A Camera on the Somme
Education Notes

Jack Grinton
England, August–November 1916

Collection, Bendigo & District RSL Museum and Eaglehawk Heritage Society
Courtesy of Jean Grinton and Dorothy Hammer
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Introduction

This education package is to be used in conjunction with Bendigo Art Gallery’s exhibition *A Camera on the Somme*. The exhibition presents highlights from a recently uncovered significant collection of photographs taken by two young brothers Jack and Bert Grinton during the First World War 1916–19.

This package provides teachers with an insight into the Grinton brothers and the 38th Battalion utilising the themes explored in the exhibition. Suggested focus questions and/or activities are also provided along these themes. The package also provides information on the Grinton collection its recent recovery and preservation. Relevant contextual information is also covered including:

- The First World War and Australians on the Western Front
- Photography and the First World War
- The development of photography and photographic technology through conflict
- Conservation of photographic collections

Curriculum Links

Include:

Visual Arts – including Photography and Studio Arts
History
English
Geography
Civics and Citizenship
LOTE – French
Interdisciplinary learning for example: Design, Creativity and Technology
Communication and thinking
A Camera on the Somme

The First World War was an industrial war of global proportions that looms large in the Australian national psyche. It was into this world conflict that two young brothers from Central Victoria, Jack and Bert Grinton, found themselves serving in the trenches of France and Belgium.

In 1916 John ‘Jack’ Grinton and Albert ‘Bert’ Grinton, left their family farm in Tragowel (100 kilometres north of Bendigo) to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force. Bert (17) joined on 21 January and like many lied a little to recruiters about his age, claiming he was already 18. Jack (23) soon followed, enlisting in Bendigo on 3 February. The brothers served in Belgium and France in C Company of the 38th Battalion, separated only when wounded, attending training school or on leave (if unable to take it concurrently). They returned home together in August 1919 and lived much of their lives on neighbouring farms on Bendigo’s outskirts. They shared little of their war experiences with their families.

Over 90 years have passed and almost all those who witnessed the war are gone. Yet in 2007 an extraordinary find came to light. Inside a biscuit tin stored for decades in a shed on the outskirts of Bendigo was a collection of 896 negatives – photographs taken by Jack and Bert Grinton. The images, captured on notoriously unstable cellulose nitrate film, endured a war from which Jack and Bert were fortunate to return. The collection was subject to 90 years of seasonal extremes and was headed for the rubbish when by chance a family friend recognised the significance. The collection now includes over 1500 images in addition to postcards, ephemera and objects.

Jack and Bert’s collection is large and varied, capturing aspects of war often overlooked by official photographers. Their unique photographs provide depth to the imagery of Australians at war. Theirs is a deeply personal record and significant as Allied soldiers on the Western Front were prohibited from having a camera. What heightens the power of the images is their very survival. Jack and Bert’s legacy turns a spotlight on the experience of individuals at war and gives texture to our understanding of Anzacs on the Western Front.

This collection of more than 1500 images is a unique addition to the historical record, capturing people and places often overlooked by official war photographs whilst also highlighting the development and artistry of amateur photography. Bendigo Art Gallery is showcasing this hugely personal and important photographic record in A Camera on the Somme. The exhibition will be on display at Bendigo Art Gallery from 13 June to 2 August 2009 before touring to venues across the country well into 2011.
Tour Dates

Bendigo Art Gallery, 14 June – 2 August 2009
Ipswich Art Gallery, 23 January – 21 March 2010
McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, 25 April – 27 June 2010
Shepparton Art Gallery, 14 August – 25 September 2010
Shrine of Remembrance, October 2010 – February 2011
Wangaratta Exhibitions Gallery, 26 March – 25 April 2011

Exhibition note

The photographs reproduced in this package and the eighty images displayed for Bendigo Art Gallery’s exhibition *A Camera on the Somme* were taken by Jack and Bert Grinton and form part of a collection of over 1500 images. They have been digitised from the original cellulose nitrate negatives or scanned from the original photographs where the negatives have been lost. The collection of negatives is owned jointly by Bendigo RSL Military Museum and Eaglehawk Heritage Society, courtesy of Jean Grinton. Additional photographs and ephemera are on long-term loan to Bendigo Art Gallery, courtesy of Jean Grinton and Dorothy Hammer.

Further Information

If you have any questions about this package or require further information, please contact the staff at Bendigo Art Gallery:

Bendigo Art Gallery
42 View St
Bendigo, VIC 3550

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The Grinton brothers and the 38th Battalion

1. Living behind the lines

As part of General John Monash’s 3rd Division, Jack and Bert moved into the trenches of the Western Front on 1 December 1916, to endure the harsh winter of 1916–17. They were soon relocated to Belgium, to undertake raiding operations against German trenches in an attempt to upset supply lines and morale during often-stagnant trench warfare.

