself are' (Savage, 2009, pp. 8-10). As it is with individuals, so it is with nations.

Memorial or monument?

People regularly use the words 'memorial', 'monument' and 'commemoration' as synonyms. They are all expressions of memory, which can belong to an individual or to a group in the form of a collective memory. Although there is no clean boundary between them, it is often useful to consider them as different, though interrelated terms.

Commemoration refers to the process whereby individual memories are constructed and repackaged for public consumption. This could take many forms, including an Anzac Day service, an Armistice Day ceremony, or a religious gathering. By watching and participating in a commemorative event, the individual expresses their loyalty to shared views of the past and acknowledges their importance to the present.

Memorial is a broad term that can encompass any effort at commemorating an event or person, particularly when it is associated with loss. It can be a statue, but might just as easily be a community hall, a town's swimming pool, a book, a scroll, a road or a bridge.

Monument is usually used in more narrow terms to describe a built structure which commemorates – though not always celebrates – an event or person.

The placement of memorials and monuments in public spaces recognises that they offer an officially sanctioned view of history. This provides an insight into the values and ideals of the society that constructed them, and which subsequently maintains them or allows them to fall into disrepair. The memorials and monuments are, however, far from being static repositories of a nation's history. By acting ostensibly as a public noticeboard (Auster, 1997), they become powerful ideological tools that legitimise what is, in reality, an imagined community (Anderson, 1991). For example, the Arc de Triomphe or 'Triumphal Arch of the Star' **(Figure 1.1)** is one of the most famous monuments in Paris and honours those who fought and died for France in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

Figure 1.1: Arc de Triomphe (1836), in Paris, France. *Image by Alexandre Prevot. Used under a CC-BY-SA 2.0 licence.*

Video 1.1: Arc de Triomphe by drone [4K]

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One of the most common types of public memorials and monuments are those dedicated to commemorating war, and by extension, a vision of citizenship grounded in wartime service and sacrifice. The British Marxist historian Raphael Samuels (1998, p. 8) observes that the role of war in shaping a nation has entered into 'the very marrow of the national idea'. The Soviet War Memorial (**Figure 1.2**) is located in the Tiergarten, a large public park to the west of Berlin's city centre. It is one of several war memorials in Berlin, the capital city of Germany, and was erected by the Soviet Union to commemorate its war dead – particularly the 80,000 soldiers of the Soviet Armed Forces who died during the Battle of Berlin in April and May 1945.

Figure 1.2: Soviet War Memorial (1945) in Berlin, Germany. *Image by Ethan Doyle White. Used under a CC-BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Not all memorials and monuments glorify an event or a person, or affirm an ideology. Counter memorials and monuments often look quite different to traditional memorials and encourage the viewer to think about different perspectives associated with the conflict or person being represented. Counter memorials and monuments also recognise the less celebratory events in a nation's history (Stevens, et al., 2018). They act to disrupt dominant historical narratives and provide a voice for those marginalised or excluded from the historical record.

For example, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial (**Figure 1.3**) commemorates gay people killed as part of the systematic state-sponsored murder of six million Jewish people by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War. It thereby becomes a universal symbol of the continuing persecution of gay people.

Figure 1.3: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial (2001), New South Wales. *Image by Koala:Bear. Used under a CC BY-SA 2.0 licence.*

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin is another example of a counter monument. It is comprised of 2,711 concrete stelae – or slabs – arranged across a five acre space. Peter Eisenman, the designer, adopted a deconstructivist approach – one informed by the paradox that the historical rupture of the Holocaust had made such an architectural representation impossible (Rosenfeld, 2016).

Figure 1.4: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005) in Berlin, Germany. *Image by Chum Chum. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Video 1.2: Peter Eisenman interview: Field of otherness

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Video 1.3: Holocaust Memorial in Berlin in 3D – VR180

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As the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in 2020 showed, some memorials and monuments are no longer considered appropriate because they celebrate views and ideals now considered anachronistic and potentially offensive. It is important, therefore, to understand the social, political, cultural and historical context of memorials and monuments to ensure the version of history that is portrayed reflects contemporary and democratic ideals, particularly those related to freedom, gender, and citizenship. Memorials and monuments should be constantly re-evaluated, a process that might result in removal, relocation or the placement of additional signage to ensure their continuing relevance. Memory begins, as William Kidd and Brian Murdoch remind us, more or less

contemporaneous with the event or the actions of the individual being remembered. Public commemorative acts – which include the construction of memorials and monuments and the rituals conducted at them – draw at least some of their significance and their ongoing resonance from contemporary narratives and agendas. As James Young (1993) observes, memorials appear to remember everything but their own past. The statue of Albert Pike in Washington DC honours a senior officer of the Confederate States Army. It has attracted considerable controversy over the years and was toppled on June 19 2020 (**Figure 1.5**) after weeks of protests in response to the killing of George Floyd, an African American man murdered during an arrest.

Figure 1.5: Vandalism to the statue of Albert Pike. *Image by APK. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Video 1.4: State controversy continues over Confederate General Albert Pike

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In the Australian context, the war memorial or monument is the most common and most powerful presence in the commemorative landscape. Yet there is limited research on the use of memorials and monuments in educational settings, particularly at the tertiary level. At a school level, the national curriculum delivers a sequenced and thematic study of history in the primary years – one that is well able to facilitate an understanding of local, regional and national history. As Peter Brett (2014, p. 19) has argued, the *Australian Curriculum: History* provides a foundation for rich and experiential engagement by children with local history and state and national historical narratives. Yet equally important is his added observation that this needs to be 'mediated by thoughtful professional decision-making that promotes key aspects of historical literacy'. This is particularly true in the use of local history such as the exploration of memorials and monuments. Griffin (2011, p. 4) argues that teachers often avoid visits to historical sites as they 'frequently find themselves out of their depth and feel inadequate, even frightened, when conducting excursions'. The authors of this textbook believe that a guide to the use of memorials and monuments which provides a theoretical framework *and* practical approaches for both specialist and generalist teachers can help to surmount the challenges for educators and students, whether they are based in metropolitan, regional or remote contexts.

Figure 1.6: Oxley War Memorial at Oxley, Brisbane, Queensland. *Image by Kgbo. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Discussion questions

- What is a memorial?
- Why do people build them?
- Can they be private or are they always public?
- What memorials are located near your school or home? What do they commemorate? What message or idea do they communicate to a viewer? Can that message be interpreted in different ways

or is their one 'correct' reading?

- Do the memorials look 'old' or 'new'? What is it about them that influences your opinion?

Wider reading

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2. The Visual Language of Memorials and Monuments

Figure 2.1: The 9/11 Memorial (2011) in New York City, United States. *Image by Berry Berenson. Public Domain. The National 9/11 Memorial is a memorial in New York City commemorating the September 11 2001 attacks, which killed 2,977 people, and the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing, which killed six. The memorial is located at the World Trade Center site, the former location of the Twin Towers that were destroyed during the September 11 attacks.*

Introduction

Memorials and monuments can take a variety of forms such as the ones featured in **Chapter 1** dedicated to military personnel. These are probably the memorials and monuments that most people encounter. However, memorials can also be temporary as well as more permanent and are important in helping individuals and communities to heal after sudden and often traumatic events such as the September 11 2001 attacks in New York City or the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

You may have encountered a temporary roadside memorial at the site of a recent fatality. Often symbols such as flowers are evident and sometimes messages and dates will be included. These types of memorials are often fairly easy to understand as they utilise readily understood symbols or other visual elements such as colour to communicate a message. For example, **Figure 2.2** depicts a 'ghost bike' in Berlin. The use of a bike painted white symbolically represents a cycling fatality. The translation reads 'Cyclist, 66 years, 30 August 2008'. These sorts of memorials are a reminder of the deceased but also act as a warning to other road users.

Figure 2.2: A ghost bike in Berlin, Germany. *Image by Bukk. Public Domain.*

Sometimes temporary memorials are replaced with permanent memorials. An example of this is The Cenotaph in Whitehall, United Kingdom, which was originally constructed from wood and painted white in 1919. However, it was so popular with the public that it was replaced the following year with the stone memorial that stands today. A contemporary memorial that was deliberately designed to be impermanent was the Mud Soldier sculpted by Dutch artist Damian van der Velden (**Figure 2.3**). She wanted her memorial to war 'to reflect the horrors and sacrifices faced by soldiers on the mud-soaked battle of Passchendaele' (Mann & Douglas, 2017, para. 1). The Mud Soldier was sited in London's Trafalgar Square to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1917 Battle of Passchendaele. The sculpture is made from mud and sand which the artist and her sister collected from Flanders Fields in Passchendaele, Belgium where approximately 275,000 soldiers died. The artist described how the First World War solider is hunched over and slowly eroding in the rain: 'all his energy is gone' (Mann & Douglas, 2017, para. 5). During the time it was exhibited a sprinkler system was used to continue the effect if the sun was shining.

Figure 2.3: The Mud Soldier (2017) in Trafalgar Square, London, United Kingdom. *Image by Richard Croft. Used under a CC-BY-SA 2.0 licence.*

You can find out more about this sculpture and the context of the Battle of Passchendaele that it memorialises by watching this video:

Video 2.1: Mud soldier sculpture in Trafalgar Square

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Technology has also enabled people to commemorate and to communicate their grief through online memorials. These types of memorials may be a simple webpage, an extensive information source or part of a social media platform. They started to appear on the internet in the late nineties, usually to commemorate people who had been in the public eye. Other sites such as Find a Grave, which is owned by Ancestry.com enabled members of the public to search and add to this online database of cemetery records. With the development of social media platforms and user-friendly web creation software the number of online memorials has increased rapidly.

Digital Memorials in New Zealand, for example, enables people to include a QR barcode on a headstone, plaque or memorial which when scanned provides a link to a webpage that contains information and images about the

deceased person (Jeffs, 2018). There is a similar initiative operating in some Australian cemeteries through bluetooth technology (Sutton, 2021).

The global COVID-19 Memorial has been created to commemorate people who have lost their lives during the pandemic. It is an interactive memorial that in addition to emphasising the people behind the statistics, also graphically shows how many people around the world have died within the last 24 hours.

The 9/11 Memorial Museum is an interactive video experience which enables viewers to select different paths during their tour of the memorial. The memorial commemorates the victims of the 9/11 and 1993 attacks, honours the courage of the first responders and helps to educate the public about the attacks and their aftermath. A number of online resources are also included as part of the memorial.

These types of memorials enable a global response to events and can allow people to grieve despite their geographic location and time of day. They can also be organic, with some providing opportunities for people to post comments on significant anniversaries and help family members and relatives to see that person is still remembered by others. Unlike more permanent memorials, online memorials also have little environmental impact.

The visual language of memorials and monuments

Traditional memorials and monuments – particularly those which memorialise wartime events – often use Classical features and Christian symbolism. The artists and sculptors who designed war memorials often included symbols that were important to the community who had commissioned the war memorial. These symbols would represent events, emotions and ideas and would have been understood by people at that time. Some examples include:

- urns: symbolising the ancient Greek custom of cremation and the funerary vessels in which ashes were stored
- wreaths: traditional symbol of commemoration, often shown as laurel leaves, which are a symbol of victory
- broken columns: representing lives cut short
- funeral shrouds: signifying death and mourning
- obelisks: which come from ancient Egyptian sun worship and represent shafts of the sun's rays
- winged angel: representing victory
- triumphal arch: which originated from triumphal monuments of imperial Rome
- eagle: representing victory and American prowess
- lion: symbolising the might of the British empire
- globe: signifying the world and the universality of humankind
- orb and cross: representing Christianity
- Christian cross: representing the ultimate symbol of salvation and sacrifice
- eternal light: represented by flames, lamps, torches and signifying remembrance and purification
- water: signifying regeneration and cleansing
- sword: reflects the military aspect of the memorial
- flags: representing various countries and patriotism, with crossed flags representing relationships between the countries

(McKay, 2014)

Many of the traditional First World War memorials in Australia that include soldiers' names lack any markings or rank – hence as Judith McKay (2014, para. 7) reveals, 'they conform to Australian egalitarian ideals'. It is important therefore to consider the context of the time when 'reading' war memorials and monuments.

See visual examples of the symbols used in commemorative memorials.

The poppy and the native desert pea: Symbols of remembrance

Interestingly, although the poppy is used on Remembrance Day and Anzac Day, it was not introduced as a symbol until 1921, after the First World War (see **Figure 2.4**). This explains why these memorials do not include this symbol. In Australia the native desert pea (or Sturt desert pea named after explorer Charles Sturt) is a flower of mourning for some First Nations groups and grows in the most arid of areas (See **Figure 2.5**). Hazel Davies, a florist with permission from traditional owners, explains that the desert pea represents the blood spilt on the land for some First Nations peoples. The desert pea represents both love and loss (Thorpe, 2018). She explains that florists are 'symbologists' who spend a lot of time working with stories. For many Aboriginal groups the desert pea is a battle-ground flower and has 'an almost identical story to the Flanders poppy' (Heathcote, 2018, para. 6).

Figure 2.4: 1921 British Remembrance poppy. *Image by Heatherannej. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Cotton and silk poppies were made in devastated areas of France by widows and orphans organised by Madame Guérin, 'The Poppy Lady of France' and the originator of Poppy Day.

Figure 2.5: Native desert pea (Sturt desert pea). *Image by Pen Ash. Used under a CC0 licence.*

Understanding the changing visual language of memorials and monuments

Contemporary memorials and monuments have moved away from including much of the symbolism evident in traditional memorials and monuments. There are a range of reasons for this including the ethnic diversity of communities, a greater understanding of individual experiences of war, and shifting notions of nationhood. As Abousnouga and Machin state:

'Some of these monuments still draw on Classical features and Christian symbolism. But there is a shift to abstraction and other kinds of symbolism to do with reified ethnic identities, heritage and even sport in order to communicate national identities. While the idea of soldiery as sacrifice and serving the nation is still apparent soldiers are now much more humanized and representations have shifted in some instances away from the power and might of the state represented through massive Classical structures, but through more organic and informal references. And perhaps as war itself has become less easy to understand and represent through older discourses and as it can no longer simply be justified through the call of the nation and its place in the world, so representations have shifted to the more complexly symbolic, even mystical, and abstract. And war and nation have merged with other banal symbols of nationhood such as sport and reified ethnic identities' (Abousnnouga & Machin, 2013, p. 215.).

Belletani and Panico (2016, p. 36) propose that the visual and political dimensions of memorials and monuments 'always function together and influence each other through continuous mediations'. They have drawn from various sources to compile the following list of categories to assist in analysing the material level of monuments. These include:

- Dimensions: large/small, wide/narrow, tall/short
- Location: degree of elevation, distance/proximity, angle of interaction
- Materials of construction: solidity/hollowness, texture of the surface
- Topological organisation: form, shape

- Eidetic organisation: regularity/irregularity, curvature
- Chromatic organisation: colours, brightness/opacity, lighting

(Belletani & Panico, 2016, p. 36)

Hay et al. (2014, p. 204) contend that memorials and monuments 'are political constructions…drawing popular attention to specific events and people and…obscuring others'. However, as Belletani and Panico (2016, pp. 33-34) argue, the meaning of monuments is not fixed and 'users may interpret monuments following their own opinions, beliefs, feelings and emotions'. In this context Belletani and Panico (2016, p. 33) contend that the meaning of monuments can be divided into four interrelated functions:

1. Cognitive function: refers to the kind of human knowledge monuments embody as well as the knowledge users have about the representations of monuments
2. Axiological function: considers whether uses value this knowledge positively or negatively
3. Emotional function: investigates which emotions and feelings monuments elicit
4. Pragmatic function: concerns the practices of users within the space of monuments

Even though memorial and monument design has changed, it is generally agreed that whether they are traditional or contemporary they should include a sensory and emotional aspect. In fact, as Sci (2009, p. 43) argues, the continuing relevance and potential of memorials and monuments is dependant on their ability to engage a viewer in a process that is '*both* cognitively stimulating *and* affectively touching' (Sci, 2009, p. 43).

A memorial or monument therefore needs to create a situation that affects the senses and emotions, prompting the viewer to experience an affective response that is 'a real-time somatic experience' of memory (Bennett, 2005, p. 3). This is common to many contemporary memorials that have been informed by the success of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, DC. They engage viewers mentally and sensually and seek to affect change by inviting the viewer to think rather than dictating what to think. They engage visitors in critical reflection about their own values as the memorials do not offer easily understood 'political ideological or cultural messages' (Sci, 2009, p. 45). Mitchell (2003, p. 453) states that the resistance or transformation of 'dominant forms of memory production' is easier when a city in which these forms are located are 'in a state of upheaval and flux.' This is not generally an issue for Australian cities, unlike places such as Berlin which Mitchell (2003) describes as the ultimate urban palimpsest: a 'city text frantically being written and rewritten' (Huyssen, 2003, p. 49).

Mitchell (2016, para. 1) describes how Berlin's urban landscape has seen an increasing number of monuments and memorials dedicated to the Holocaust. In terms of their visual design, she argues they are 'often puzzingly mundane or even inescapably ugly'. She explains that an aesthetic style that can memorialise such an unspeakable moment in time had to be neither reductive nor sentimental:

'Artists have also had to grapple with deeper moral qualms about aestheticizing the unspeakable suffering of Holocaust victims …' (Mitchell, 2016, para. 2). This has lead to a 'moral aversion towards the use of traditional monumental forms' (Mitchell, 2016, para. 2).

The creation of 'affective monuments' has been a response by artists to the issues in memorialising the Holocaust. These types of monuments induce a emotional response in individuals and forge a 'more private, personal connection to the past' (Mitchell, 2016, para. 3). Another approach that artists have used is 'negative form' which is structured around the idea of empty space and often consists of inverted forms. 'A gesture of respect for those who are not here to speak for themselves' (Mitchell, 2016, para. 6). Examples of these affective memorials include the Aschrott Fountain (1985) in Kassel, Germany's City Hall Square and the Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial (2000) in Vienna, Austria. These types of memorials and monuments are also called 'counter memorials' or 'counter monuments' because they give voice to the people who would have not had their voices heard previously, or whose voices have been deliberately removed. These types of memorials are usually set into the ground, become part of the landscape and provide space for the viewer to interpret as opposed to traditional memorials which are usually set above the landscape and often provide a dominant historical narrative (See **Figure 2.6**).

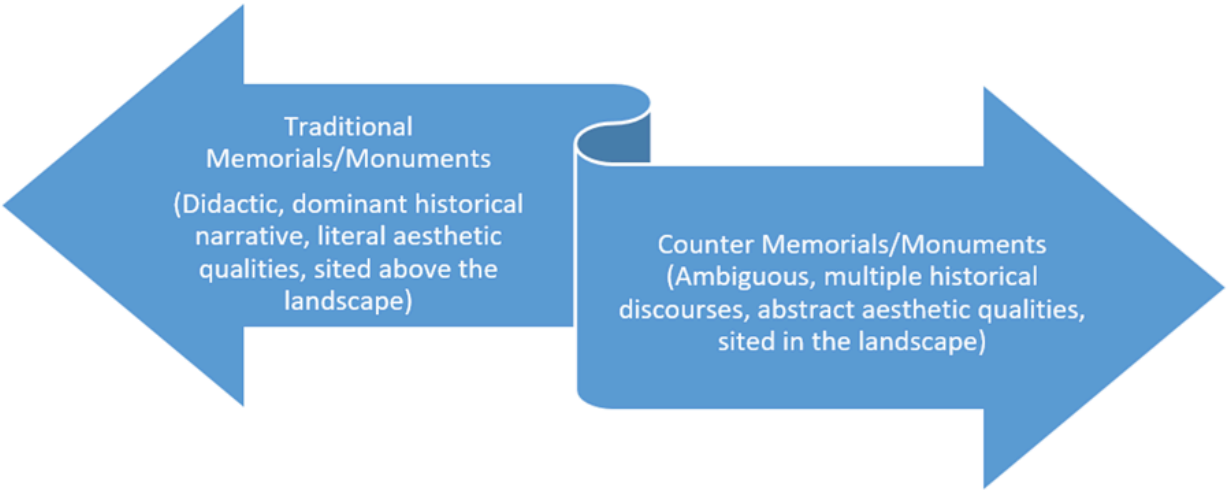

Figure 2.6: Transformation of memorials and monuments over time.

