

How did the role of Australian women help to shape the Anzac Spirit during World War I?

video script

June 28th the day it all started. From the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, came what was soon to be known as the Great War, and then later World War One.

The day that Australia got involved was the 4th of August, as Britain declares war on Germany, and as Australia was under Britain's ruling it involved Australia into the war. Due to the day prior Germany had declared war on France and invaded Belgium.

Continuing on was many tough, bloody, and exhausting battles taking place over the 4 years of the Great War. Including major battles such as Gallipoli and battles along the Western Front.

The Australian imperial force (AIF), a small volunteer force was made up to assist in Europe, but instead found themselves diverted to Egypt to train further joint with New Zealand forces forming the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The Anzacs then then moved to turkey in order to assist in the Gallipoli campaign and landed in Gallipoli on the 25th April 1915, a significant date we commemorate each year as Anzac Day in spirit of those who joined forces and landed that day.

Then in early 1916, the Australian divisions joined the British army in France and Belgium, most coming off of the Gallipoli battle fields only to meet a new form of fighting along the Western Front, resulting in a years worth of tragic sacrifice.

These battles continued until the date of November 11, as this was the day that Germany agrees to an armistice and the fighting comes to an end at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month, now known and celebrated as Remembrance Day.

The end of 'the war to end all wars' was official on June 28 1919, when The Treaty of Versailles is signed by Germany and World War 1 came to an end.

When talking about the battles and wars in history lessons the class mainly focus on the guns, violence, fighting, and blood sacrifice that went on during the world war. What is often forgotten is the women who had a heavy impact of the behind the scenes that aren't often showcased.

To fill the gap left by a generation of fighting men, more than a million women took the chance to join the work force between 1914 - 1918.

One of these industries was the munitions factories, the role consisted of making gun shells, explosives, aircraft, and other materials that were supplied to the war fronts.

An even bigger contribution from the women of the ww1 time period was that of all the nurses on the battle fronts and post ww1 assisting back home Australia as well.

The Australian nurses went by the acronym AANS, standing for Australian Army Nursing Service. In WWI 2,139 AANS nurses served overseas, with 423 others serving in Australia. Together they served with 130 Australians who worked with Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. 25 died on active service and the other 388 were decorated (awarded) for their services. Post WWI AANS adapted to RAANC, Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps. With the motto of 'Pro Humanitate' meaning for humanity. As those nurses blood have been carried down generations so has the spirit of their services in post war resulted in more respect for women in medical professions.

During the Great War period another impact women had was the making of ANZAC biscuits. ANZAC biscuits were shipped to the soldiers by women from back home Australia, these biscuits were made using a recipe allowing for no refrigeration which meant after the shipment process they arrived in soldiers hands ready to eat.

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Women Currently make up 12.8% of the ADF (15.1% in the RAAF, 14.6 in the Royal Australian Navy, And 10.5% in the Australian Army.) as well as the 12.8% in The ADF, 17.5% of the Reserves are women.

Although only 74% of the total number of roles in the Australian Armed Forces, are available to women, prior to ww1 that number was zero.

Through the years, Australia and the armed forces have progressed into a work force where from the influence of women's war efforts during ww1 and then In ww2 have advanced into the number of women serving in the defence force and reserves today.

Where women once stood waiting for the returning soldiers, from the War, now stands current and ex-serving women in the ADF who now march on Anzac Day in remembrance of those who fought for our country a hundred years ago, carrying on the Anzac spirit 100 years on.

And on Remembrance Day 11/11/18 will be exactly 100 years past the end of the First World War, and 100 years of the Anzac spirit passing through generations of men and women resulting in Australia as know it today.

In recognition of women's efforts during the war and their lasting spirit, the Darwin Anzac Day march was lead by women, for the first time in 2018.

The Women Veterans Network NT lead 150 returned service women through Darwin cenotaph. This all-women network was led by Army Corporal Sonya Newman, who in 2017 had her leg amputated after a number of service-related injuries.

Marking a significant moment for Australian women from 100 years ago, influencing womens roles of today.

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Not only did WW1 influence the roles of women today, but the roles of women in WW2 were also influenced by the women of the prior war period.

When the Great War was over, and the surviving soldiers returned to their previous jobs, women found themselves thrown out of work and domesticated once again almost overnight.

It took another war in 1939 for them to return to the work place in such great numbers. In doing so women once again temporality replaced men in the workforce to make them able to enlist and add to Australia's man power.

A form of influence carried out in both wars was that of propaganda posters.

Propaganda is a form of communication, it aims to influence attitudes of communities and encourage a particular view. In this instance, most war propaganda was about encouraging women to take part in either the land army or replace the men in the jobs they left vacant.

Propaganda can be used as a form of political warfare, like these posters seen among both world wars displaying their values to a target audience of the women back home taking care of Australia.

One of the most famous propaganda posters from this time was the Rosie the riveter, 'rosies' were seen as a huge influence not only in the Us and Australia in WW2 but also influencing the modern world in speeches, protests, and many other forms of inspirational or historical messages.

The poster once used as representative of equality is still used for the same reasons in modern day Australia, America and other places to protest and discuss equality between men, women and others.

From the Great War, having heavy influence on Australia and the rest of the world, women of Australia were able to embrace and share the ANZAC spirit onwards as it continues to effect our lives as Australians today.

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