RESEARCHING WORLD WAR 1 SOLDIERS

HAWKESBURY LIBRARY SERVICE - LOCAL STUDIES FACT SHEET

This fact sheet has been prepared to direct researchers researching World War 1 to a variety of resources relating to Military, Armed Forces, conflicts as well as War Memorials. It is not a complete list of every resource. Consult the Library catalogue for more information https://aurora.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/library/

Although hostilities were brewing for some time, the key factor of the outbreak of war was the assassination in Sarajevo of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, on 28 June 1914. A diplomatic crisis ensued, and Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914. Within weeks, the key world powers were at war. Countries from the British Empire including Australia, entered the war alongside Britain. Voluntary recruitment started 10 August 1914 for the Australian Infantry Forces (AIF) with most of the earlier enlistments sent to Egypt. Hawkesbury locals were quick to volunteer with many joining up within days of the announcement. Some of the earliest local recruits are listed below. Over 600 Hawkesbury locals enlisted and about 100 deaths were recorded as a result of this war, including one of the earliest casualties, William Bowman Douglass 1881-1915, photograph from Hawkesbury Library Service.

Alex Teale	E. Cambridge	Reginald Threlfall	Dr Helsham
Cecil Eather	Lt. Harold Watkins	Lt M. Bowley	Dr Piero Fiaschi
Fred Hayes	Pat Molloy	Lt Herbert Holland	Nurse A. Wright
Reg Holden	Mervyn Green	Lt Macwhirter	Dr (Major) Helsham
Pte Blumer	E. Kemp HMAS Emden	R. B. Hughes	Students Hawkesbury
Tom Jenkins	Jack Laraghy	R. N. Bradshaw	Agricultural College
R. M. Beveridge	Oscar Ward	Capt Bowman Douglas	
Pte Longworth	Frank Eather	Dr Fullerton	

What do you know about World War 1?

Find out about World War 1. The countries that were involved, the allies, the leaders and the important battles. Websites include State Library of NSW https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/significant-collections/wwi Australian War Memorial www.awm.gov.au/1914-1918/ and www.awm.gov.au/atwar/ww1/ and https://www.abc.net.au/ww1-anzac/gallipoli/ & https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/schools/resources/understanding-gallipoli

World War 1

Anzac Portal https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/
AIF Project https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html
Australians on the Western Front 1914–1918 http://www.ww1westernfront.gov.au/
Embarkation Roll http://www.awm.gov.au/nominalrolls/ww1/embarkation/index.asp
Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918 http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/volume.asp?conflict=1

Australian War Memorial

The Australian War Memorial collects material relating to the various conflicts Australia has been involved in, as well as a wealth of material relating to the military service of individuals. Their website has a collection of information sheets which will guide family historians. It has several databases to assist with research, including the Roll of Honour and Commemorative Roll databases. The Collection database is another interesting place where you can search for material relating to individuals as well as the units they served in. Includes photographs, official war diaries, private papers, letters, diaries, film, sound and art. Published material, including maps and journals are also searchable. The website is http://www.awm.gov.au/

Service Records

World War 1 service records have been digitised and are available to access online from the National Archives of Australia
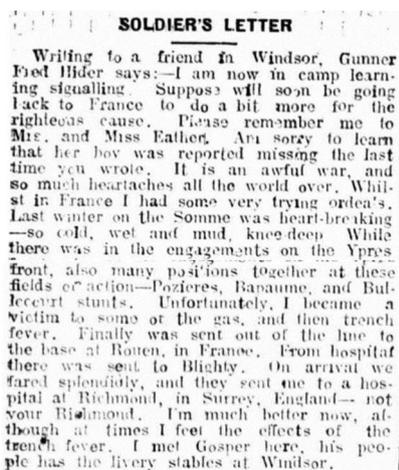
Records of WW1 Australian servicemen and women from the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) are held by the National Archives of Australia. Most of the World War 1 service records have been digitised and are accessible online   http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/   The personnel dossiers include records of service of:

- First Australian Imperial Force (1st AIF)
- Australian Flying Corps (AFC) – the predecessor of the RAAF
- Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF)
- Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train (RANBT)
- Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS)
- Home or Depot units for personnel who served within Australia
- Non-combatants eg artists, photographers, chaplains & historians

What's in WW1 Service Records? Records may contain the following:

- ATTESTATION PAPERS Completed by the person at time of enlistment. May include next-of-kin, employment details, marital status, age, place of birth and physical description.
- SERVICE & CASUALTY FORM Records movements & transfers between units & promotions. Lists any injuries & treatment received
- CORRESPONDENCE Various pieces of correspondence. May include records between soldier's next-of-kin may, notification of wounds or death, awards and medals.
- They do not contain detailed information about service, details of battles the person was involved in, or daily accounts.

Records are also available for the Boer War, World War 1 and 2, Korean, Vietnam, the Australian Army (Army); Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) are also available but not necessarily available online http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/

Newspapers

Newspapers are an excellent source of information about World War 1. They can include information about soldiers, enlistments, letters from the front, wounded and deaths, recruitment, and details about the Hawkesbury home front details. Soldiers' letters were regularly published providing an insight into the war. Check the Australian Historic Newspapers 1803-1955 which are digitised and available for free on TROVE http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper

The main local newspaper for this period is the *Windsor & Richmond Gazette.*

Pictured *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* 16 January 1915

Miscellaneous resources

State Records NSW www.records.nsw.gov.au has some pertinent records relating to NSW during WW1. They also have produced various called *Researching WW1 Guides* http://nswanzaccentenary.records.nsw.gov.au/index.php/how-to-research-wwi-records-at-state-records-nsw/

State Library of NSW

The State Library of NSW established a portal for their huge collection of NSW Anzac material see https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/significant-collections/wwi which includes their amazing collection of WW1 soldiers diaries. Also includes photographs and letters plus many other resources. The Voices from war, includes over 550 personal accounts of service, Diarists from World War I, letters, newspapers and ephemera.

Profiles of Military Units

The Australian War Memorial has profiles of the various units of the army, navy and air force that have served Australia during conflict, see http://www.awm.gov.au/units/

Cemeteries and monuments

Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) commemorates the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the two world wars. Details cemeteries, burial plots and memorials found at almost 23,000 locations, in 153 different countries around the world http://www.cwgc.org/ Another useful site is **The War Graves - photographic project** http://www.twgpp.org/

Some local soldiers who died overseas are listed on headstones in the Hawkesbury. Roy Charles Streeter died on Gallipoli 19 May 1915. His death is recorded on his mother Maria's grave at the Windsor Catholic Cemetery. Sgt Staunton Hope Johnston of Ebenezer died on active service 11 May 1918 and was buried on the Mount of Olives. He is also listed on a family headstone at Ebenezer. A memorial plaque was erected by the mother of Pte O'Brien in St Matthews Anglican Windsor:

*In Loving Memory of Pte Alfred (Harold) O'Brien
D Compy 21st Battalion A.I.F.
KIA at Passchendaele Ridge France 4 Oct 1917
Aged 23 years
Peace Perfect Peace Erected by his Loving Mother*

War Memorials

Many Australians have served their country during times of conflict. As a result of the huge numbers of men and women that lost their lives because of World War 1, Australian communities constructed war memorials to honour their memories. In the Hawkesbury district several monuments commemorate the names of persons involved in conflicts such as the Boer War, World War 1, World War 2 and the Korean/Vietnam War. Honour Rolls have also been established in various locations such as halls, churches, schools & businesses across the community. There are several War Memorials in the Hawkesbury district as well as numerous Honour Rolls throughout the district, commemorating the names of those Australians who served at a time of conflict. These have been photographed and transcribed on the **Hawkesbury on the Net** website at http://www.hawkesbury.net.au/memorial/index.html and is fully searchable. Those recorded include: Central Colo - Morans Rock Reserve Honour Rolls, Ebenezer - *The Great War* Honour Roll, Freemans Reach Roll of Honour, Richmond War Memorial, Wilberforce Park War Memorial, Windsor Boer War Memorial and Windsor War Memorial. For other locations in NSW see Register of War Memorials in NSW https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/