In contemporary memorial and monument design it appears that the more contentious the event that is celebrated, the more abstract and symbolic the memorial or monument becomes. This can leave the viewer unable to understand and 'read' either the purpose for this commemorative site or the visual symbols and aesthetic devices that have been chosen. Young (1999, para. 5) identified the profound impact on monuments and memorials wrought by aesthetic and political revolutions and the world wars. Heroic self-aggrandising figurative icons that celebrated the nation state and its triumphs dominated the commemorative landscape of the late nineteenth century. In contrast, contemporary memorials and monuments are antiheroic, ironic, and self-effacing, and are clearly shaped by the ideological ambivalence and uncertainty typical of late twentieth century postmodernism.

Figure 2.7: Australian Service Nurses National Memorial (1999) on Anzac Parade in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Nick-D. Used under CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

The Australian Service Nurses National Memorial (**Figure 2.7**) honours past and present nurses of the Australian Defence Force, serving in the Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army and Royal Australian Air Force and associated services. It was unveiled on October 2 1999.

This memorial is made predominately of cast glass which form two sets of wavy lines. Etched and cast into the glass is text and images which portray a timeline of the contribution made by Australian nurses in the armed services. The memorial also incorporates pictures and diary entries, which emulate the original handwriting, cast into the glass. Some of the panels are blank which symbolises the continuing service of this group whose history has not finished. The glass walls are interlocked to symbolise nurturing hands. There is also a contemplative area linked to the memorial which is surrounded with rosemary for remembrance and includes a reflective pool fountain and the symbols of the armed forces. A nurse who was present at the unveiling of the memorial remarked that:

'… the Memorial seemed in marked contrast to the other more masculine memorials on Anzac Parade. One enters the memorial on the north side from a slight ramp. The curved lines of the panels lead one through to a contemplative space at the southern end where is a low waterfall and sunken garden … As we walked through, cast into the back panels was a scenic collage depicting the zones where nursing service was given. Overprinting named these places so well known to us, for example, Gallipoli, Salonika, Singapore, Banka Island, New Guinea and Rabaul … cast into the inside front panels were nurses depicted from the Boer War onwards in their uniforms of the day with hand written extracts from the personal and poignant accounts of nurses etched into the glass. The front panel facing Anzac Parade simply says "Beyond all Praise"' (Johnson, 1999, paras. 3-4).

The unusual use of glass and the curved forms of the memorial were deliberate choices made by the artist and designers. They felt these qualities emulated feminine qualities which honoured the Australian Service Nurses. The glass also allows the viewer to become part of the memorial and to see various aspects of the text, including the

history of Australian Service Nurses from different perspectives as they walk through the memorial. The memorial is also sited into the landscape and uses natural elements such as water and rosemary to link the memorial to the environment it is sited in. The viewer can also bring their own perspectives to the memorial based on their sociocultural and political position. The memorial allows the viewer the space to relate to interpret its meaning.

Without an understanding of the visual elements or the inherent meaning of non-traditional memorials and monuments can struggle to operate at either a literal or artistic level. It is important to also consider the impact of artists, designers, committees, the sociocultural political context and the use of materials in the creation of a memorial and monument. Importantly, the viewer also brings their own perceptions, personal background and history, and sociocultural and political context to their 'reading' of a memorial or monument (see **Figure 2.8**).

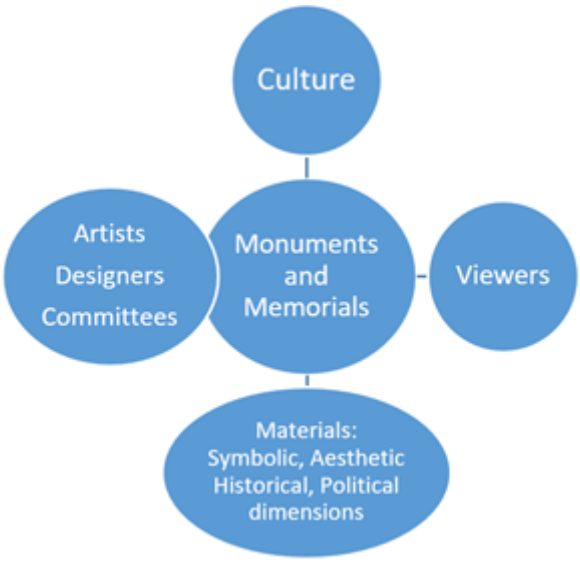

Figure 2.8: Elements that can impact on 'reading' a memorial or monument.

Visual analysis: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial (2001)

The following section provides a general approach to analysing a memorial or monument. When analysing a memorial or monument, there are a number of elements to consider including: Subject, Form, Site and Visitor Experience. The following section provides a visual analysis of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial (**Figure 2.9**) which is sited in Sydney, Australia.

The memorial was built to honour all gay people who have been murdered, tortured and persecuted because of their sexuality. It is sited at Green Park in the Sydney suburb of Darlinghurst. Green Park is adjacent to the Sydney Jewish Museum, which ensures that the memorial retains its historic meaning.

Figure 2.9: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial (2001), New South Wales. *Image by Koala:Bear. Used under a CC BY-SA 2.0 licence.*

The memorial was built to honour all gay people who have been murdered, tortured and persecuted because of their sexuality. It is site at Green Park in Darlinghurst, in Sydney Australia. Green Park is adjacent to the Sydney Jewish Museum, which ensures that the memorial retains its historic meaning.

Subject

The Holocaust refers to the attempted genocide of European Jews during the Second World War. Six million Jews – two thirds of the Jewish population of Europe – were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Other groups were targeted, though not quite as systematically as the Jews, including gay men and to a lesser extent lesbians. In all, the Nazis arrested around 100,000 gay people and imprisoned about 50,000. Though most served their sentence in regular prisons, between 5,000 and 15,000 were sent to concentration camps, where perhaps sixty per cent died.

Form

The memorial is comprised of a pink triangular glass prism symbolic of the ones worn in concentration camps to identify and humiliate gay men. According to a pamphlet held in the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives announcing the formation of the committee, it is now considered by some as a 'symbol of gay pride' (Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project, 1991b). The black triangle used to identify lesbians is present in the form of a triangular grid of

black steel columns intersecting the prism. Together, the two triangles take the form of a fractured Star of David. The black columns are sentinels intended to symbolise individual resilience and strength. The designers, Russell Rodrigo and Jennifer Gamble, did not embrace abstraction to the extent that someone like Peter Eisenman, the designer of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, did. Rodrigo (2009, p. 11) argued that 'some form of figuration is required in order for an empathic link to be evoked in the memorial participant, for projection and identification to take place'. Effective memorial design, in Rodrigo's view, requires a balance between 'abstraction and figuration, between ambiguity and specificity'. The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial is a counter memorial in terms of subject matter in a manner far more confident than it is in terms of form.

Site

The memorial is situated in Stonewall Gardens in Darlinghurst, Sydney. The name celebrates a connection with the Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village in New York in June 1968 which are widely considered a watershed in the gay liberation movement. It also positions the memorial in the context of both Holocaust commemoration and gay liberation. In addition, Darlinghurst was at the time the heart of Sydney's gay and lesbian population, having been the site of demonstrations, public meetings, Gay Fair Days, and the starting point for the AIDS Memorial Candlelight Rally. It is also very close to the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Historical context

It is important to remember that memorials are often constructed sometime after the event they commemorate. They usually reflect the attitudes of the generation constructing them rather than being 'true' to the historical event or person. For example, memorials to the Confederacy in the United States offer an insight into how one generation can pursue its own agenda by appealing to history.

Eleven states joined the Confederacy at the start of the American Civil War but there are memorials spread over 31 states and the District of Columbia. The war finished in 1865 but the majority of the memorials were constructed between the 1890s and 1950s, with the biggest spike being between 1900 and the 1920s. Early memorials were to dead soldiers and were usually placed in cemeteries, but later examples were often statues to Confederate heroes placed in public spaces such as city squares. When Georgia redesigned its state flag in 1956 to include the Confederate battle flag and South Carolina flew it from its capitol building from 1962 onward, it tells us more about those states' response to the Civil Rights movement than it does the 'facts' of a century old war.

Likewise, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial tells us as much, if not more, about the concerns of the gay and lesbian community in the years between 1991 and 2001 than it does the attempted genocide of the Jewish people or of the persecution of gay people by the Nazis. For the memorial is not only situated thousands of kilometres away from the main Holocaust sites, but by the time it was completed in 2001 there were few Holocaust survivors still alive and resident in Australia. Yet the ten year effort to have the memorial constructed was an important period for Sydney's gay and lesbian population. In June 2018 the New South Wales police reviewed 88 deaths between 1976 and 2000 and found that possibly upward of 27 of them were gay hate crimes. The violence reached a 'bloody crescendo' in the late eighties and early nineties as the AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) epidemic worsened, with upward of 20 assaults each day, most going unreported or uninvestigated. One paper claimed this was the direct result of an 'unsympathetic' police and judiciary (Duffin, 2018). The persecution of gay people by the Nazis was thereby positioned by the memorial's supporters as a 'commemoration of the oppression of lesbians and gays throughout the world and at any point of time in history' (Gay & Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project, 1991).

In addition, by the mid eighties, the AIDs epidemic had gripped the public imagination. At its peak in the early nineties, it was killing 1,000 Australians each year. By the early nineties when the memorial was first discussed, the deaths in New South Wales had reached almost 3,000 (Health Outcomes International & The National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, 2007). The desire for a Holocaust memorial was, however, well in step with international developments. Beginning at the site of the concentration camp at Mauthausen, Austria in 1984,

memorials were later also constructed at Dachau, Neuengamme, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen in Germany, and Risiera San Sabba in Italy. Cities around the world also followed suit, among them Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Cologne in Germany; Rome Bologna and Trieste in Italy; Natzweiler-Struthof and Bas-Rhin in France; Amsterdam and Den Haag in the Netherlands; Vienna, Austria; Barcelona, Spain; Laxton, Nottinghamshire in the United Kingdom; Tel Aviv, Israel; Anchorage, San Francisco and Palm Springs in the United States, and Manitoba and Ottawa in Canada. Sydney is the only one of these cities located outside Europe, North America and Israel that has a memorial to the Holocaust. In the Australian context, the local resonance of the Holocaust genocide has not always been readily linked to local issues because of its uncomfortable association with the treatment of First Nations Australians.

Visitor experience/current use

The memorial was initially positioned as a site of resistance and protest rather than commemoration. In one promotional pamphlet, the memorial was characterised as a reminder to 'lesbians and gays in Sydney not to become complacent – that no matter how open and accepted we feel at the moment, there is always the chance that tomorrow, full scale persecution could start again' (Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial Project, 1991b). The conflation of historical and contemporary persecution in the same publication, which ranged from Nazi Germany to Russia and the Soviet Union, Colombia, Iran, Peru, Cuba, Angola, Tasmania, and the 'victims of bashings and murders occurring in Sydney and elsewhere to the present day' served only to reinforce this message. The tone was intentionally belligerent. The memorial would be a 'visible and permanent reminder to the heterosexual population that we will not forget those who hide their love in China, those imprisoned in Angola or those who face vilification and loss of work in Tasmania' ('Why the triangle', n.d). Although there were initially some concerns that Sydney's Jewish community might oppose the memorial, this has not been the case. The Jewish community in Sydney include the memorial during commemorative services on Holocaust Remembrance Day. The memorial was also an important site for delegates at the 25th Jewish LGBT+ World Congress in March 2019. The gay and lesbian communities, which naturally cut across all racial, ethnic, religious, and class boundaries are not as drawn to the memorial, perhaps because of its aesthetic and ideological link to an event that played little or no part in their own identity formation.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of how memorials and monuments have changed over time. At this chapter shows, dominant historical narratives can often obscure or diminish the voices of others. The counter memorial movement has provided an opportunity for memorials and monuments to address past historical injustices and to challenge previous narratives that presented one perspective. In doing this they offer the viewer the opportunity to consider multiple narratives informed by their sociocultural and political context. This chapter has provided considerations for 'reading' memorials and monuments and a greater awareness of how to decode their language.

Activity

Questions to prompt discussion:

1. Create a timeline that includes five memorials or monuments, with the earliest created in the ninetieth century (January 1 1801 – December 31 1900) and the last in the twenty-first century (January 1 2001 – present day). Position them on the timeline by their year of dedication. Consider the first, third and fifth memorials on the timeline and create three columns to compare the three memorials using the framework described above to explore their: Subject, Form, Site and Historical Context.

	Name of memorial or monument 1 (Year)	*Name of memorial or monument 2 (Year)*	*Name of memorial or monument 3 (Year)*
Subject			
Form			
Site			
Historical Context			

2. Choose one of the three memorials or monuments from the previous question and complete the following template:

Elements	*Name of memorial or monument (Year)*
Dimensions: large/small, wide/narrow, tall/short	
Location: degree of elevation, distance/proximity, angle of interaction	
Materials of construction: solidity/hollowness, texture of the surface	
Topological organisation: form, shape	
Eidetic organisation: regularity/irregularity, curvature	
Chromatic organisation: colours, brightness/opacity, lighting	

3. When you next encounter a memorial or monument take some time to watch how people interact with it.
– Does the memorial or monument invite people to walk into it or around it?
– How do people react to the memorial or monument?
– Is there any text or signage to assist people with understanding the memorial or monument or is the viewer encouraged to work out the meaning for themselves?
– Engage with the memorial or monument and consider its emotional function. What emotions does this memorial or monument elicit for you? Do you know why this is the case? How does your sociocultural and political positioning affect how you encounter this memorial or monument?

– Given the research you have undertaken, do you think the artist or designer achieved what they intended through this memorial or monument?

Resources

Commonwealth War Graves Commission. (2021). *Find war dead with our war graves search tool*. Commonwealth War Graves Commission. https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/.

This site lists war records of 1.7 million Commonwealth men and women who are commemorated and will provide a photograph of the memorial where they are commemorated. This includes the following countries: United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India.

Facing History and Ourselves. (n.d.). *Analyzing and creating memorials*. Facing History and Ourselves. https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/analyzing-and-creating-memorials

War Memorials Trust. (2021). *We will always remember*. War Memorials Trust. http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/

This site provides Primary and Secondary lesson plans, resources and project ideas to build a greater understanding of war memorial heritage.

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PART II

PART B

3. War Memorials in the Australian Commemorative Landscape

IN MEMORY OF
OUR GLORIOUS DEAD

Figure 3.1: Dalby War Memorial (1922), Dalby, Queensland. *Image by Heritage Bank staff. Used under a CC BY 3.0 licence.*

Introduction

Before the First World War (1914-1918) Australia had very few civic monuments. The war memorials constructed after 1918 irrevocably changed the Australian commemorative landscape and in doing so they became the new Commonwealth's first national monuments. By the mid nineties, well before the renewed construction associated with the war's centenary, it was estimated there was one monument for every 30 soldiers killed. The comparable figure for France is one memorial for every 45 soldiers killed (Hedger, 1995). War memorials are far from being a uniquely Australian phenomenon – indeed, the first known example, the White Monument at Tal Banat, can be traced to Syria in the third millennium BC. Nevertheless, their domination of the commemorative landscape ensures they are an Australian icon, which makes their limited use in Australian schools even more bewildering. Educators do need to ensure, however, that their students understand that they are inherently ideological, usually offer a state sanctioned version of history, are indicative of the views of the generation that built them rather than the generation they commemorate, and that how they are 'read' can alter over time.

Traditional war memorials

During the first great wave of memorial building in the 1920s and 1930s, sculptors and designers used symbols that were familiar to most people. During this period commemoration often 'reconciled triumphalism and sacrificialism within narratives of Australian heroism and achievement' (Crotty & Melrose, 2007, p. 681). Your local war memorial may therefore include any of the following symbols:

- urns and broken columns as symbols for death
- wreaths for mourning, eternal light and torches for remembrance
- crosses for sacrifice
- the laurel
- triumphal arches
- Winged Victories for victory
- globes for mankind
- columns for honour
- lions for fortitude
- water and obelisks for regeneration
- rising suns for national birth.

These symbols of Edwardian classicism brought 'together all that seemed best and most noble in the artistic life of the civilization they had fought to preserve' (Borg, 1991, p. xii). Traditional war memorials were therefore not considered an appropriate forum for artistic experimentation and innovation and therefore usually confined themselves to symbolic forms that were familiar to Australians of the time.

If your town or suburb has a memorial that was built during the interwar years it is likely that it is either an obelisk, a stone monolith originating in ancient Egypt, or an Australian soldier or 'digger' with an upturned rifle. The obelisk is the most common form of war memorial, with Queensland the only state preferring this symbol instead of the soldier statue. The obelisk possessed certain advantages: it was nonsectarian, widely recognised as a symbol of death or glory, and for communities struggling to raise the necessary funds, it could also be easily and cheaply supplied (Inglis, 2008). The obelisk at Macquarie Place Park in Sydney was reputedly erected on the site where Governor Phillip raised the Union Jack in 1788. It is the earliest surviving public monument commemorating the colonisation of Australia (**Figure 3.2**).

Figure 3.2: Macquarie Obelisk (1918), Macquarie Place, Sydney, New South Wales. *Image by Usablewikiname. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Figure 3.3: Everton War Memorial (1923), Everton, Victoria. *Image by Mattinbgn. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Discussion questions

1. What do Central Park in New York, the Embankment of the River Thames in London, the Place de la Concorde in Paris, Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, and the Piazza San Pietro in Rome have in common?
   Find out the answer.
2. What capital city has an obelisk that commemorates one of its 'founding fathers' and why have they used an ancient form of commemoration?

"LEST WE FORGET"
1914 — 1918
ARCHER S.A.
ASHFORD L.J.
BARDON C.
BELL F.
BELSON W.C.
BLACKLEY T.
BROMFIELD J.
BROWN F.
BROWN JOHN J.
CAKEBREAD G.
CARR W.T.
CASTLES E.J.
COCKERILL C.
COLEMAN W.L.
COOK S.
DANN F.
EVERS O.L.
FARLOW F.C.
FARLOW H.H.
FLEGLER R.
FRASER G.
GRILLARD L.B.
GRAU F.W.
GREAR R.
HALLORAN J.
HALLORAN T.
HANNAN R.
HIBES J.
HUDSON F.
HUNT S.W.
KEARNEY J.
KEWKINS W.
BALL H.J.
LAMBERT M.
KINGSMUIR H.
KNOX T.
LARKIN S.C.
LESLIE E.
LEE T.
LINEDALE W.J.
LORD F.C.
LYNCH S.
MAKEPEACE E.
MALTBY P.
MARTIN J.
McSHARRY T.
NAIRNE J.R.
O'CONNOR W.
OST R.H.W.
PARNHAM A.
PRESSLEY L.
PRESSLEY W.H.
REDPATH G.
ROBERTSON J.
ROBERTSON R.M.
ROBINSON C.S.H.
SIMS W.
STOREY F.
SWAN F.C.
THOMSON H.
TURNER H.
WALLACE L.H.
WHITE L.A.
WILLIAMS H.
WHITEFORD E.A.
SCHWING A.
FOX M.
UNVEILED
25/4/24.
Herberton
Ravenshoe

Figure 3.4: Atherton War Memorial (1924), Atherton, Queensland. *Image by State of Queensland. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

If your town or suburb's memorial is not an obelisk, a pillar or column, it is probably a 'digger' statue. Although there are often numerous differences from one figure to the next, it is unlikely that they are in an aggressive posture. Unlike bronze, stone does not lend itself to imitating action, though the memorial in Atherton is a rare example (**Figure 3.4**). Many have the soldier figure standing with the rifle resting upside down in the funeral position (or 'reverse arms'), as is the case with the memorial in Dalby, Queensland (**Figure 3.1**). Like the obelisk, the soldier statue is usually accompanied by a plaque bearing the names of all who served from the town or region – usually without rank – with a small cross or star indicating those who had 'made the supreme sacrifice'.

