



Australia's Great War: 1918

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Synopsis:

The planes kept flying low above them. They were dropping bombs and the noise drowned out all other sounds. After an hour the signal rang out and they surged forward through the smoke. Thousands of men screaming and yelling, their line was kilometres wide. Behind them came Monash's tanks, those huge, new mobile machines. They smothered the land they ran over; flattening the crops and then any wire left standing. With Russia out of the war, the Germans have sent all the troops to the Western Front. Almost defeated, a small group of Australians fight to hold the enemy back at Villers Brettoneux. Weary after years of fighting and dead-lock, Ned and his mates know that the war will be lost if they can't turn the tide. More and more, Ned's thoughts turn to home, not knowing if he will ever see his family, or his brother, again.

Author Bio:

Libby Gleeson AM has published over 30 popular, highly acclaimed books for children and teenagers, been shortlisted for 13 CBCA Awards, and won three. Libby has been a teacher and lecturer and contributes regularly to national conferences. She chaired the Australian Society of Authors from 1999-2001, and in 2007 was awarded membership to the Order of Australia. She won the 2011 Dromkeen Medal, awarded for contributions to children's literature. <http://www.libbygleeson.com.au/>

Curriculum Links:

English Year 7

[ACELT1619](#), [ACELT1620](#), [ACELT1621](#), [ACELT1622](#), [ACELY1725](#)

English [ACELY1725](#)

Following the disasters at Gallipoli and casualties in France the recruiting figures for enlistment had dwindled. Gilgandra's butcher, R.G. Hitchen and his brother Bill, the local plumber, came up with the idea of organising a march that would travel from Gilgandra to Sydney recruiting soldiers on the way. This march became known as the Cooee March, and Ned and his mates were among those who made the journey. The group left Gilgandra with 26 men and by the time they reached Sydney (over 430km) the number of men had increased to 263.

- Design a poster encouraging soldiers to enlist.

English [ACELT1622](#)

Look at picture books on the same themes.

- When you hear the term 'picture book', what do you think of straight away?
- Are picture books just for younger readers. Discuss the intended audience of these picture books. Do you think the text is typical of what you think a 'picture book' is, and whether it has fulfilled its purpose?

Picture books about Villers Brettoneux

- Do Not Forget Australia – Sally Murphy and Sonia Kretschmar
- Digger – Mike Dumbleton and Robin Cowcher (DUE March 2018 * Will be included in next month's Standing Orders selection)

English [ACELT1620](#)

Chapter 6

Ned and his mates come up with the idea of going out in the early hours of the morning, on their own, to capture some German soldiers, called a Peaceful penetration.

- Read pages 90-95
- Write about the late night capture from the German soldiers point of view.

Nurses play a big part in this novel, think about the story from the nurses point of view.

Resources on Nurses during WWI:

Devotion: Stories of Australia's Wartime Nurses - Robyn Siers

In the Lamplight - Dianne Wolfer (DUE MARCH 2018)

Other points to discuss:

Without the means to wash and dry clothing, new clean socks were in high demand for the soldiers during WWI, cold wet mud in the trenches, so groups were set up to support the soldiers by means of sending socks and other comfort items from Australia.

Look at groups that were supporting our troops from the homefront:

Australian Comfort Fund

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/1848>

Australian Red Cross

https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/redcross/redcross_bothwars

Are there still organisations that support Australian military serving overseas?

<http://www.defence.gov.au/events/christmas/support.asp>

Research other organisations in Australia that support groups overseas:

Kokoda Track Foundation: <https://ktf.ngo/about/>

World Vision Australia <https://www.worldvision.com.au/>

Discuss how technology has changed the effectiveness of these relief organisations ie: communication and transport?