Richmond War Memorial pictured

If you have information about any other Honour Rolls in the local area, please advise the Local History Librarian on history@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

Ceremonies

On Anzac Day (25 April) and Remembrance Day (11 November) special ceremonies are held at War Memorials across the nation as a mark of respect & remembrance for Australians who served, were injured or killed in any military operations Australia has been involved. For more information about the history and traditions of Anzac Day & Remembrance Day (or Armistice Day) see the following websites: Anzac Day http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac_tradition.htm and Remembrance Day http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/remembrance/index.htm

Biographies

Australian Dictionary of Biography - http://adb.anu.edu.au/
AWM Biographies - http://www.awm.gov.au/people/biographies/

Maps

Maps may be useful to put people and places into perspective. How far did they travel? Which countries were they in? Try the Anzac Portal https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/where-australians-served/gallipoli/map-australian-locations and https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/where-australians-served/gallipoli#4 See http://battlefields1418.50megs.com/gallipoli_photos.htm plus Google Maps is also worth looking at https://www.google.com/maps

Images

Images help visual the war, the people and events.

Images of World War I Australian servicemen (NAA Flickr Collection)

https://www.flickr.com/photos/national-archives-of-australia/collections/72157628184430675/

Military (SRNSW Flickr Collection) https://www.flickr.com/photos/state-records-nsw/sets/72157606328090451/

National Archives of Australia http://photos.naa.gov.au/

Also try the photograph collections of the State Library of NSW www.sl.nsw.gov.au National Library of Australia www.nla.gov.au and State Library of Victoria www.slv.vic.gov.au

Aboriginals in the AIF

Over 400-500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders volunteered for service in the AIF. Originally rejected on the grounds of race many slipped through. Towards the end of war restrictions eased. Practically no recognition was given on return home.

Indigenous histories http://indigenoushistories.com/

Department of Veterans' Affairs http://www.dva.gov.au/benefitsAndServices/ind/Pages/at_war.aspx

Indigenous soldiers (NSW) https://nswanzaccentenary.records.nsw.gov.au/how-to-research-wwi-records-at-state-records-nsw/researching-indigenous-soldiers/

Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in World War I & II service records (NAA)

http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/abbreviations.aspx

Military Abbreviations & Terminology

http://www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/abbreviations.htm

Armed Forces - Abbreviations (UK)

http://www.armedforces.co.uk/abbreviationsah.htm

Websites and Miscellaneous

As well as those mentioned in this leaflet, check these out:

- AIF Project https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html
- Understanding Gallipoli https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/schools/resources/understanding-gallipoli
- Nurses http://nurses.ww1anzac.com/
- Anzac Centenary site (archived) https://nswanzaccentenary.records.nsw.gov.au/
- Hunter Valley nurses http://huntervalleygreatwarnurses.com/
- NZ Records - Archives New Zealand http://archives.govt.nz/world-war-one
- New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Personnel Files http://www.archway.archives.govt.nz/
- UK Inventory of War Memorials http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/
- Histories, Units & War Diaries http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/ww1/
- State Library projects http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/projects/wwi/index.html
- First World War Official histories now online http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/first_world_war/
- Explore The National Archives Collection http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/our-online-records.htm
- First World War records http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/looking-for-subject/firstworldwar.htm
- British Army unit war diaries (1914-1922) http://archives.govt.nz/world-war-one
- Imperial War Museum Imperial War Museum http://www.iwm.org.uk/

Hawkesbury Library has a subscription to Find My Past and this site has some useful information contained in a section called Anzac Stories http://www.findmypast.com.au/articles/anzac-day-stories To search the database you need to be in the Library. The Library has computers available to use or access our free wireless.

Prepared by the Local History Librarian & updated 21/8/2023