Instead of statues and obelisks, some communities built a utilitarian memorial such as a community hall. Sixty percent of First World War memorials were monuments, while approximately twenty percent are halls, and between one and two are hospitals or schools, with eighteen percent being both functional and monumental (Inglis, 2008).

Figure 3.5: Tumbarumba Memorial Hall (1936), Winton, New South Wales. *Image by Virtual Steve. Used under a CC BY-SA 2.5 licence.*

There are a range of other war memorial forms located across Australia. For example: a Doric Pavilion in Narrogin, Western Australia; a tower in Goulburn, New South Wales; a cenotaph in Gosford in New South Wales, and an Arch of Victory in Ballarat, Victoria. However, regardless of the type of war memorial your suburb or town has, or even if there is not one close enough to visit during school time, it would be a valuable exercise to discuss what kind of symbols and figures are *not* used on memorials constructed during the 1920s and 1930s.

LEST
WE
FORGET
LOL

Figure 3.6: Maryborough War Memorial (1922), Maryborough, Queensland. *Public Domain.*

The Maryborough War Memorial (**Figure 3.6**) is the only local First World War memorial that includes a Red Cross nurse (as well as figures of a soldier, sailor and airman) beneath a Winged Victory. There are also a few figures of allegorical females such as the ones in bronze in Wellington in New South Wales. The figure of Victory is flanked by History (right) and Fame (left). Clearly, however, the digger mythology was a masculine one, and the choice of memorials reflected that narrowness.

Figure 3.7: ANZAC Memorial (1933), Wellington, New South Wales. *Image by Peter Ellis. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Not all memorials were intended for parks or other publics paces. Schools, workplaces and community halls also constructed memorials, often in the form of honour rolls. As these two examples show, construction began before the war was even over.

Figure 3.8: First World War Honour Board (1917), Lands Administration Building, Brisbane, Queensland. *Image by Vic Bushing. Used under a CC BY 3.0 licence.*

Figure 3.9: First World War Honour Roll (1917), Old Hall, Toowoomba Grammar School, Toowoomba, Queensland. *Image by Queensland Government used under a CC BY 4.0 licence.*

Figure 3.10: Shrine of Remembrance memorial (1930), Brisbane, Queensland. *Image by Kate Nielsen. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

At the other end of the scale are the large state memorials located in the capital cities. Only two of the seven were completed by 1930, with the result that they were far too late to offer therapeutic comfort. As Inglis (2008, pp. 266-267) observes, however, that was never their primary purpose. They were instead 'public declarations, acts of formal homage, involving everywhere the governments and parliaments which had collaborated to make soldiers of their citizens'. That did not mean they could not be beautiful. Brisbane's Shrine of Remembrance (**Figure 3.10**) with the eternal flame burning at its heart, in the heritage-listed Anzac Square, is one of the country's most beautiful classical Doric structures (Hedger, 1995). It was not just the classical architecture that communicated a message: the 18 columns represent the end of the First World War, as do the number of stairs leading up to the shrine itself – 19 in the first row and 18 in the second – which when combined signify the year of peace, 1918. The bottle (boab) trees in Anzac Square commemorate the Queensland Light Horse Regiments, which served in South Africa's Boer War (1899–1902), while the Middle Eastern date palms symbolise Australia's victories in the Middle East during both World Wars. To Christians, palms are also a biblical symbol of victory. At its base is a relief tableau by Daphne Mayo dedicated to fallen Queenslanders by the women of Queensland. The drinking fountains and the circular pools are symbolic of new life. The memorial is now surrounded by other statues commemorating later wars, though they are realistic rather than abstract in design.

Figure 3.11: National War Memorial (1931), Adelaide, South Australia. *Image by Bilby. Used under a CC BY 3.0 licence.*

Each of the other states also commissioned their own memorials, with Raynor Hoff's memorial in Adelaide being

particularly noteworthy. On the front is the Angel of Death presented here as a flattened stylised relief carving holding a sword over the altar of sacrifice and holding a laurel and a wreath:

'He towers over a bronze figure group of ordinary people: a woman, a scholar and a farmer, who pay homage to the dead and who pleaded with the Angel from their subservient roles. The disregard of the angel heightens the impact and makes the work a symbol of despair' (Hedger, 1995, p. 33).

On the obverse is the Angel of Resurrection, who bears a dead soldier away to eternal rest and glory while preparing to crown him with a victory laurel in a move that shifts the viewer from despair to hope. We see in the memorial Hoff's interest in Art Deco which he later used in the ANZAC Memorial in Sydney (**Figure 3.12**).

Figure 3.12: ANZAC Memorial (1934), Sydney, New South Wales. *Public Domain.*

The British Empire's practice of not repatriating the dead of the First World War meant the term cenotaph became so emotionally charged that whatever the form of a memorial, it was really 'first and last, an empty tomb' (Inglis, 2008, p. 248).

The modern commemorative landscape

Rather than building additional obelisk, cenotaph or soldier memorials after the end of the Second World War in 1945, the addition of extra names to an established memorial plinth seemed a more practical solution. The postwar population boom and increased numbers of young people in need of healthy recreation led to the proliferation of swimming that served a commemorative purpose as well as meeting community needs at a time of post-Olympic fervour (McShane, 2009). The designers of contemporary Australian war memorials, however, are to a certain extent

freed from the 'artistic tyranny of the Anzac myth' (Garton, 1996, p. 45). As a result, the heroic memorial has increasingly been replaced by a 'new breed of abstract' and, often, 'therapeutic' memorial' (Stephens, 2012, p. 146). Some of the designers have chosen not to exercise this freedom, as was the case with the visually arresting but undeniably anachronistic Australian Boer War Memorial in Canberra (**Figure 3.13**).

Figure 3.13: Australian Boer War Memorial (2017), Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Peter Ellis. Used under CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Others have sought an uneasy accommodation between a style reminiscent of Great War memorials and abstraction (The Korean War Memorial, Canberra), or have used the Great War iconography augmented, but never challenged by the symbols of a marginalised group (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial, Adelaide). Some use well known symbols not usually seen in Australian memorials which mount a muted challenge to hegemonic narratives but which are in reality seeking admission to them on the part of a marginalised group (Yininmadyemi – Thou didst let fall, Sydney).

Figure 3.14: Korean War Memorial, Canberra (1999), Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Peter Ellis. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Some designers have drawn inspiration from ancient standing stones or monoliths and classical stelae (slabs or pillars) to communicate a conservative narrative for a new class of war hero. For example, the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial in Canberra (**Figure 3.17**).

Figure 3.17: Australian Peacekeeping Memorial (2017), Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Nick D used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

They have also been used to commemorate service in an unpopular cause – for example, the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial (**Figure 3.18**) – which is an interesting example of the shift in memorial design:

The memorial includes a contemplative space, an addition that is typical of many similar efforts to confront a difficult past or which acknowledge a multiplicity of stories. The absence of the classical symbolism that pervades earlier Australian war memorials is marked, as is the foregrounding of trauma and suffering. This structure is not a celebration of the nation state and is instead dedicated to 'all those that suffered and died'. As Stephens (2012, p. 149) observes, the inward facing stelae and the suspended stone halo are intended to produce a feeling of unease, so much so that he describes the structure as a 'pensive and anxious memorial'.

Figure 3.18: Vietnam Forces National Memorial (1992), Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Bidgee. Used under a CC BY-SA 2.5 licence.*

As Australian society has changed markedly over the years since 1918, memorials need to tell a different story, one that is symbolically authentic (Stephens, 2012). The question of what is authentic is inevitably contested. An example of the difficulty of employing an artistic language that 'speaks' to such a diverse society is evident in the Korean War Memorial in Sydney (**Figure 3.14**). When it was unveiled in 2010, some people saw it as a 'welcome departure' from the 'heroic monumentality of traditional Australian war memorials' (Ward, 2010, p. 56). For people more familiar with traditional war memorials, the shift to abstraction is not as welcome as Ward's observation might suggest, as Anne Ferguson found to her cost when designing the Australian Servicewomen's Memorial in Canberra (**Figure 3.19**). Her flat, abstract design aroused significant controversy. As Sebastian Smee (2000, p. 371) observed, publicly commissioned sculptures disappoint people as there are many ideas from different stakeholders and the end result never matches their expectations expectations. Clearly there are still 'tensions between traditional memorial design and the current transition in Australia towards memorials that are more overtly abstract and interactive' (Stephens, 2012 p. 142).

Figure 3.19: Australian Servicewomen's Memorial (1999), Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 AU licence.*

Despite the plethora of war memorials and their often singular narratives, there is a growing awareness of the need to include marginalised voices whose experiences have been excluded from official commemoration. One of the most effective is the Aboriginal Memorial at the National Gallery of Australia (**Figure 3.20**), completed in 1988 for the bicentenary. It is an installation of 200 hollow log coffins from Central Arnhem Land, one for each year of European occupation. The logs are, like cenotaphs, empty tombs which commemorate people who have died defending their land, though in this case they fought against, rather than for, white Australia.

Figure 3.20: Aboriginal Memorial (1987), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Nick D. Used under CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Activity

Create a visual timeline which includes six Australian war memorials from the following conflicts:

- Frontier Wars (1788-1939)
- Boer War (1899-1902)
- First World War (1914-1918)
- Second World War (1939-1945)
- Korean War (1950-1953)
- Vietnam War (1955-1975)

Write a short paragraph for each image on the timeline which provides an overview of the conflict including the dates, locations, rationale for the conflict and result of the conflict. What differences and similarities can you see between the memorials over time?

Choose one of the Australian war memorials from your visual timeline and complete the following:

- Find another war memorial that commemorates the same conflict in another country – if choosing the Frontier Wars you might like to consider other memorials that explore battles between Indigenous peoples and colonising forces
- Consider the wording on the Australian and overseas memorial and discuss any similarities or differences between the text that has been used on both
- Take time to explore the design of both memorials and imagine you are a visitor at both sites
- Imagine you are a family member who lost someone in this conflict and in an email or short travel blog for your family, describe your reaction to both memorials and whether you believe they successfully capture the conflict that is being commemorated

The following sites may assist you with researching Australian memorials:

- Monument Australia – https://www.monumentaustralia.org.au/
- Places of Pride: The National Register of War Memorials – https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/
- Queensland War Memorial Register – https://www.qldwarmemorials.com.au/
- Register of War Memorials in New South Wales – https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/
- Victorian Heritage Register – https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/

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4. Counter Memorials and Monuments

Figure 4.1: A visitor touching a name on The Wall at the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, in Washington, DC, United States. *Image by Sky Ring. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Introduction

This chapter explores counter memorials, sometimes also known as anti-memorials. Many memorials – particularly

those built before the 1980s – offer a sanitised and simplified view of history that celebrates the nation state as a benign and positive force. They are typically affirmative in the sense that they glorify an event or person or celebrate and reinforce an ideology.

Figure 4.2: The Queen Victoria Statue (1908), located outside the Queen Victoria building in Sydney, New South Wales. *Image by Bjørn Christian Tørrissen. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

In contrast, anti-monumental works generally recognise darker events, such as the Holocaust, or the more troubling side of an event that in other times might have been glorified, such as a war. They may warn of the evils of an ideology, such as fascism or racism. Whereas traditional monuments recognise famous figures or the heroism of unknown soldiers, a growing number of anti-monumental works recognise the suffering victims of conflict or persecution and admonish the perpetrators (Stevens, Franck, & Fazakerley, 2012).

Stimulus Idea

Memorials raise complex questions about which history we choose to remember. If a memorial

cannot tell the whole story, then what part of the story, or whose story, does it tell? Whose memories, whose point of view, and whose values and perspectives will be represented? Memorials must also respond to the question: Why should we remember? Writing about memorials in Germany, Ian Buruma distinguishes between a **Denkmal**, a monument built to glorify a leader, an event, or the nation as a whole, and a **Mahnmal**, a 'monument of warning'.

Read a visual essay about Holocaust memorials and monuments.

Counter memorials and monuments emerged in postwar West Germany during the 1980s. They seek to challenge dominant historical narratives by presenting equally valid, yet often marginalised perspectives, such as the controversial 1913 Explorers' Monument in Fremantle, Western Australia, which had a plaque included in 1994 to provide the Indigenous perspective on the event depicted (Scates, 2017). In contrast to traditional memorials or monuments that glorify an event, a person or affirm an ideology, a counter memorial or monument recognises the less celebratory events in a nation's history (Stevens, et al., 2018). In contrast, traditional war memorials and monuments have been widely criticised as 'nation-building, exclusionary, sexist and militaristic' (Strakosch, 2010, p. 270). A counter memorial or monument seeks to disrupt dominant historical narratives, provide a voice for those whose stories have been marginalised or excluded, and enhance awareness and understanding of the historical event that is being commemorated.

Figure 4.3: The Empty Library (1995) in the Bebelplatz in Berlin, Germany. *The Empty Library – also known as Biliothek or simply Library – memorialises the burning of over 20,000 books written by predominately Jewish authors by the Nazis in the Bebelplatz in Berlin, Germany on May 10 1933. The memorial itself is set into the cobblestones of the plaza and contains a selection of empty subterranean bookcases. Image by Luis Alvaz. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

The more contentious the event commemorated, it appears, the more abstract and symbolic the counter memorial or monument becomes (See **Figure 4.3**). This leaves lay audiences unable to understand and 'read' either the purpose for this commemorative site or the aesthetic devices that have been chosen. Without an understanding of the visual elements or the inherent meaning counter monuments or memorials can struggle to operate at either a literal or artistic level. These commemorative sites are a constant and public visual reminder of lesser-known stories of Australian History. Similarly to traditional memorials which encompass semiotic complexity and 'embed codes of sacrifice, national identity and loss' (Allen, 2016, p. 18), non-traditional or counter memorials and monuments also utilise key semiotic elements – however how they do this is not widely understood (Kerby, et al., 2019). The placement of counter memorials and monuments in public spaces and the official imprimatur that this positioning gives them creates an inherent tension but also allows them to function as a 'public noticeboard' (Auster, 1997). A guide to assist viewers in 'decoding' the semiotic language that is used by artists, designers and architects of counter memorials can be found in **Chapter 2**.

Frontier Wars

The Frontier Wars were fought on the Australian frontier between 1788 and 1928. They led to the death of 22,000 people – 20,000 of them Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders killed either in official or non-official actions. Raymond Evans and Robert Ørsted-Jensen (2014) argue the real number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders killed may be in excess of 65,000 in Queensland alone. As Henry Reynolds (2013) observes, it was 'one of the few significant wars in Australian history and arguably the single most important one. For Indigenous Australia, it was their Great War' (Reynolds, 2018, p. 248). The proof that the conflict was indeed a war is both extensive and compelling, ranging from material held in archives in major cultural institutions in Australia and Great Britain to oral histories in Indigenous communities. They describe, often with a 'disturbing candour … violence [which] was very widespread, well-orchestrated and committed continent-wide from occupation until far into the 20th century' (Daley, 2014). Such was the extent of the violence, and the degree of official agency, that there is a compelling case for it to be considered genocide (Richards, 2008). Whether or not it constitutes state sanctioned genocide or 'societally-led genocide', there was as Palmer (2000) argues considerable public support for a policy of extermination.

Video 4.1: The art of forgetting, Australians and their history

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=111#oembed-1

Video 4.2: The Frontier Wars: Australia's forgotten conflicts

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=111#oembed-2

Video 4.3: A conspiracy of silence, Qld's frontier killing times

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=111#oembed-3

Video 4.4: Australian Frontier Wars: Keith Windschuttle and Henry Reynolds on Lateline

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=111#oembed-4

Figure 4.4: Reconciliation Place (2002), Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Reconciliation Place is a symbol of the Australian Government's commitment to the ongoing reconciliation process with First Nations Australians. The selection of its location in Canberra puts the reconciliation process physically and symbolically at the heart of Australian democratic life. Image by Graham. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Visual analysis – Reconciliation Place, Canberra

The National Capital Authority website provides background information about Reconciliation Place (**Figure 4.4**.),

including a description of each of the 17 artworks which from part of this memorial. A national design competition was launched for the Reconciliation Place memorial with 36 entries received. The winning design team was:

- Architect: Kringas Architecture
- Indigenous Cultural Advisor: Sharon Payne
- Exhibit Design Consultant: Alan Vogt
- Architectural Assistants: Amy Leenderes, Agi Calka and Cath Eliot

It was a requirement of the design competition that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island person formed part of the design team. There are regularly scheduled public guided walks of this site.

Complete the following sections of this visual analysis based on your personal research of this memorial:

- Subject
- Form
- Site
- Historical context

Think-Pair-Share strategy

Video 4.5: Think, Pair, Share

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=111#oembed-5

Think-Pair-Share is a collaborative learning strategy that is effective with students of any age. With this teaching technique, teachers give their students an assignment. They then ask their students to think about it themselves, then work with a partner to discuss the assignment. In the end, students share their findings with the rest of the class.

Benefits of Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share engages students in learning by becoming active participants in the lesson. But there are many other benefits to using this strategy. Think-Pair-Share:

- is flexible enough to work across subjects including math, science, reading, history and more
- allows students who are too shy to speak up in class the opportunity to participate and respond to the question or assignment
- builds oral communication skills
- improves comprehension of the material
- requires minimal additional prep work by the teacher
- adds variety to your teaching methods to help students who don't learn as well with other methods

- teaches students to think about their ideas before speaking them out loud
- broadens the answers received and promotes discussion

Learn more about the benefits of Think-Pair-Share, as well as how to use it in the classroom.

Activity

Use Think-Pair-Share to answer the following questions:

- Why do people build memorials?
- What memorials are you familiar with in your local community?
- Where are they located and what does that say about whose story they tell?
- Who is left out of this story?
- Are the monuments literal representations of people or things or are they abstract?
- Do they have an impact on you? Why or why not?
- Do they look like memorials that you have seen in other towns and cities or on television? How are they similar? How are they different?
- Are some events too horrible to be commemorated by a memorial in a public space?
- Should memorials always be a commemoration or celebration of something?

Gallery walk

A gallery walk engages students in the feedback and reflection process. Learners and teachers collaborate to develop success criteria for a piece of work, then co-develop strategies for offering constructive peer feedback.

Learners produce a piece of work then display their work for their peers to view. All learners review the work of all their peers, then offer constructive and respectful feedback using the strategies and success criteria established at the beginning of the task.

Finally, learners return to their own work, reflect on the feedback of their peers and revise their work accordingly.

Gallery walks are easily adaptable to learning from home as students' collaboration when using the strategy relies upon written, rather than verbal, communication. Digital whiteboards enable learners to comment on one another's work while remaining physically separate.

A slower approach to this activity would enable feedback and reflection without the use of digital tools, if teachers are able to collect hard copies of student work and redistribute them to their peers for feedback.

See an example of a gallery walk.

Activity

You have been asked by the Australian Government to design a memorial for inclusion on Anzac Parade in Canberra. You have complete control over the project. Your first task is to familiarise yourself with the memorials already sited on the Parade.

Discover how to conduct a self-guided walking tour of Anzac Parade.

Figure 4.5: Anzac Parade from the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *Image by Thennicke. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

As designer, you will need to answer the following questions:

- Will it be a Denkmal (monument) or a Mahnmal (memorial)?
- What is the main audience for your memorial?
- What ideological statement will you try to make?
- What will you name your memorial?
- What material, symbols, imagery or words will you use to communicate your ideas? Your visual vocabulary can include considerations such as shape, mass, material, imagery, location, words, names or dates. The first decision will be whether the memorial will be literal or abstract.
- What memorials have influenced your design decisions? Look at some other examples of counter memorials such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC (**Figure 4.1**) or ones commemorating the Holocaust.

What next?

1. Once you've made your design decisions, draw a sketch on paper or on the computer, or build a model of your memorial
2. Prepare and deliver a 3 minute multimodal presentation explaining your design decisions
3. View each other's memorial as a gallery walk – are there patterns in the choice of person and event? In the design decisions?

Resources

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5. Commemorating Genocide Holocaust Memorials in Australia and Overseas

Figure 5.1: German Nazi death camp Auschwitz in Poland, arrival of Hungarian Jews, summer 1944. *Image by Ernst Hofmann. Used under a CC BY-SA licence.*

Introduction

On Australia Day 2021 Federal Treasurer and Liberal Member for Kooyong (a suburb in Melbourne, Victoria), Josh Frydenberg, and Labor Member for Macnamara (also in Melbourne, Victoria), Josh Burns wrote an opinion piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that acknowledged an interesting turn in Australian commemorative practices. As Frydenberg and Burns (2021, para. 14) noted, the establishment of Holocaust museums promoted tolerance and 'understanding while combating racism and anti-Semitism'. This drive for Holocaust commemoration will eventually see Holocaust memorials and museums established in each capital city. These initiatives are occurring concurrently with the controversial $500 million expansion of the Australian War Memorial, concern over what some see as the paucity of funding allotted to the National Archives, and the ongoing debate about the Frontier Wars and the traditional narrative of European settlement as a benign and civilising process.

Both Frydenberg and Burns lost family members during the Holocaust, a connection that gives them a very personal stake in the delivery of Holocaust education in Australian schools, as well as via its cultural institutions. They see this as a means of ensuring 'the children of today and tomorrow learn from the past and work towards

a brighter, more tolerant and inclusive future' (Frydenberg & Burns, 2021, para. 16). Both Frydenberg and Burns (2021, para. 1) seek to position the Holocaust as a specific event, one that was 'not just a crime committed against the Jewish people [but also] a crime against humanity'. They have sought to add to this specificity broad links to contemporary Australian political and cultural values, including 'a deep commitment to multiculturalism and diversity' and 'a pride in the many cultures, religions and identities that make up Australia' (Frydenberg & Burns, 2021, paras. 25-26).

The determination to ensure the Holocaust does not fade from the collective memory as the last survivors pass away was backed by considerable financial support. In August 2020 the state government of Western Australia allocated $6 million to help fund the construction of a new Jewish Community Centre in Yokine, a suburb of Perth, which would include a Holocaust education centre. In late September 2020 the Morrison Government announced funding of $3.5 million to support the establishment of a Holocaust Museum and Education Centre in Brisbane, Queensland. The then Minister for Education Dan Tehan (2020, para. 3) argued that 'It is critical that people of all ages, and particularly our young people, learn about this dark period in world history'. Given his role in education, he unsurprisingly harboured hopes for the didactic value of a museum for it 'would ensure generations of Queenslanders can learn about the past to prevent discrimination and prejudice in the future' (Tehan, 2020, para. 5).

In October Tehan announced that $2.5 million of government funding would be likewise directed to the establishment of the Adelaide Holocaust Museum and Steiner Education Centre in Adelaide, South Australia. In January 2021 Alan Tudge, the Minister for Education and Youth, and Andrew Barr, the Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister added $750,000 to the growing total to assist in establishing the Canberra Holocaust Museum and Education Centre in the nation's capital. In March 2021 the Australian Government committed $2 million towards the establishment of a Holocaust education centre in Hobart, Tasmania, in a move that angered some Aboriginal activists, who argue that 'history much closer to home was being ignored' (Cooper, 2021, para. 3). The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) was founded in Elsternwick, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria in 1984 by Holocaust survivors. The Sydney Jewish Museum was established in 1992 by the generation of Holocaust survivors who migrated to Australia, and now with the announcement of other Holocaust education centres in other states and territories in Australia the ring had now been closed.

Though each centre will probably include a memorial to the Holocaust, there are nevertheless some, though not many, already in existence. Western Australia has the Holocaust Memorial (1995) in Perth. Victoria has the Jewish Victims of the Holocaust (2008) in Melbourne. The Leo Baeck Centre for Progressive Judaism at Kew, Melbourne, has a striking modern wind sculpture entitled '... and the wind whispered your name' (2010). New South Wales has the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial (2001), three memorials at The Sydney Jewish Museum – the Sanctum of Remembrance (1992), The Children's Memorial (2002) which commemorates the 1.5 million children who were murdered during the Holocaust, and the Zachor ('Remember') Digital Memorial (2017) which is part of 'The Holocaust and Human Rights' exhibition – and the Paul and Eva Lederer Youth Campus and Art Garden (2019) at the Central Synagogue, also in Sydney.

In her keynote speech at the Holocaust Memorial Dedication Service at the Leo Baeck Centre for Progressive Judaism on November 14 2010, Pauline Rockman OAM, President of the Jewish Holocaust Centre argued that the most successful memorials allow for a multiplicity of interactions and rituals and which encouraged reflection and dialogue (Rockman, 2010).

What was the Holocaust?

The Holocaust refers to the systematic, state-sponsored murder of six million Jews by Nazi Germany and it collaborators. Though it drew on older anti-Semitic beliefs, it was implemented in stages after the Nazis came to power in 1933. It started with anti-Jewish legislation and economic boycotts, escalating to mass killings, and finally to genocide after the start of the Second World War in 1939. In all, two thirds of European Jews were murdered in a process referred to euphemistically by the Germans as the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question'. Though some conspiracy theorists deny that the Holocaust occurred or argue that the numbers are exaggerated, the proof that a systematic and widespread attempt to annihilate the Jewish people is both extensive and compelling.

Resources

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Video 5.1: The Holocaust

Transcript available from Khan Academy

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=116#oembed-1

Video 5.2: The path to Nazi genocide

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Commemorating the Holocaust

Most of the Holocaust museums and memorials constructed around the world since 1945 are driven either by either nationalistic or humanistic imperatives. The former connects the Holocaust to the broader history of the nation in which it is located. The moral, political and social implications are then often used as a vehicle to explore contemporary political issues. The latter approach is informed by the value of 'the universal humanistic lessons of the Holocaust' as an element in the 'fight against prejudice, discrimination and racism' (Berman, 2006, pp. 34-35). The Australian government's approach is a hybrid, with politicians particularly open to links with contemporary Australia. The specific Jewish experience is sometimes dehistoricised and replaced by a vision of the Holocaust as an example of the destruction wrought by all forms of racism and intolerance (Alba, 2007, p. 151). The relativising of the Holocaust positions it as a 'cosmopolitan memory' (Levy & Sznaider, 2002, p. 88), a 'traumatic event for all of humankind' (Alexander, 2002, p. 6), and the 'archetypal sacred-evil of our time' (Moses, 2003, p. 6).

Designers of Holocaust memorials have to confront the tension between aesthetic imperatives and the ethical considerations inherent in the memorialisation of an event that many consider beyond comprehension. James Ingo Freed, the designer of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, initially had doubts that it was even possible to address the aesthetic issues of engaging with an 'unimaginable, unspeakable, and un-

representable horror' (Young, 1993, p. 16). As Freed (1993, p. 89) conceded, 'looking over your shoulder, you were always aware of the spectre of this thing, those millions of bodies'. In effect, he knew he would need to engineer a monument that would evoke a nightmare (Argiris, Namdar, & Adams, 1992, p. 48). As Bewes (1997, p. 145) observes, Auschwitz is an affront to human rationality. Any attempt to depict it must find a way to do so and 'not … insult the millions of real dead' (Lyotad, 1989, p. 364). From the earliest attempt to memorialise the Holocaust in 1943 at the Majdanek Concentration Camp near Lublin, Poland, to the most recent efforts, three characteristics have come to dominate these attempts:

- they are addressed to transnational audiences
- they communicate multiple meanings
- they use a new repertoire of symbols, forms and materials to explore those meanings

Having dispensed with the use of stelae (slabs or pillars), towers and realistic statuary by the 1960s, Holocaust memorials no longer resembled traditional war memorials of the type familiar to most Australians. Holocaust memorials and monuments therefore tend to adopt larger, more expansive, abstract and avante-garde forms (Marcuse, 1978) (See **Figures 5.2 and Figures 5.4–6**). Figurative references are less visible – for example **Figure 5.2** does contain human forms, but they have been transformed into barbed wire. In **Figure 5.3** the people have been more realistically presented, but as noted this is not common practice in Holocaust memorial and monument design due to the complexities of presenting such an horrific event.

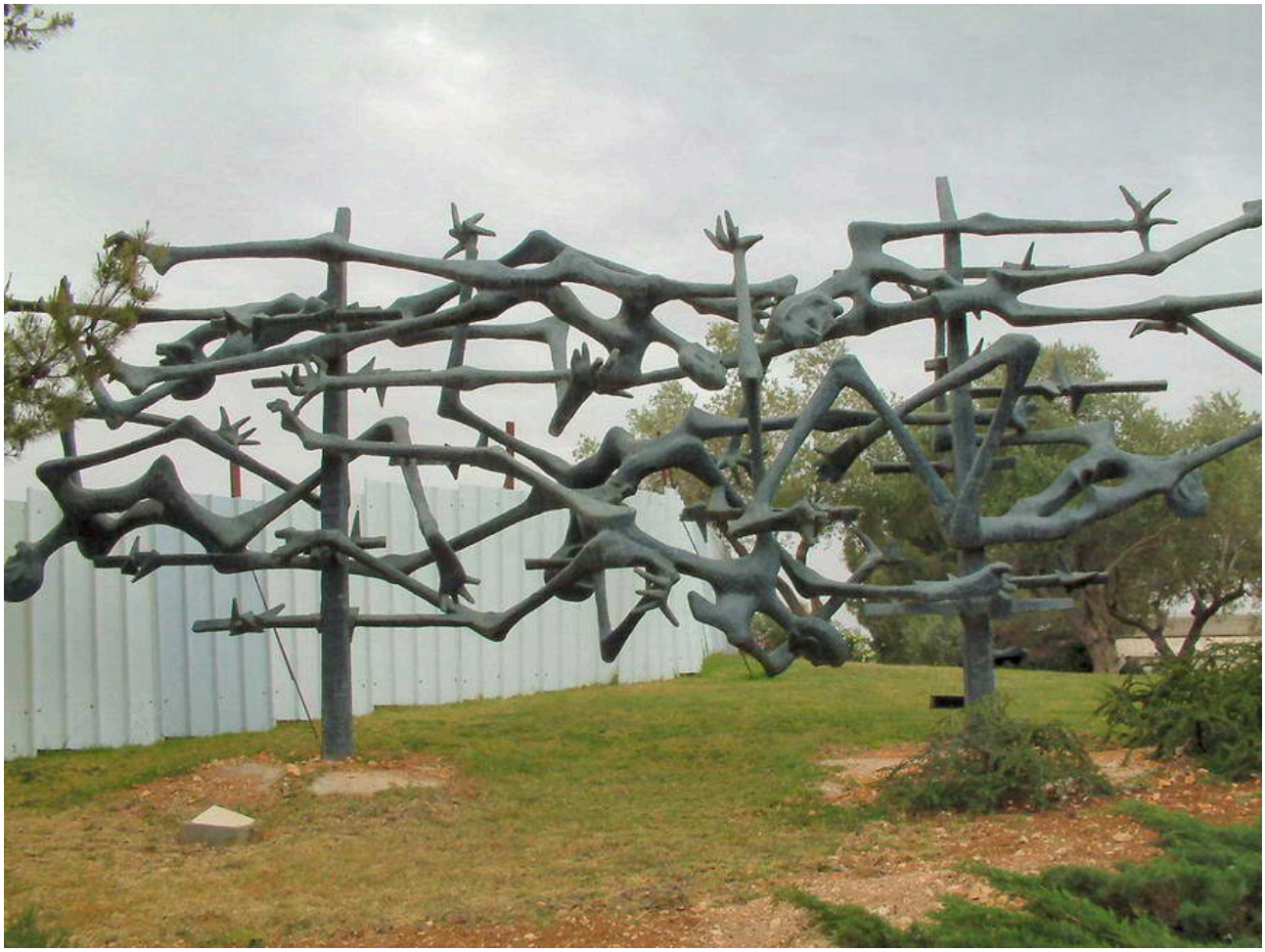

Figure 5.2: Torah memorial (1979) at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel. *Image by Nandor Glid. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Figure 5.3: The Monument to the Ghetto Heroes (1948) in Warsaw, Poland. *Image by Dr. Avishai Teicher. Used under a CC BY-SA licence.*

Figure 5.4: Memorial at the site of the Rumbula massacre (2002), Rumbula forest, Latvia. *Image by Dr. Avishai Teicher. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Figure 5.5: Athens Holocaust Memorial (2010), Athens, Greece. *Image by Tilemahos Efthimiadis. Used under a CC BY-SA 2.0 licence.*

Figure 5.6: Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial (2000), Vienna, Australia. *Image by Bwag. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Video 5.3: Architecture of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

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Video 5.4: Inside Auschwitz – English version in 360°/VR

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Video 5.5: The world's first Holocaust museum

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Video 5.6: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=116#oembed-6

Video 5.7: Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach, Florida

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Discussion questions

View the 10 shortlisted designs for London's Holocaust memorial.

- Do they have anything in common?
- What are the differences between the designs?
- Which one do you prefer? Why?

View the winning design in this video:

Video 5.8: Holocaust Memorial in Westminister

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=116#oembed-8

- Was it a design you liked?

- Why or why not?
- Would you visit the memorial?
- Would you feel comfortable taking a 'selfie' at the memorial? Why? Why not?

Activity

Think about how you would design a Holocaust memorial in your local area.

- Would you use an abstract design?
- What symbols might you include?
- Would materials would you use?
- Would you include text or figurative elements?

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PART III

PART C

6. An Education in Commemoration: The Australian Curriculum, Commemoration and Memorials

MAJOR GENERAL
LACHLAN MACQUARIE
GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES
1810 - 1821

Figure 6.1: Major General Lachlan Macquarie statue (2013) at Hyde Park, Sydney, New South Wales. *This statue commemorates Governor Lachlan Macquarie's part in founding and shaping Sydney. He served as the Governor of New South Wales from 1810 to 1812. Governor Macquarie ordered a military reprisal raid against Aboriginal people in the early hours of the morning on April 17 1816 which saw the killing of 14 people of the Dharwal tribe. This is generally referred to as the Appin massacre and since 2000 has been commemorated annually at a memorial service at Cataract Dam, New South Wales. Image by Maksym Kozlenko. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Reflection

Think back to your primary schooling, especially if you were educated in Australia. Do you remember starting the first week of school in January on a Wednesday, because the Australia Day public holiday on January 26 had disrupted the beginning of the school year? Do you remember learning about Captain Cook's voyage in 1770 and the establishment of the first British colony in 1788? Do you remember standing in the undercover area on April 25 for Anzac Day as your principal introduced a representative from the local branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL), to speak about the sacrifices made at Gallipoli and elsewhere by Australian servicemen and women, and then hearing the school captain read the Ode of Rembrance followed by the playing of the Last Post? Perhaps your school sent a contingent to the Dawn Service held near an Anzac Memorial or you or your family members marched in the Anzac Day parade. Perhaps your school visited a local museum where you learnt about the struggles of the first European settlers. Did you learn about the history of your town or region and about prominent locals who distinguished themselves in politics, industry, sport or entertainment? You may have learnt about the Aboriginal communities who once lived locally, or perhaps even something about the Frontier Wars? You may even have travelled to Canberra where you probably visited the Australian War Memorial, Parliament House and the National Museum of Australia.

Introduction

As this reflection indicates, acts of commemoration are embedded into our educational system, not only as a part of the official History curriculum, but in the routines and rituals of the school year. These acts of commemoration play a significant role in shaping our understanding of local, regional and national history. The *History Rationale* in the *Australian Curriculum* states that 'an awareness of history is an essential characteristic of any society, and historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others'. In addition, it is 'interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking about human values, including present and future challenges' (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2021, para. 1). An important aspect of History is related to what societies – both past and present – choose to commemorate and how. There are various forms of commemoration which can include memorials or monuments that are usually permanent and occupy civic or public spaces. The placing of a statue or memorial is, in effect, a colonisation of space little different from planting a flag. What they commemorate, how they were constructed and the role they play during community rituals and ceremonies offers an invaluable insight into seemingly officially sanctioned versions of a community's history.

It is equally important to consider what is not commemorated – either in stone or during community ceremonies and celebrations – and to ascertain why these gaps and silences exist. Some statues and memorials commemorate European settlement in Australia, and they invariably offer what is, at best, an incomplete version of the past, as in the case of the statue to Governor Lachlan Macquarie at the beginning of this chapter. Sometimes, it is not just the

history they tell that is incomplete. As Bruce Scates (2017, para. 2) observes, 'By occupying civic space they serve to legitimise narratives of conquest and dispossession, arguably colonising minds in the same ways white "settlers" seized vast tracts of territory'. Some memorials and statues have been criticised because they sanitise a nation's history by minimising or ignoring painful events. Sometimes a statue or memorial commemorates a person or event no longer considered appropriate – in these cases they are often toppled or damaged as we have recently seen through the Black Lives Matter (BLM) global movement (Fortin, 2017; Modhin & Storer, 2021). Our understanding of history evolves over time. Memorials and statues are, however, literally set in stone. They can be removed, vandalised, fall into disrepair or just be ignored if they no longer seem relevant to modern audiences.

Although users of this textbook may well teach in different countries, this section will provide a series of examples related to the *Australian Curriculum: History* in order to explore how memorials and monuments can be used to facilitate authentic learning experiences. Before introducing the *Australian Curriculum: History*, it is important to acknowledge the danger of engaging uncritically with memorials and monuments. As they are tangible objects which often have a nation building agenda – indeed, they often compel the viewer to physically look upward at them – they can be mistaken for history rather than versions of history.

The approach adopted by students when dealing with historical sources in the classroom needs to be replicated outside of it. That is not to say they are not a valuable insight into how particular ideas have developed and are maintained. It is just that they need to be used and critiqued with caution. For example, the majority of Confederate monuments in the United States were built during the era of Jim Crow laws – state and local laws that enforced racial segregation from 1877 to 1964. They may therefore prove to be a more accurate representation of the views of *some* Southerners during the period they were constructed rather than during the Civil War. In addition, as they are usually sited in public spaces, they represent an officially endorsed version of history – an important distinction. By critiquing memorials as they would any resource, educators will also discover that there are numerous opportunities to develop their pedagogy and to make acts of commemoration more meaningful and purposeful without drawing on the financial resources of the history department or school. It might be as simple as accessing photographs of memorials related to the period of history being studied.

Activity

Look at the following images of a range of memorials and monuments related to war (**Figure 6.2-6.13**). Consider the similarities, the differences, the artistic choices and how they impact on the message that the memorial or monument communicates to viewers. Conduct some research into the events they commemorate and when they were built.

- What do they tell us about how these conflicts are remembered?
- What lessons are we as contemporary viewers likely to take away from seeing the memorials?
- What kind of emotional responses are likely to be generated?

Figure 6.2: Marine Corps War Memorial (1954) in Arlington County, Virginia, United States. *The United States Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima memorial) was dedicated in 1954 to all Marines who have given their lives in defence of the United States since 1775. Image by Famartin. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Figure 6.3: The Three Soldiers (1984) and Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982), Washington DC, United States. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial recognises and honors the US armed services members who served in one of America's most divisive wars. Image by Julie Minevitch. Used under a CC BY 2.0 licence.*

Figure 6.4: Shot at Dawn (2001), National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, United Kingdom. *This memorial commemorates the 306 British Army and Commonwealth soldiers executed after being court martialled for desertion and other capital offences during the First World War. Image by Harry Mitchell. Used under a CC BY 4.0 licence.*

Figure 6.5: The Cenotaph (1920) on Whitehall in London, United Kingdom. *The Cenotaph on Whitehall in London is designated as the United Kingdom's primary war memorial that commemorates the end of the First World War. Image by Andrew Shiva. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Figure 6.6: Memorial for the Victims of Nazi Military Justice (2014) at Vienna's Ballhausplatz, Austria. *This memorial is dedicated to Germans and Austrians who deserted the Wehrmacht – the unified armed forces of Nazi Germany established by Adolf Hitler from 1935 to 1945. Image by Bwag. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

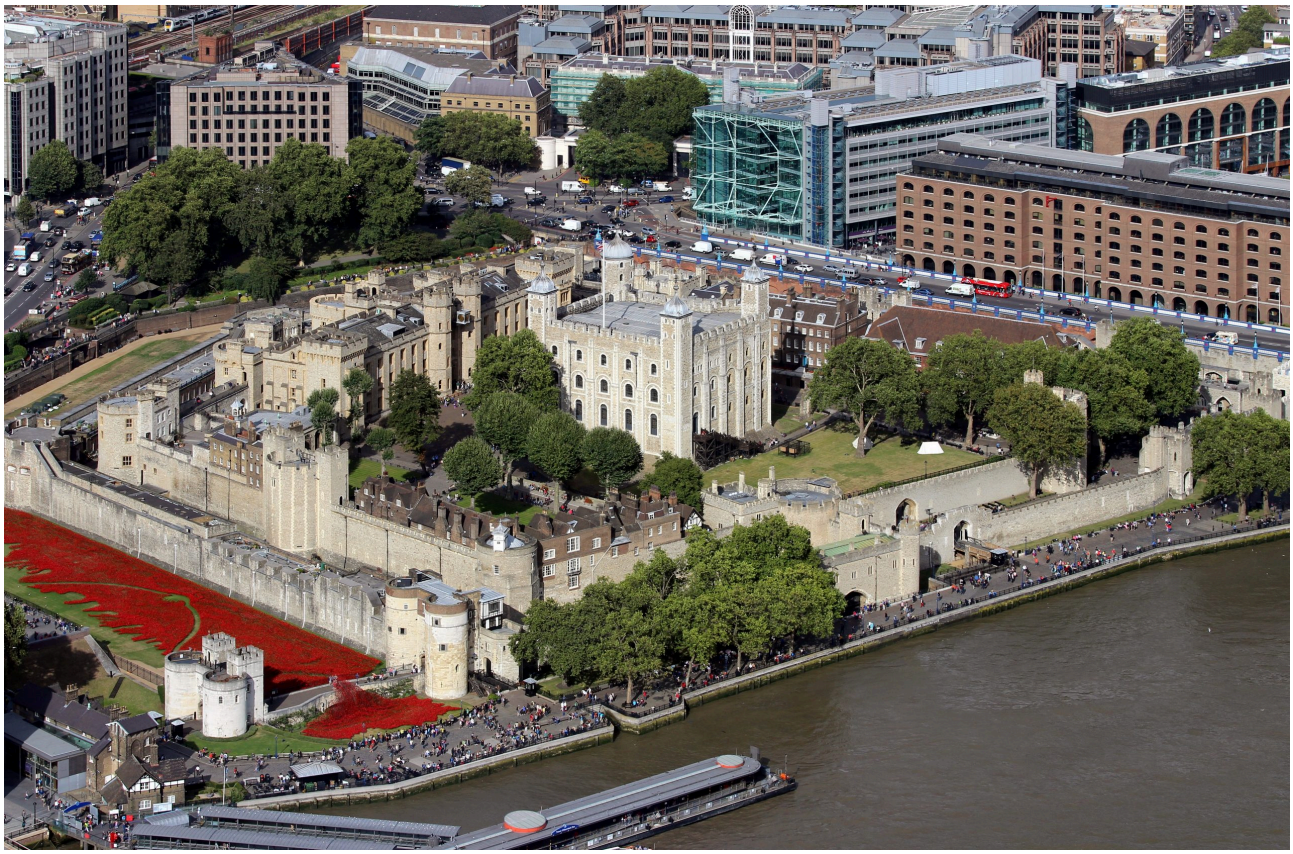

Figure 6.7: The Tower of London, United Kingdom, including the Blood Swept Lands And Seas Of Red installation (2014). *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red was a public installation created to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War and consisted of 888,246 ceramic red poppies – one for each British or colonial serviceman killed in the war. Image by Hilarmont. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Figure 6.8: Australian Boer War Memorial (2017), Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. *This memorial commemorates the military history of Australia during the Second Boer War from 1899 to 1902. Image by Peter Ellis. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

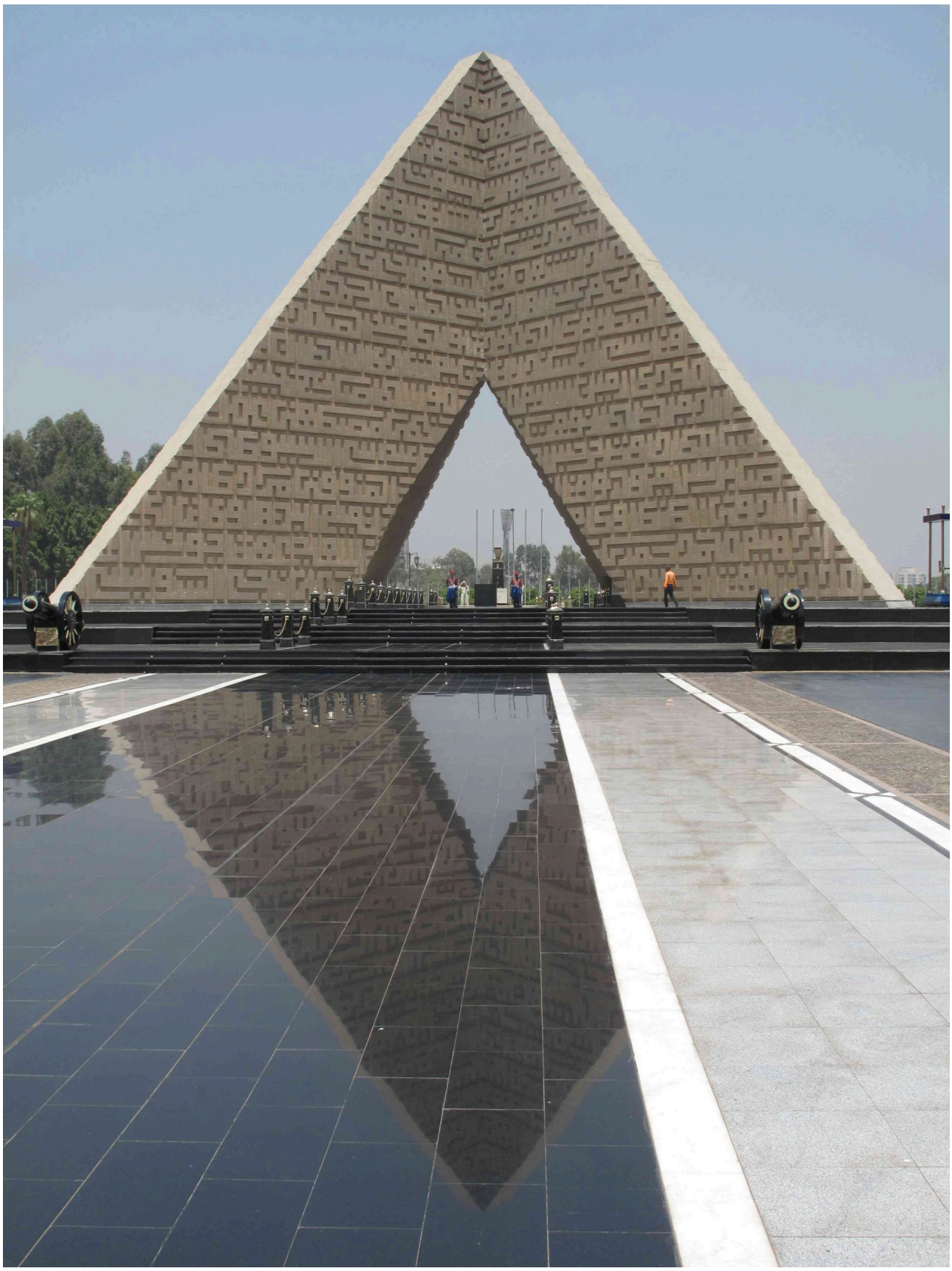

Figure 6.9: Unknown Soldier Memorial (1975) in Cairo, Egypt. *This memorial honours Egyptians and Arabs who lost their lives in the 1973 October War (also known as the Yom Kippur War, the Ramadan War, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war or the Fourth Arab-Israeli War). Image by Wkawalek. Used under a CC BY 3.0 licence.*

Figure 6.10: Warsaw Uprising Monument (1989), Warsaw, Poland. *This monument is dedicated to the heroes of the Warsaw Uprising which occurred in August 1944 after Warsaw had been occupied by Nazi forces for five years. It has been described as one of the important and devastating events in the history of Warsaw and Poland which saw ninety per cent of Warsaw's buildings destroyed and the systematic destruction of the city carried out by Germans after the uprising. Image by Dhirad. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Figure 6.11: Monument to the Women of World War II (2005) in London, United Kingdom. *This memorial is dedicated to the work that women undertook during the Second World War. Image by Andrew Shiva. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

Figure 6.12: Yasukuni Shrine (1869) in Chiyoda, Japan. *The name of this Shinto shrine, located in Chiyoda, Tokyo, means 'Peaceful country' in Japanese. It commemorates those who died in the service of Japan from the Boshin War of 1868 to 1869 through to the First Indochina War of 1946 to 1954. Image by Wiiiii. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Figure 6.13: The ex-Ottoman M.15 barrel on its transport vehicle preserved at Brisbane Grammar School, Queensland as a war memorial. *Image by Kgbo. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.*

The modern memorial

With the advent of modern architecture and its commitment to material and formal honesty came the prominence of the minimalist memorial – designs of commemoration that favored the absorbent meaning of abstract forms to the prescriptive qualities of literal sculptures. After Maya Lin sliced the ground on the National Mall to create the black granite wound of the Vietnam War Memorial and Peter Eisenman raised disorienting stelae out of Berlin's fraught urban space to form the Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe, many recent memorial designs have taken similarly understated routes, suggesting in a combination of both allusive and unspecific forms the shapeshifting nature of collective memory.

Sorabjee (n.d.) acknowledges that regardless of whether they are pervaded by a sense of reverence or a recognition of trauma, or whether they commemorate individual tragedy or mass conflict, memorials share a common motivation. They reflect a community's desire to 'pinpoint the collective memory in a shared physical experience, a space of reflection designed to hold the heaviness of history'. When they are controversial, either aesthetically or ideologically, she argued that the language of abstraction best allows 'flecks of individual remembrance to colour in their volumetric outlines'.

Engaging with memorials and monuments

Engaging with memorials and commemorative activities will nevertheless compel educators to confront the intersection between history and myth. Historical myths should never be dismissed as mere fabrications or lies waiting to be exposed. They are foundational narratives through which people find their most important meanings. They are sacred and have over time passed into and become history (Mali, 2003, p. xii). They can have elements of truth (Robin Hood), they can be adaptations of stories and myths from other cultures (St Nicholas), they can be updated from generation to generation (King Arthur), they can embellished in literature (Paul Revere), they can be used for nation building agendas (the 'Miracle of Dunkirk') or they can be propaganda creations (The Angel of Mons). Each of these examples are grounded in historical events, but they have become part history, part sacred story.

Figure 6.14: Robin Hood statue (1952), Nottingham, United Kingdom. *Image by RichardUK2014. Used under a CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.*

Discussion questions

- What myths are you familiar with?
- Where did you first hear them?
- Do they serve a purpose other than entertainment?
- What do they tell you about the society that created them?

Research one of the examples provided and explore the 'truth' of the person or event versus the myth.

Mythology as pop culture

Ten reasons why Disney movies Are modern mythology

Heroes and superheroes: From myth to the American comic book

Why superheroes are modern mythology

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The Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences (Foundation – Year 6) – History (Years 7 -10)

The table below summarises the Australian History topics across the F-10 *Australian Curriculum*, drawing upon the Humanities and Social Sciences – History strand (F-6) and then the dedicated History curriculum for Years 7-10. Note that not all of these topics are compulsory, for example in Year 10 schools choose from ONE of Migration, Popular culture or The Environment Movement. The topics below are those related to the use of local history in the classroom.

Year Level	Topic	Content Descriptors
Foundation	HASS – History	• How they, their family and friends commemorate past events that are important to them (ACHASSK012)
Year 2	HASS – History	• The importance today of a historical site of cultural or spiritual significance in the local area, and why it should be preserved (ACHASSK045)
Year 3	HASS – History	• The importance of Country/Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who belong to a local area (ACHASSK062) • How the community has changed and remained the same over time and the role that people of diverse backgrounds have played in the development and character of the local community (ACHASSK063) • Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, Anzac Day and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems (ACHASSK064) • Celebrations and commemorations in places around the world (for example, Chinese New Year in countries of the Asia region, Bastille Day in France, Independence Day in the USA), including those that are observed in Australia (for example, Christmas Day, Diwali, Easter, Hanukkah, the Moon Festival and Ramadan) (ACHASSK065)
Year 4	HASS – History	• The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) (ACHASSK083) • The journey(s) of AT LEAST ONE world navigator, explorer or trader up to the late eighteenth century, including their contacts with other societies and any impacts (ACHASSK084) • Stories of the First Fleet, including reasons for the journey, who travelled to Australia and their experiences following arrival (ACHASSK085) • The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans and the effects of these interactions on, for example, people and environments (ACHASSK086)

Year 5	HASS – History	• Reasons (economic, political and social) for the establishment of British colonies in Australia after 1800 (ACHASSK106) • The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants (including Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) and how the environment changed (ACHASSK107) • The impact of a significant development or event on an Australian colony (ACHASSK108) • The reasons people migrated to Australia and the experiences and contributions of a particular migrant group within a colony (ACHASSK109) • The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony (ACHASSK110)
Year 6	HASS – History	• Key figures, events and ideas that led to Australia's Federation and Constitution (ACHASSK134) • Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children (ACHASSK135) • Stories of groups of people who migrated to Australia since Federation (including from ONE country of the Asia region) and reasons they migrated (ACHASSK136) • The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation (ACHASSK137)
Year 7	Investigating the ancient past	• The nature of sources for ancient Australia and what they reveal about Australia's past in the ancient period, such as the use of resources (ACDSEH031) • The importance of conserving the remains of the ancient past, including the heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACDSEH148)
Year 8	• No specific focus on Australia	

Year 9	Movements of Peoples	• The influence of the Industrial Revolution on the movement of peoples throughout the world, including the transatlantic slave trade and convict transportation (ACDSEH018) • Experiences of slaves, convicts and free settlers upon departure, their journey abroad and their reactions on arrival, including the Australian experience (ACDSEH083) • Changes in the way of life of a group(s) of people who moved to Australia in this period, such as free settlers on the frontier in Australia (ACDSEH084) • The short and long-term impacts of the movement of peoples during this period (ACDSEH085)
Year 9	Making a Nation	• The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACDSEH020) • Experiences of non-Europeans in Australia prior to the 1900s (such as the Japanese, Chinese, South Sea Islanders, Afghans) (ACDSEH089) • Living and working conditions in Australia around the turn of the twentieth century (that is 1900) (ACDSEH090) • Key people, events and ideas in the development of Australian self-government and democracy, including, the role of founders, key features of constitutional development, the importance of British and Western influences in the formation of Australia's system of government and women's voting rights (ACDSEH091) • Laws made by Federal Parliament between 1901 and 1914, including the Harvester Judgement (1908), pensions, and the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) (ACDSEH092)

Year 9	World War I	• The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I, including the Gallipoli campaign (ACDSEH095) • The impact of World War I, with a particular emphasis on Australia including the changing role of women (ACDSEH096) • The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend (ACDSEH097)
Year 10	World War II	• Experiences of Australians during World War II (such as prisoners of war (POWs), the Battle of Britain, Kokoda and the Fall of Singapore) (ACDSEH108) • The impact of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the Australian home front, including the changing roles of women and use of wartime government controls (conscription, manpower controls, rationing and censorship) (ACDSEH109) • The significance of World War II to Australia's international relationships in the twentieth century, with particular reference to the United Nations, Britain, the United States and Asia (ACDSEH110)
	Migration	• The waves of post-World War II migration to Australia, including the influence of significant world events (ACDSEH144) • The impact of changing government policies on Australia's migration patterns, including abolition of the White Australia policy and 'Populate or perish' (ACDSEH145) • The impact of at least ONE world event or development and its significance for Australia, such as the Vietnam War and Indochinese refugees (ACDSEH146) • The contribution of migration to Australia's changing identity as a nation and to its international relationships (ACDSEH147)

	Rights and Freedoms	• The origins and significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), including Australia's involvement in the development of the declaration (ACDSEH023) • Background to the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for rights and freedoms before 1965, including the 1938 Day of Mourning and the Stolen Generations (ACDSEH104) • The 1954-1968 US civil rights movement and its influence on Australia (ACDSEH105) • The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: 1962 right to vote federally, 1967 Referendum, Reconciliation, Mabo decision, *Bringing them home* report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology (ACDSEH106) • Methods used by civil rights activists to achieve change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and the role of ONE individual or group in the struggle (ACDSEH134) • The continuing nature of efforts to secure civil rights and freedoms in Australia and throughout the world, such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) (ACDSEH143)
	Popular Culture	• The nature of popular culture in Australia at the end of World War II, including music, film and sport (ACDSEH027) • Developments in popular culture in post-war Australia and their impact on society, including the introduction of television and rock 'n' roll (ACDSEH121) • Changing nature of the music, film and television industry in Australia during the post-war period, including the influence of overseas developments (such as Hollywood, Bollywood and the animation film industry in China and Japan) (ACDSEH122) • Australia's contribution to international popular culture (music, film, television, sport) (ACDSEH123) • Continuity and change in beliefs and values that have influenced the Australian way of life (ACDSEH149)

	Environment Movement	• The background to environmental awareness, including the nineteenth century national parks movement in America and Australia (ACDSEH028) • The intensification of environmental effects in the twentieth century as a result of population increase, urbanisation, increasing industrial production and trade (ACDSEH125) • The growth and influence of the environment movement within Australia and overseas, and developments in ideas about the environment including the concept of 'sustainability' (ACDSEH126) • Significant events and campaigns that contributed to popular awareness of environmental issues, such as the campaign to prevent the damming of Australia's Gordon River, the nuclear accident at Chernobyl and the Jabiluka mine controversy in 1998 (ACDSEH127) • Responses of governments – including the Australian Government – and international organisations to environmental threats since the 1960s, including deforestation and climate change (ACDSEH128)

Although a teacher of history devoted to improving their craft is always able to search for opportunities to employ a creative and innovative pedagogy, the *Australian Curriculum: History* does not always lend itself to the integration of local histories. Yet, the opportunities are there for teachers willing to explore them. Indeed, research conducted by Anna Clark (2016) confirms that:

'… the historical contradiction that sees intimate and personal histories generating genuine, tangible engagement … while official histories frequently struggle for relevance and attachment in the community more broadly. Look a little closer, and that paradox seems to hinge precisely on participants' relationship to history – in particular, how it pertains to them, and whether they can see themselves in it'.

Case study

Most schools hold an ANZAC Day ceremony. Remembrance Day is also observed, with a one minute silence at 11 am on November 11, but ANZAC Day, with its public holiday, still stands out as the most significant commemoration of Australia's service in various international conflicts. Schools also often play a role in community commemoration events – such as Dawn Services – by sending student leaders to lay a wreath or play another role in the ceremony. There have been a number of reasons posited for Anzac Day's longevity: an increasing interest in family and community history (Holbrook, 2014), its appeal as a civic religion (Inglis, 2008) or as an expression of displaced Christianity (Billings, 2015), its status as a sacred parable above criticism (McKenna, 2007), an expression of the commerce and politics of nationalism (McKenna & Ward, 2007), the impact of a grand narrative that emphasises the role of Australian military engagements and the Anzac spirit in shaping the nation (Lake, 2010) and proof of a hunger for meaning, a craving for ritual and a search for transcendence (Scates, 2006).

Though each of these no doubt exerts at least some influence on how the April 25 is celebrated, it must be remembered that Australia's wartime mythology – and by extension Anzac Day – has not remained static in the public imagination. Such was the growing disconnect from both the historical events and the rhetoric surrounding them that by the 1960s, Anzac Day was in terminal decline, a situation exacerbated by the growing opposition to the Vietnam War (Inglis, 1965):

Many of those who fought in the First World War were born in the last two decades of the nineteenth century when it was treated as a matter of faith that the sun would indeed never set on the British Empire. In contrast, the Australians who reached adulthood in the 1950s and 1960s inhabited a different world – one in which the social and moral values of their parents and grandparents appeared irrelevant. The British Empire was dissolving, the emotional link to the UK was at odds with an increasingly multicultural Australia, and the pre-eminence of the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in the national story appeared less certain than it had even a few years before (Rhoden, 2012).

The emergence of the construct of a 'kinder, gentler Anzac' in the late 1960s and 1970s transformed the Australian wartime mythology from one 'grounded in beliefs about racial identity and martial capacity to a legend that speaks in the modern idiom of trauma, suffering and empathy'. In doing so, it 'saved the Anzac legend from oblivion' (Holbrook, 2016, p. 19):

'In the post-Cold War and post-Vietnam era, war texts relating war's disruption of civilisation grew in critical and popular regard … Our cultural values have evolved, bringing a consequent change in the valuation of war texts. From the 1960s, the emphasis shifted to exposing war in its guise of the antithesis of civilisation. War became no longer foundational but contradictory to civilisation, war being the ruination of society' (Rhoden, 2012).

The annual Anzac Day parade on April 25 and the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra – which enjoys significant bipartisan political support – exert an almost unrivalled influence on the Australian understanding of the war specifically, and national identity more generally. To a modern audience 'saturated with traumatic memories and understandings of victimhood', this evolution in the understanding of Anzac Day conforms to a wider construct of history that increasingly characterises it as a 'wound or scar that leaves a trace on a nation's soul' (Twomey, 2015, para. 17).

The explicit teaching of *why* we observe Anzac Day is important. The Australian War Memorial states 'On Anzac Day we come together, in person and in spirit, to commemorate the men and women who have served our nation in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations' (Australian War Memorial, 2021, para. 1). The recognition that the rights and freedoms we enjoy today are in part because of the military service of Australian men and women, both in the past and today helps students understand the significance of Anzac Day. Incorporating a study of local ANZAC and war memorials into the curriculum – e.g. the Year 9 World War I unit is often taught at the end of the year, around Remembrance Day, and the Year 10 World War II unit often finishes at the end of Term 1, as ANZAC Day approaches – again helps make these connections to the students' own lives more tangible.

This approach could include an investigation of what the memorial commemorates and what role it plays in the various rituals of community life. It is also important that a range of perspectives is considered:

- Who is not commemorated?
- Is there recognition of the service of women on the home front?
- Is there recognition of Indigenous servicemen and servicewomen?
- Are the less noble aspects of war or actions of individuals acknowledged?

By undertaking research on an aspect of local involvement in war, students come to have deeper and more nuanced understanding of not only the national narrative of 'ANZAC-ery', but also the real life ramifications war has on both service personnel, their families and their communities.

Schools are a key site for the building of national identity. In Australia, schooling is compulsory and the Foundation – Year 10 curriculum is a national one – even though it is addressed differently in different jurisdictions and contexts, it nonetheless provides the foundations for a commonality of learning experiences. This means the majority of Australian students have a similar experience of both the History curriculum and participation in acts of commemoration.

As you will see as you read through the Content Descriptors, the curriculum opens with a focus on personal commemorations and local history, but quickly turns to national narratives, with no mention of local histories beyond Year 3. The focus is on British settlement, Federation, war experiences and increasing cultural diversity post 1945. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are often included, although there is only one unit in Year 7 that is dedicated exclusively to First Nations history prior to British colonisation. This chronological exploration of Australia's history offers teachers opportunities to explore particular moments in greater depth and focus on the development of historical skills as students engage with increasingly complex historical concepts.

Community commemorations

In addition to the learning experiences in schools, our nation also pauses to observe significant dates. The federal public holidays are New Year's Day, Australia Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, and each state and territory also observes the Queen's Birthday and Labour Day public holidays on differing dates. It is clear that these dates are linked to an Anglocentric heritage: Australia follows the Gregorian calendar, marking January 1 as the New Year, observing the Christian holidays of Easter and Christmas, honouring British colonisation on Australia Day and Australia's links with Britain through the Queen's Birthday and service in wars, most notably those in support of Britain, particularly on ANZAC Day. Even Labour Day was initially a celebration of the eight-hour work day – part of the working white man's paradise promised by the 1901 *Immigration Restriction Act*, more commonly known as the White Australia policy. The next section will focus on two commemorations with the strongest links to the Australian History curriculum: ANZAC Day and Australia Day.

Figure 6.15: Australian soldiers with the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment march in an Anzac Day parade in Darwin, Australia, April 25, 2013. *Public domain.*

Resources

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Local histories

Bringing history to life in the classroom can prove a real challenge for teachers at all levels. The *Australian Curriculum* does not undertake any dedicated local history studies, but opportunities exist throughout the curriculum to embed local perspectives.

Relationships with the wider community are key to success here: local museums, historical societies, 'Friends of…' organisations, Returned and Services League of Australia (RSLs), and First Nations organisations are all valuable connections to have. It can also be helpful to contact the nearest university, as there may be staff undertaking research on local histories who can assist with resource recommendations or can be asked to give a guest lecture to students.

Ensuring a diversity of perspectives also helps enrich the narrative students build for themselves and their community: every town has people from diverse backgrounds and experiences and students should have the chance to hear from a range of these voices, not a singular narrative. It is also possible to draw on experts who are further afield through videoconferencing and virtual tours. Another important local resource are the memorials and place names in your local area: it is likely that your area has a Memorial Pool, Tobruk Drive, [Name] Memorial Library, and a collection of war memorials in local parks that can be visited and researched to better understand the events or actions of individuals that contributed to these public acts of memorialisation.

Some examples of opportunities to embed local connections include:

- asking RSL representatives to speak during the units on the World Wars, visiting local war memorials and researching the contributions of local service personnel, including women and Indigenous peoples
- Exploring sites, museums, 'pioneer villages', etc. that reflect the history of European settlement when teaching about Captain Cook, Federation or the Rights and Freedoms units, including visits with an Elder to local sites of significance for your local First Nations group, and speakers from various community groups e.g. the local Greek Club to speak about their experience as migrants, etc.
- Asking your school administration to add diverse voices to commemorations like ANZAC Day to assist students in better understanding the many experiences had during times of conflict, not only by the soldiers themselves but their families and other groups within the community.

Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) – 'The Canberra trip'

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Bob Hawke, the Federal government established the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) in 1988 and with it the Citizenship Visits Program, which provided financial assistance to schools to bring students to Canberra to learn about Australia's democratic institutions and visit sites including the Australian War Memorial. The program is now known as PACER (Parliament and Civics Education Rebate) and requires schools to attend:

- an educational tour of Parliament House, and where possible, a role play in the Parliamentary Education Office
- the Museum of Australian Democracy and/or the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House
- the Australian War Memorial

(PACER, n.d.)

This pilgrimage to the nation's capital is one key way in which students construct their understanding of our national narratives. Australia's federation, its successes as a parliamentary democracy and sacrifices in defence of that democracy emerge as the key pillars of this narrative. The eponymous 'Canberra trip' gives students the opportunity to explore the many ways in which communities commemorate events of national significance. One of the most interesting of these is an exploration of the various monuments which line Anzac Parade, considering their design and the language used in each memorial.

It is clear that both the structure of the *Australian Curriculum* and civics and citizenship activities and commemorations promoted and observed at a federal level of government promote a national narrative, while at the same time attempting to acknowledge and navigate the fact that this narrative can be problematic, particularly for First Nations peoples. Both the teaching of a nation's past and the memorialisation and commemoration of events of both national and local significance play a key part for students in understanding the ways in which their society functions, the sacrifices made in the defence of that society and the diversity and richness – with the varied perspectives that come with this – present in both their national and local communities.

Wider reading

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7. Guide to Using Memorials and Monuments as a Resource in the Classroom

Figure 7.1: Menin Gate at Midnight (1927) by Australian artist Will Longstaff*. Public Domain.*

Introduction

This chapter provides practical examples to assist educators in engaging students with memorials and monuments as a key resource to learn about a range of interrelated areas such as Humanities and Social Sciences and the Arts. Both areas help students to consider the social, cultural, environmental, economic and political contexts encompassed in memorials and monuments. As we have seen in the previous chapters, memorials and monuments often reflect the values of the society that constructed them. However, as communities become more diverse, memorials and monuments have changed to reflect multiple perspectives, valuing the interpretations viewers bring through designs that are more abstract and less didactic than traditional memorials. However, it is important that students learn how past events impact on the present and how contemporary memorials and monuments also draw from the past.

Practical guides and video support

The following section provides practical guides to help students learn about their local war memorial or monument, explore its history and undertake individual research on the names that are listed. The guides also support students in learning how to search public databases such as the Australian War Memorial records, the National Archives of Australia and Trove.

The authors wish to acknowledge their USQ colleagues Margaret Bremner (Senior Research Librarian) and Marjorie Jeffers (Liaison Librarian) for their work on these resources.

The practical guides and video support provide information about:

- Finding information about the local war memorial and using Trove
- Identifying a name on the local memorial or honour board
- Searching the Australian War Memorial records
- Finding service records at the National Archives of Australia

Practical guide 1: Finding information about the local war memorial and using Trove

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that some content may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material. Some material on Trove contains terms that reflect authors' views – or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded – but may not be considered appropriate today. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in a historical context.

What is Trove?

Trove is a collaboration between the National Library of Australia and hundreds of Australian partner organisations, including state, university and council libraries. Trove shows where physical content such as books and journals are held. You can also use it to search for and access digital content including newspapers, government gazettes and diaries. It is a useful resource for all who are interested in history.

How to search

- Go to Trove: https://trove.nla.gov.au/
- Enter your keywords into the search box at the top of the homepage (ensure your spelling is correct – Trove will search for whatever you type)
- Click the green magnifying glass button to the right of to the search box to begin your search

Image by Trove. Used under a CC BY-NC licence.

Searching a category

- Click the arrow buttons next to 'All categories' to see a drop-down list of available categories

Image by Trove. Used under a CC BY-NC licence.

- Choose a category such as 'Newspapers & Gazettes'

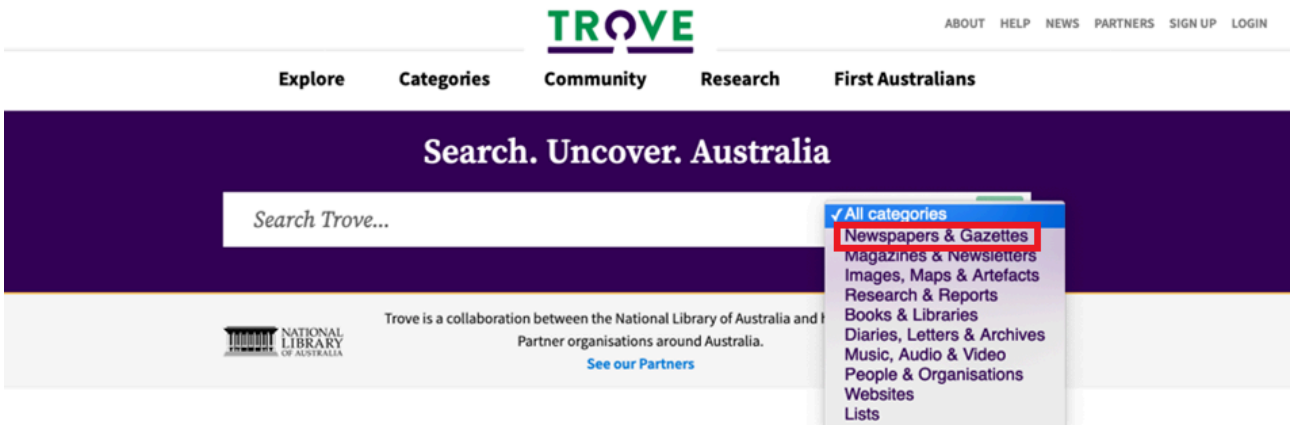


Image by Trove. Used under a CC BY-NC licence.

Gazettes are a useful source of government information as they are an official publication created for the purpose of sharing the actions and decisions of the government. All Australian governments (Commonwealth, State and Territory) publish official gazettes. These gazettes are now published in digital format, but the early ones have been digitised and added to Trove.

- Enter the names of the people, places or events you want to search for (e.g. Roma War Memorial) and hit Enter or click the search icon (green magnifying glass)

Using inverted commas as punctuation marks around a group of words will bring back items with those words together as a phrase. For example, “roma war memorial”.

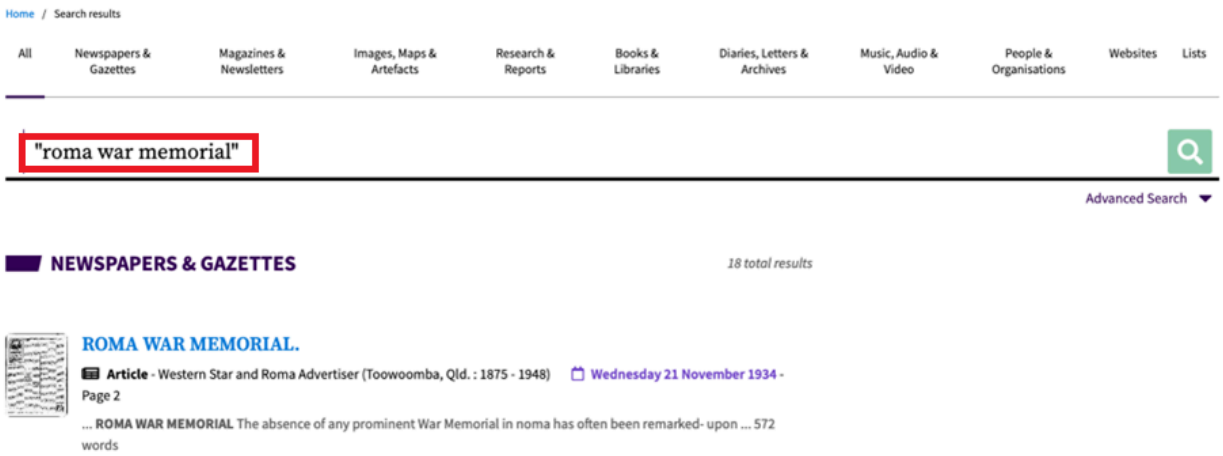


Image by Trove. Used under a CC BY-NC licence.

This will show you newspaper articles about the Roma War Memorial.

Tips and tricks

If you want a more specific search, you can customise it by using search commands with your keywords.

Search commands are special words and symbols that help to refine search results. You can use a single search command or construct a complex combination.

AND

Get results that contain both words.
If you do not use any commands in your search, Trove will assume that you want to find things that have all of those words in them, and effectively puts an **AND** between each of your keywords.
Examples:

- Paul AND Kelly
- Paul Kelly

Both of these examples will give you results that contain both of the words “paul” and “kelly”.

OR

Get results that contain one or more words.
Example:

- cat OR dog

NOT

Exclude items from your results that contain the word(s). A minus sign (**–**) can also be used instead of **NOT**.
Examples:

- cat NOT dog
- cat -dog

Both of these examples will give you results that contain “cat” but do not contain “dog”.

(brackets)

Use brackets to group your search terms together, and combine search commands. Putting brackets around each set of search commands will improve your results.
Examples:

- “South Australia” AND (elections OR politics) NOT (Adelaide OR Kingston)
- (cats AND dogs) NOT rabbits
- (cats dogs) -rabbits

These last two examples will give you the exact same results, as Trove will use **AND** where no command is given.

date

Get results from a certain date range.
Example:

- date:[1920 TO 1930]

Resources

Video overview 1: Finding information about the local war memorial and using Trove

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=127#video-127-1

Download a printable Finding information about the local war memorial and using Trove handout.

Practical guide 2: Identifying a name on the local memorial or honour board

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that the memorial and research sites listed in this resource may contain or link to images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material. Some material on memorials contains terms that reflect authors' views – or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded – but may not be considered appropriate today. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in a historical context.

Visiting the local memorial

War memorials are visible in towns and cities across Australia. In larger towns and cities, the main memorial can be quite significant (see **Figure 7.2**) though there are also memorials in local suburbs (see **Figure 7.3**). The smaller memorials are not restricted to older suburbs. Finding and investigating names on these memorials can lead to interesting information about your local area.

Figure 7.2: Shrine of Remembrance (1930) in ANZAC Square, Brisbane, Queensland. *Image by monkeyc.net. Used under a CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 licence.*

Figure 7.3: Forest Lake War Memorial (2000), Brisbane, Queensland. *Image by Aussie~mobs. Used under a CC0 licence.*

Finding memorial information online

As it is not always possible to visit a memorial in person, there are other ways to find photos of memorials or honour boards and be able to trace a soldier from their home to their return or burial site. The following government and private websites can be used to view photos of memorials:

- New South Wales War Memorials Register – https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/
- Queensland War Memorials Register – https://www.qldwarmemorials.com.au/
- Victorian Heritage Database – https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/
- Monument Australia – https://monumentaustralia.org.au/search
- Virtual War Memorial Australia – https://vwma.org.au/
- Places of Pride: National Register of War Memorials – https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/

How to search

The Queensland War Memorials Register allows you to view any memorial or honour board in Queensland.

- For this demonstration go to the Queensland War Memorials Register: https://www.qldwarmemorials.com.au/
- Click “More search options” under the left search box to see advanced search options

Image by Queensland War Memorial Register. Used under their Terms and Conditions.

- Search by Conflicts commemorated or Memorial type

Image by Queensland War Memorial Register used under their Terms and Conditions.

- Enter the name of the suburb, town or postcode (e.g. 4455 for Roma) to find all the conflicts and/or memorials for that postcode

List all memorials

Name, suburb, town or postcode

4455

Conflicts commemorated

(any)

Memorial type

(any)

Search Clear all Search help

Found 4 matching memorials out of 1399 total memorials.

Memorial name	Location	Memorial type
Roma War Memorial Cenotaph	Roma	Cenotaph/shrine
Roma War Memorial Heroes Avenue	Roma	Garden/avenue/tree
Roma and Shire of Bungil Honour Board 1914–1918	Roma	Honour board
Roma and Shire of Bungil Honour Board 1939–1945	Roma	Honour board

Image by Queensland War Memorial Register. used under their Terms and Conditions.

- Click on “Roma War Memorial Cenotaph” to get the address and see photographs

Image by Queensland War Memorial Register. Used under their Terms and Conditions.

Resources

Video overview 2: Identifying a name on the local memorial honour board

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=127#video-127-2

Download a printable Identifying a name on the local memorial honour board handout.

Practical guide 3: Searching the Australian War Memorial records

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that the memorial and research sites listed in this resource may contain or link to images, voices or names of deceased persons in

photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material. Some material on the Australian War Memorial contains terms that reflect authors' views – or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded – but may not be considered appropriate today. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in a historical context.

You can find out more about a person you have identified on a local war memorial using the Australian War Memorial website.

The range of records held by the Australian War Memorial include:

- First World War nominal and embarkation rolls
- Roll of Honour
- information about honours and awards
- Red Cross and prisoner-of-war records
- unit war diaries and histories
- military orders
- various military handbooks and instructions

A nominal roll is a list of names – here it refers to a list of veterans who served in a particular conflict. It can also provide a 'snapshot' of each individual veteran's military service by displaying a range of information that has been gathered from documents in their military service record. Nominal rolls for conflicts other than World War I can be found on the Department of Veteran's Affairs website.

An embarkation roll gives dates and shipping details for persons embarking on a sea journey.

How to search

When searching for details about a particular person in the collection at the Australian War Memorial you will need to know a little about them.

- Go to the Australian War Memorial: https://www.awm.gov.au/
- Click on "People" to open to a search box

Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 licence.

- Enter the name of the person you want to learn about, e.g. "Frederick, J H" (you may need to try different spellings)

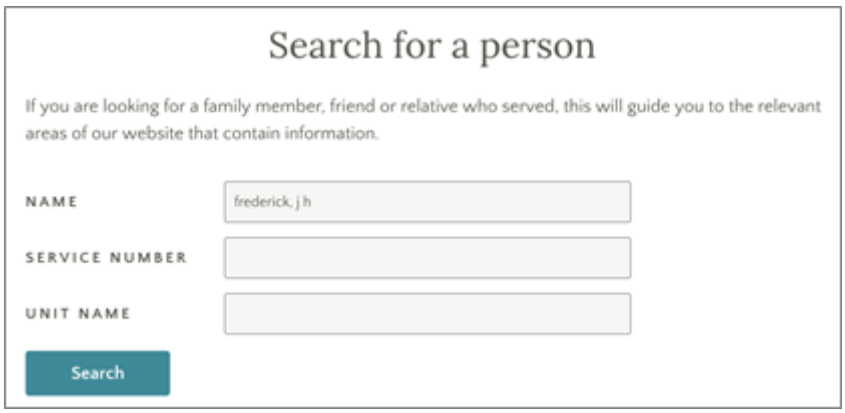


Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 licence.

In this case there is one result in the Roll of Honour, as well as details of "Frederick, J H"'s embarkation (First World War Embarkation Rolls) and his death and burial place (Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files).

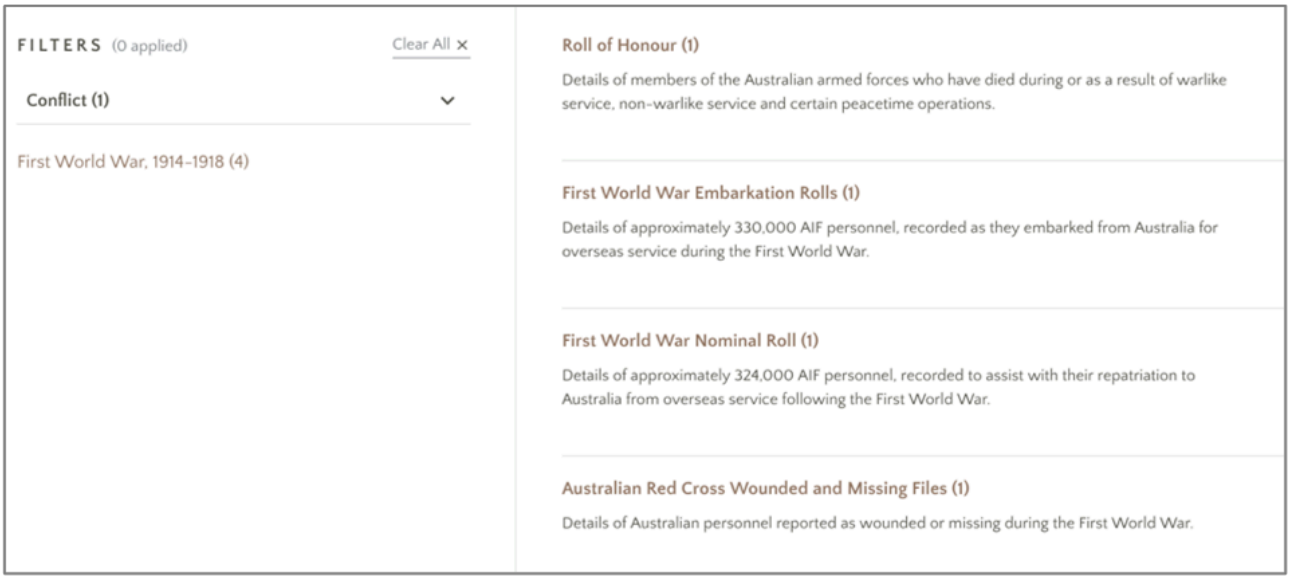


Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 licence.

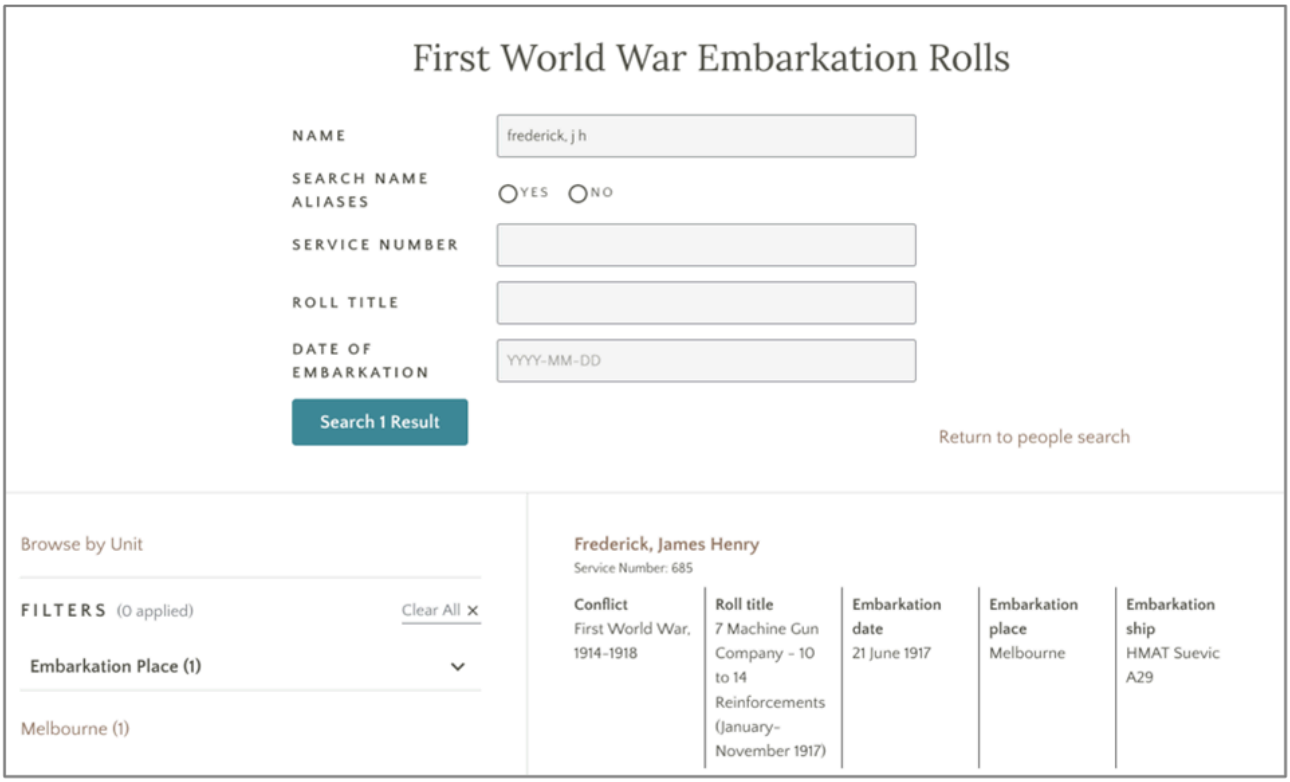


Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 licence.

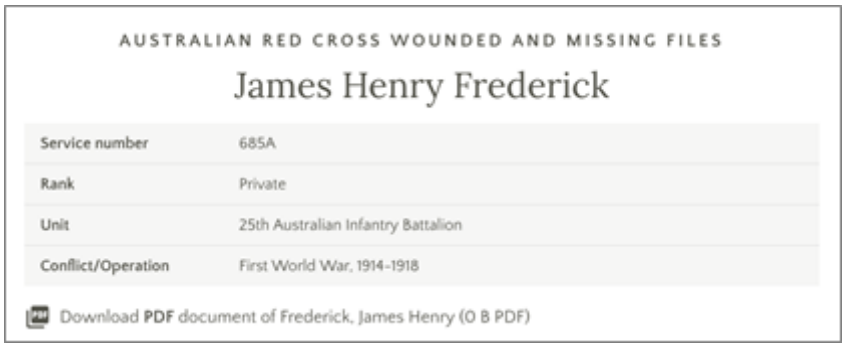


Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 licence.

Sometimes you will find that there is more than one person with the same name and initials. Using a filter allows you to remove results from a search that are not relevant, or to only include those that will be relevant. You can choose to include only those people from a specific conflict, for example the First World War or the Boer War.

The entry for James Henry Frederick in the Roll of Honour gives details of his date and place of death, and the cemetery where he is buried.

ROLL OF HONOUR

James Henry Frederick

Service number	685A
Rank	Private
Unit	25th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service	Australian Imperial Force
Conflict/Operation	First World War, 1914–1918
Conflict Eligibility Date	First World War, 1914–1921
Date of Death	04 July 1918
Place of Death	France
Cause of Death	Killed in action
Age at Death	36
Place of Association	Roma, Queensland, Australia
Cemetery or Memorial Details	Crucifix Corner Cemetery, Picardie, France
Source	AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914–1918 War, Army

Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 licence.

It also provides a map of the Australian War Memorial Honour Roll showing an approximation of where his name appears on the wall.

Location on the Roll of Honour

James Henry Frederick's name is located at panel **104** in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial (as indicated by the poppy on the plan).

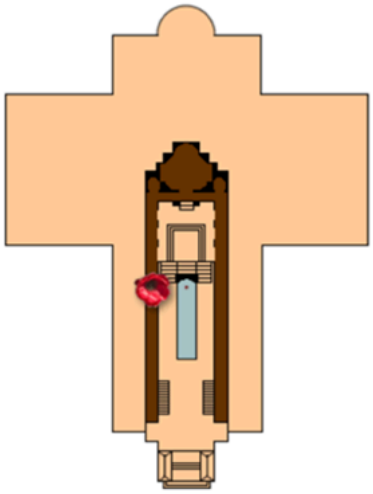


Image by Australian War Memorial. Used under a CC BY-NC 3.0 licence.

From here you can find out about the cemetery where a veteran is buried including photographs by going to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website.

Resources

Video overview 3: Searching the Australian War Memorial records

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=127#video-127-3

Download a printable Searching the Australian War Memorial records handout.

Practical guide 4: Finding service records at the National Archives of Australia

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that the memorial and research sites listed in this resource may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material. Some material on National Archives of Australia contains terms that reflect authors' views – or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded – but may not be considered appropriate today. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in an historical context.

The National Archives of Australia collects and manages government records.

How to search

To find a service records for someone who has been a member of the Australian Defence Service you will need their name and preferably their service number.

- Go to the National Archives of Australia: https://www.naa.gov.au/
- Click the tab "Explore the collection" and choose "Defence and war service records"

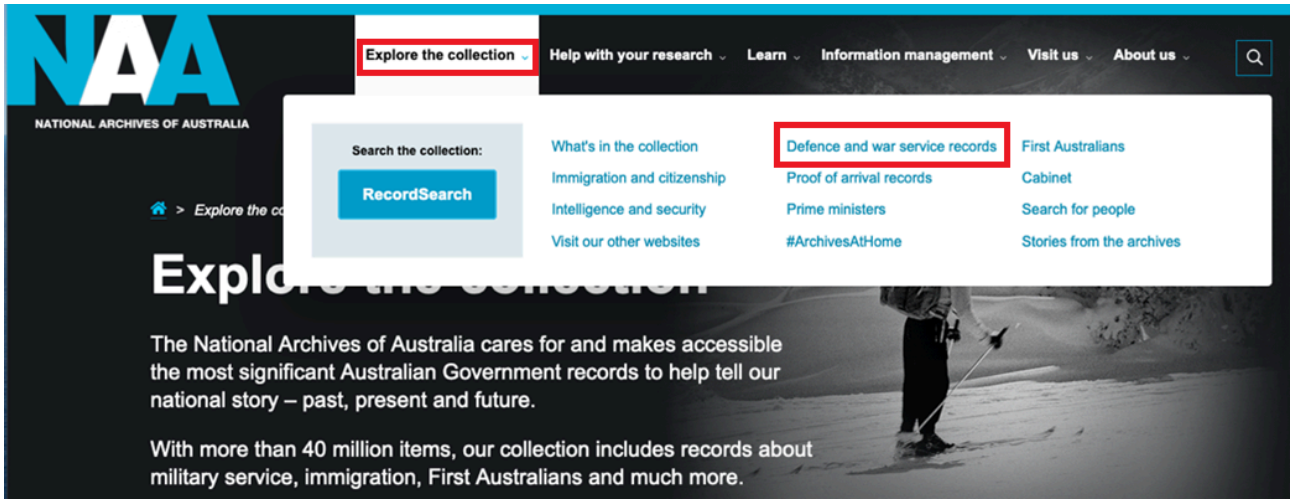


Image by the National Archives of Australia. Used under a CC BY licence.

This page gives information about the types of records that are available in the archives.

- Click on RecordSearch

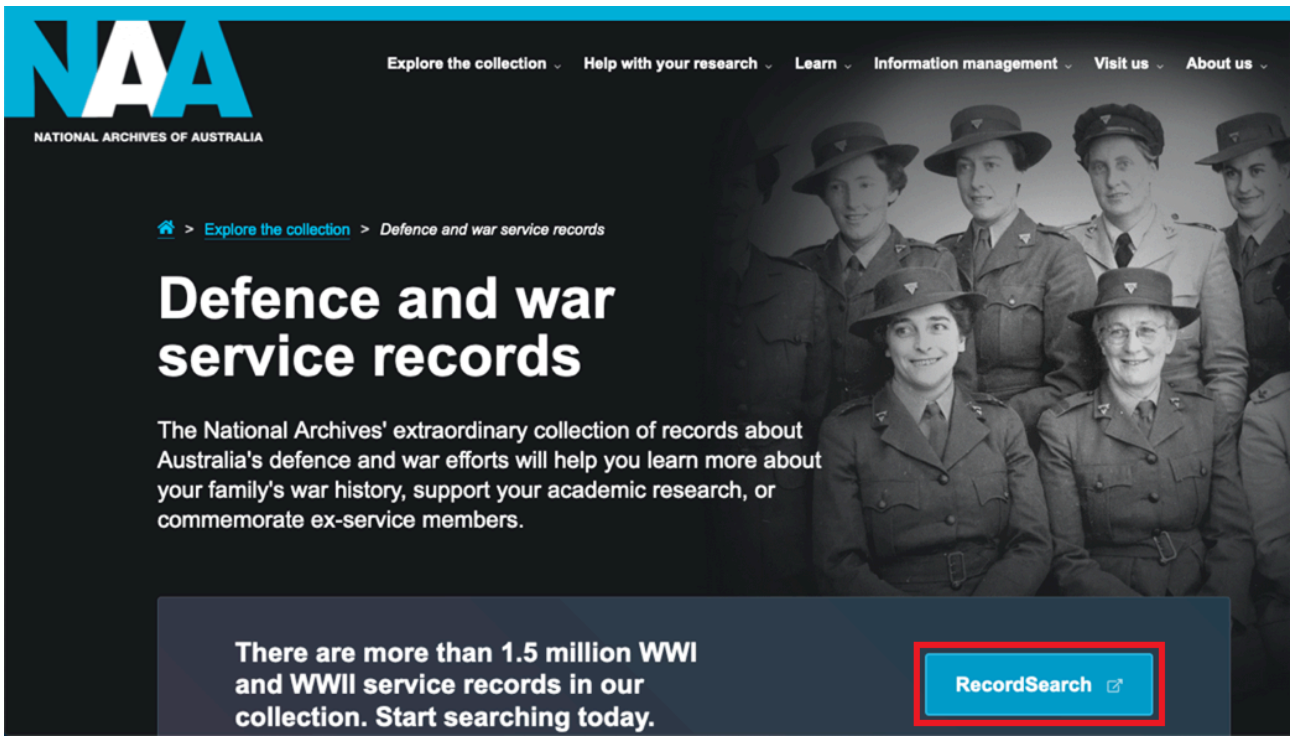


Image by the National Archives of Australia. Used under a CC BY licence.

- Choose the tab for a NameSearch and enter the person's family name and the given names (if available)

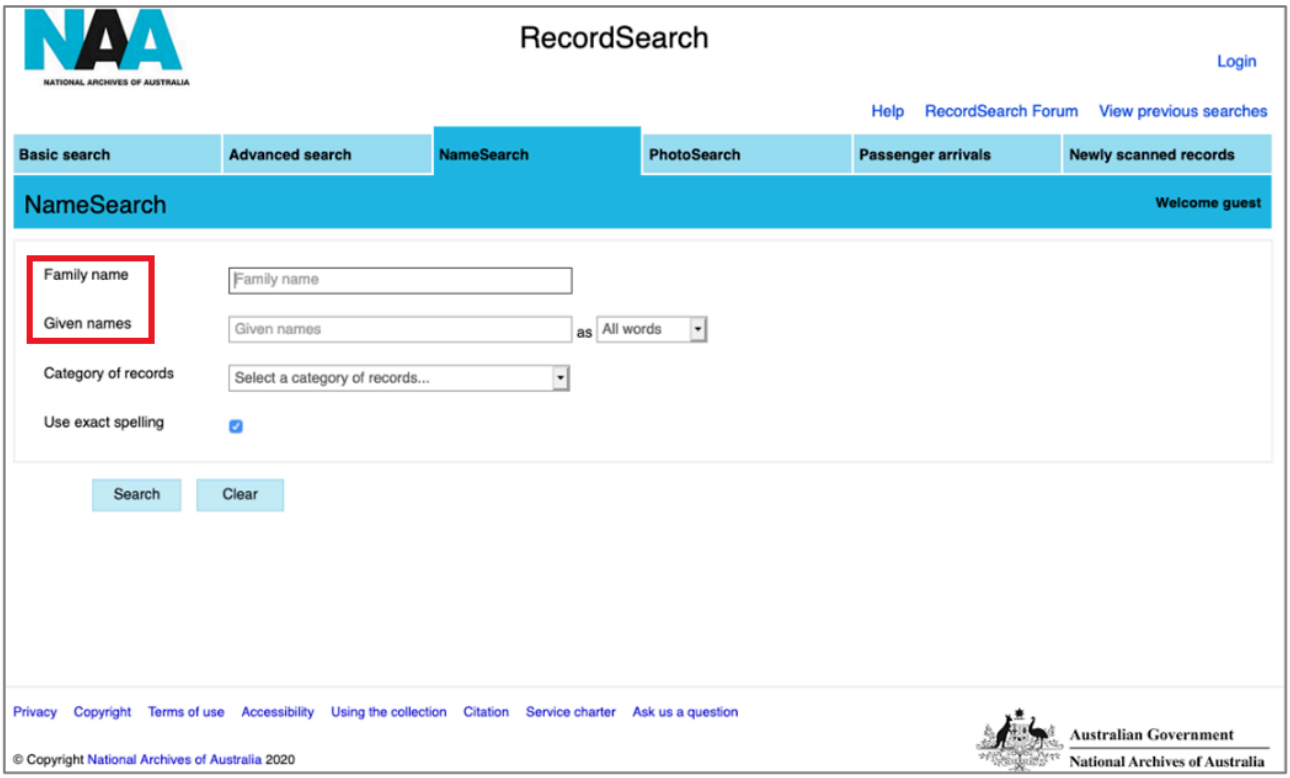


Image by the National Archives of Australia. Used under a CC BY licence.

- Choose the category of records that you want to search

This drop-down list includes general Australian Defence Forces personnel records, as well as specific ones like Army, Navy and Air Force. It is easiest to look under the general heading to find the records. You can use service numbers retrieved from the Australian War Memorial records to search.

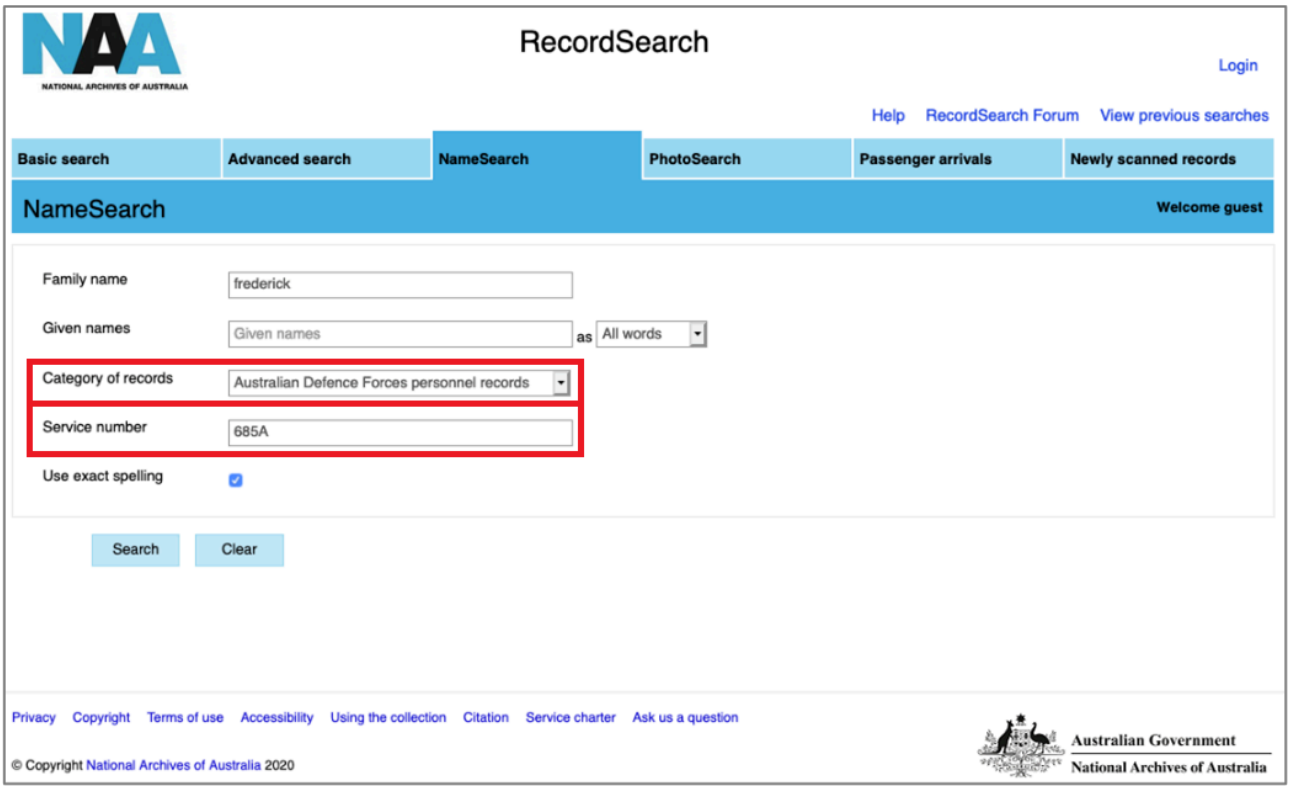


Image by the National Archives of Australia. Used under a CC BY licence.

- Enter the details that you know and click Search

Either a list of records or a specific personal record will be provided (depending on whether you search by name or service number).

The record in the archives gives details including:

- the date range of the contents in the series
- the series number that will provide the name of the government department that created those records
- how to cite this record when writing about your finds
- where the physical files are kept
- the format of the files – physical or digital
- the number of files in this series

This record shows that there is a digital copy of the files that can be viewed online:

Item details for: B2455, FREDERICK J H	View digital copy
Title	Frederick James Henry : SERN 685A : POB Scone NSW : POE Roma QLD : NOK W Frederick Emily
Contents date range	1914 - 1920
Series number	B2455 Click to see which government agency or person created this item.
Control symbol	FREDERICK J H
Citation	NAA: B2455, FREDERICK J H
Item barcode	1994227
Location	Canberra
Access status	Open
Date of decision	12 Apr 2001
Physical format	PAPER FILES AND DOCUMENTS (allocated at series level)
Records authority class number	3891
Date registered	27 May 1997

ump to record number Go

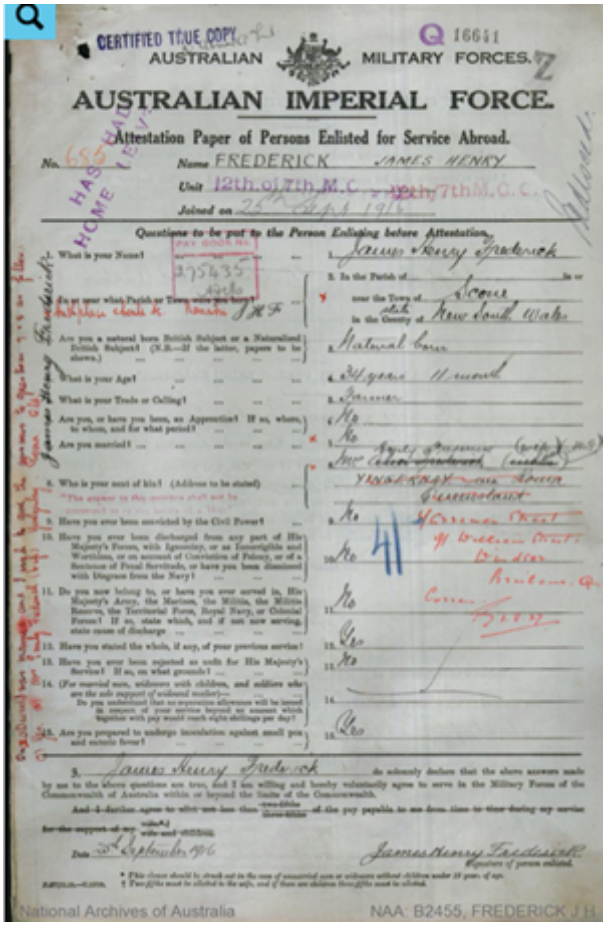
Displaying 225 of 375

New search Refine search

ack to top

Image by the National Archives of Australia. Used under a CC BY licence.

This is the first page of the digitised file for J H Frederick:


CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 685 Name FREDERICK JAMES HENRY

Unit 12th or 7th M.C. 7th M.C.C.

Joined on 25 Sept 1916

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? James Henry Frederick

2. In the Parish of ... or near the Town of Scone in the County of New South Wales

3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? Natural born

4. What is your Age? 21 years 11 mond

5. What is your Trade or Calling? Farmer

6. Are you married? No

7. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) Mrs ... Yandilla via Scone

8. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No

9. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? No

10. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge. No

11. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? No

12. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No

13. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)— Do you understand that no separation allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach eight shillings per day? No

14. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? No

I, James Henry Frederick do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

Date 25 September 1916

James Henry Frederick
Signature of person enlisted.

National Archives of Australia NAA: B2455, FREDERICK J H

Image by the National Archives of Australia. Used under a CC BY licence.

Resources

Video overview 4: Finding service records at the National Archives of Australia

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://usq.pressbooks.pub/apossessionforever/?p=127#video-127-4

Download a printable Finding service records at the National Archives of Australia handout.

Research with the local community

There are important resources in your local community that can help students learn more about historical events, including their own families, community groups or organisations. A number of countries provide grant assistance for individuals, schools and other institutions to document and honour the service and sacrifice of military personnel. In Australia the Department of Veterans' Affairs provide a range of grants including the *Saluting Their Service' Commemorative Grants* which are designed to preserve Australia's military history, promote an understanding and appreciation of the experiences of service personnel, and involve people around the nation in a wide range of activities that honour the service and sacrifice of Australians.

The authors were successful in being awarded a *Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grant* which will be discussed in the following section. However, it is possible to conduct a similar project with students and involve the wider community through this process.

Saluting their Service Commemorative Grant

In the heart of the people they loved – Community commemoration

Project description

This project recorded short vignettes of stories from community members prompted by artefacts that have a personal connection with either their own military service or that of a family member. The vignettes explored the military service of service personnel through artefacts held by their families, ultimately bringing together a range of diverse – and often unknown – stories and experiences that highlight the service and sacrifice of local community members, as remembered and told by their families. Numerous treasured artefacts are still held by families, sometimes for more than a century. This approach enabled the sharing and documenting of these stories of service and sacrifice and ensured they were not lost if family members moved away from their local communities.

Process

- The success of the grant enabled the project team to access various media outlets to invite community members to participate in this project. In addition, local organisations such as libraries, Returned Service League of Australia branches (RSLs) and their community networks were also contacted. This enabled promotion of the project and resulted in the following process:
- A brief overview of the project was provided with an Expression of Interest which asked people to briefly note the artefact and to provide details of the relative's service
- Participants were asked to bring an artefact connected to a family member who had seen service to a filmed interview, where they talked briefly about the artefact and how it related to their relative's service
- Research was conducted after the interview, including using the Australian War Memorial and the National Archives of Australia to verify details and provide further details. This information was sent to the participants in appreciation of their contribution and time.
- A website containing a digital patchwork of these stories was created – this website branches out into pages for each of the individual stories containing the filmed interviews, a photograph of the artefact, a photograph of the family member, and information about their service
- The interviews were linked together so they could be shown on a loop at the Remembrance Day Service held at The Glennie School in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia.

The Australian Army requisitioned the Glennie Anglican Girls School in Toowoomba, Queensland and established the Surgical Division for its 117th Australian General Hospital (AGH) in January 1942, opening with two officers and 78 personnel from other ranks, including ten sisters. Hospital wards were built on the eastern end of the original Glennie Preparatory School grounds with other original Prep School buildings used as the hospital theatre, intensive care, x-ray and physio huts. The walking wounded were allowed the freedom of the city but were required to wear 'hospital blues'. The Headquarters and Surgical Division situated on the Glennie Preparatory School site later became the No. 1 Australian Orthopaedic Hospital (Anglican Focus, 2019, paras. 3, 5-6). A memorial now stands at the site (**see Figure 7.4**).

Figure 7.4: A memorial to the patients and staff of the 117th Australian General Hospital and the 1 Australian Orthopaedic Hospital at The Glennie School in Toowoomba, Queensland. *Image reproduced with permission from The Glennie School.*

A range of artefacts were documented during this project such as:

- a First World War embroidery that was completed as part of physical therapy during convalescence
- a postcard from a naval ship (**Figure 7.5**)
- a commemorative scroll (**Figure 7.6**)
- medals
- photographs
- drawings
- souvenir booklets
- old coins

and more.

Figure 7.5: Postcard from HMAS Manoora, Christmas 1943. *Photo credit: Dylan Robins. Used with permission.*

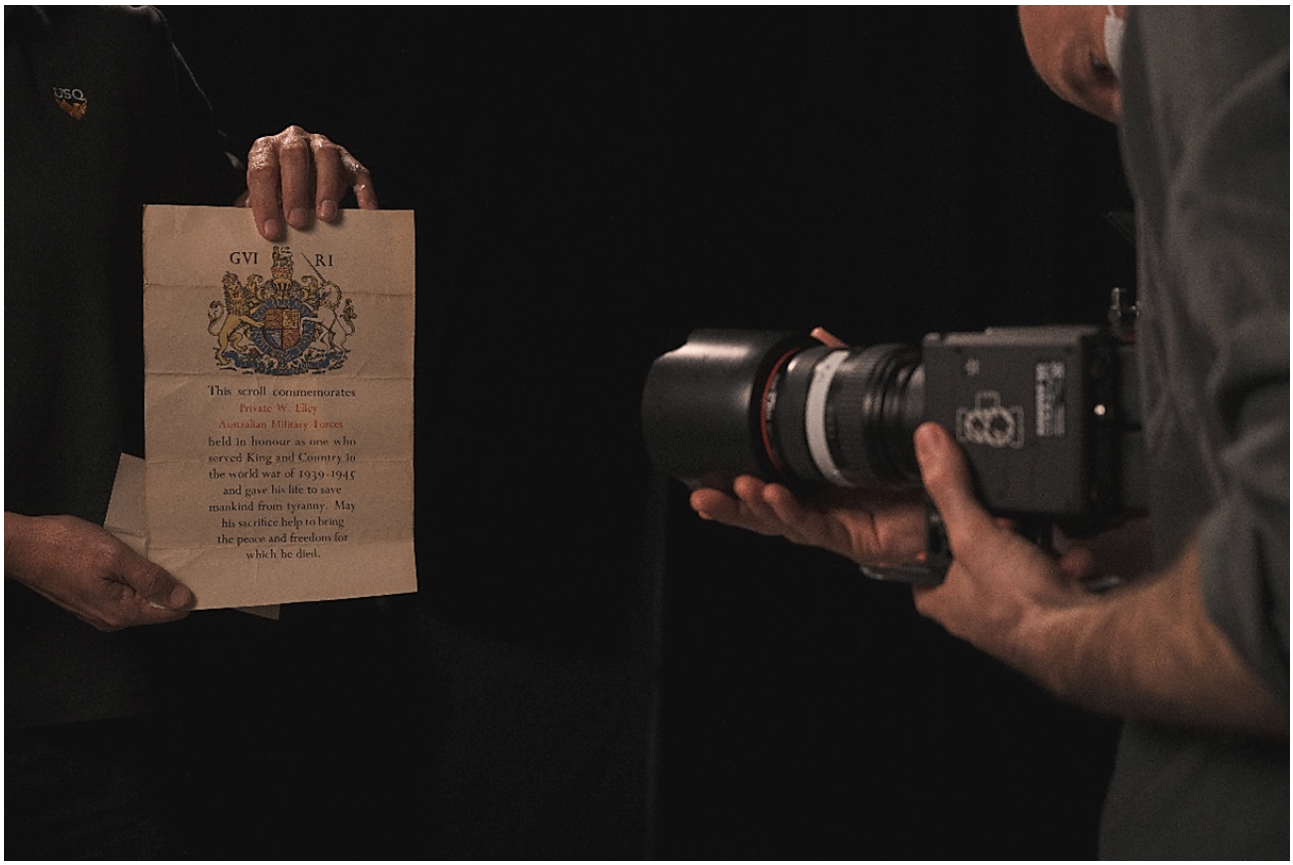


Figure 7.6: Commemorative scroll recognising the service and sacrifice of Private W. Elley of the Australian Military Forces. *Photo credit: Dylan Robins. Used with permission.*

The website associated with this project titled '*Community Stories – Saluting their Service*' was launched in April 2022 in commemoration of Anzac Day.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of several resources and approaches for using memorials and monuments in the classroom. Local history is an invaluable resource for educators and also assists students in connecting with and learning about the stories of their local community. It is important to document the stories of our local communities to ensure we understand how they have contributed to the broader national and international stories and the diversity that is inherent within these. Understanding how these events occurred and learning about history from different perspectives encourages students to develop empathy and understanding as they learn why particular events have occurred and how they impact on their lives today.

References

Anglican Focus. (2019, November 11). Glennie will never forget. *Anglican Focus*. https://anglicanfocus.org.au/2019/11/11/glennie-will-never-forget/

Conclusion

The integration of local history into classroom pedagogy must be done with some care. For example, Australia's history curriculum and commemorative calendar have long been dominated by 'white Anglo' narratives (Walton et. al, 2018 p. 133). The prominence of Anzac Day and what some see as the militarisation of Australian history has profoundly distorted our history, which in turn has placed the military before the civil and the imperial ahead of the national (Reynolds, 2018). A second major consideration for history teachers is the process famously characterised as the 'great Australian silence' and a 'cult of disremembering' which has reduced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to little more than a 'melancholy footnote' in Australia's history. This has all but erased the 'invasion, massacres, ethnic cleansing and resistance' that characterised First Nations Peoples' treatment for much of the period after 1788 (Stanner, 2000, p. 120). The absence of a First Nations' voice ensures that many Australians have a sanitised understanding of Australian history that is pervaded by celebrations of Anglo-Saxon identity and achievement. There is a pressing need, as Alison Bedford and Vince Wall (2020) argue, for a new pedagogical framework that reflects and explores our shifting attitudes from foundation myths to an exploration of our nation's foundational truths.

Of course, this blindfold/armband binary is a false dichotomy, but it is helpful in understanding why there is such tension in teaching Australian national history. Is the past a story of glorious nation-building, defined by the ANZAC spirit, or is it a narrative of colonial oppression? The answer of course is both. The teaching of Australia's military history offers a particular challenge to teachers. Since Prime Minister John Howard's intervention in the national History curriculum in the early 2000s and the subsequent 'History Wars', debate continues about how best to teach our wartime history. The History Wars created two distinct positions: the 'white blindfold' perspective that argues that Australia's national story, best exemplified in the 'ANZAC spirit', is one of progress and growth. White blindfold arguments diminish the significance of evidence of frontier violence (with some scholars arguing there were no massacres or disputing the number of casualties), the mistreatment of First Nations peoples by successive eras of government policy, and the racism that underpinned the White Australia era. It was this perspective that motivated Australia's Prime Minister John Howard's refusal to offer an apology to First Nations people. On the other hand, the 'black armband' view is seen as an apologist stance, which argues that contemporary society needs to make reparations (even if largely symbolic) for past harm or neglect. The black armband view supports evidence of First Nations frontier resistance, recognises the harm caused by government policy, and seeks to move towards reconciliation through truth-telling. A formal national apology was made to Australia's First Nations peoples on February 13 2008 by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

Understanding the ANZAC legend – both the genuine heroics of our servicemen and women and the less glorious parts of our military service – is vital to understanding a core part of Australia's national identity. Equally, understanding the impacts of colonisation on not only First Nations peoples but our society as a whole is vital in addressing contemporary social and political challenges.

References

Reynolds, H. (2018). The militarisation of Australian history. Social alternatives, 37(3), pp.33-35.

Walton, J., Priest,N., Kowal, E., White, F., Fox, B., & Paradies, Y. (2018). Whiteness and national identity: Teacher discourses in Australian primary schools. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(1), 132-147. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1195357