The 38th Battalion fought its first major battle at Messines from 7 to 9 June 1917, where both Jack and Bert were wounded. This was followed by the battle of Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October, during which, despite careful planning and preparation, the battalion suffered 29 per cent casualties. This comparative success was promptly followed by Passchendaele (Third Battle of Ypres) on 12 October. Executed in haste amid horrendous conditions brought on by torrential rain, Passchendaele was the 38th Battalion’s most devastating operation of the war, resulting in 62 per cent casualties. Bert was seriously wounded, but fortunate to be evacuated. Many wounded men drowned in the Flanders mud before help could reach them.

The 38th Battalion were rushed south to France in March 1918 to counter the German Army’s Spring Offensive. Between April and November the stalemate of the preceding years crumbled further as the Allies combined their infantry, artillery, tanks and aircraft more effectively and launched their own offensive. The 38th Battalion played an active role throughout August and early September in the 3rd Division’s advance along the Somme valley. The last action of the 38th Battalion, from 29 September to 2 October, was part of the Australian–US operation that breached the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line along the St Quentin Canal and heralded Germany’s defeat. The success of this push exemplifies the skill and tenacity of men who fought for four days under heavy gas, shell and artillery fire, with severe casualties, and took strategic and well-fortified enemy positions. Jack was wounded during this final push and still in hospital on 11 November 1918 when the war ended. On 14 October 1918, the 37th and 38th Battalions were amalgamated. Each was at half its original fighting capacity (fewer than 500 men), indicative of the true cost of Allied victory.

Between raids, battles and offensives Australian soldiers had to be accommodated, fed, trained, entertained and relocated behind the lines. The brothers did not dispose of their cameras as military regulations insisted but nor did they take photographs of all aspects of army life. As infantry soldiers and not war photographers, there were times when it would have been impossible for them to take photographs. Raiding a German trench, performing sentry duty or actively fighting in a large-scale battle did not allow for taking snapshots. Jack and Bert’s images instead capture aspects of war often overlooked by official photographers. Domestic scenes of soldiers behind the lines, in the makeshift camps or French billets they transiently inhabited throughout the war years.
Focus Questions

1. What scenes did official war photographers tend to focus on and why?
2. Why didn’t official war photographers tend to publish images depicting the lives of the soldiers behind the lines?
3. What factors do you think shaped the images official war photographers such as Frank Hurley or Hubert Wilkins captured of Australians on the Western Front?
4. Looking at the images ‘My Kit’ and Kitted Up – what are some of the essential items soldiers took with them to the front? What essential items would you take with you?
5. Jack and Bert Grinton took cameras with them even though their kits were heavy, they were non-essential items and cameras were officially prohibited for allied soldiers. Why do you think they did this? If you could take one ‘special’ item with you what would you choose?
6. In the images on display what sorts of things are soldiers doing for entertainment? What other things might soldiers have done to pass the time between battles?
7. From the images on display, what were some of the places soldiers had to sleep? What would the conditions have been like?
8. Given the large number of soldiers that had to be fed, with minimal cooking facilities and a shortage of fresh produce, what sort of meals would the soldiers have had to eat? What food would you miss most and what would be your first meal on returning home?
9. Why do you think there are virtually no photographs in this collection of soldiers fighting in battles or serving in front line trenches?
10. Messines and Mont St Quentin were two of the most successful allied offensives during the war. Passchendaele and Gallipoli were two of the most disastrous yet most Australians have heard more about these failures than the successes – why do you think this is? What do you think soldiers like Jack and Bert Grinton would think about the fact that we tend to remember certain aspects of the war?
2. The burden of war

Australia was deeply impacted by the First World War. Some 61,700 Australians didn’t come home, about two-thirds of them buried or missing along the Western Front. The wounded numbered 155,000, about half the men who had served overseas. In addition a large number of soldiers who had been gassed but did not seek treatment were impacted for the rest of their lives. The Australian casualty rate was the highest among the British Empire forces. By the 1930s another 60,000 had died from wounds or illnesses caused by the war. At least one generation of women and children, and arguably a second, suffered as a result.

For Australian soldiers like Jack and Bert Grinton who returned home to their pre-war lives, the war would stay with them. Many men did not want to talk about where they had been or what they had done. However, the Australians were lucky in the sense that they could return to a landscape untouched by war. The people of Western Europe were not so fortunate. The people of France and Belgium and the destruction heaped upon the countryside are recurrent themes in Jack and Bert’s photographs.

France lost 1.4 million soldiers during the war, many more young men than Britain or Germany. During the course of the war 11% of France’s entire population, both soldiers and civilians, were killed or wounded. By 1919 industrial and agricultural production had fallen to less than half pre-war levels. Large areas of farmland were devastated and property and livestock destroyed. Countless towns, villages, industry and railways had been bombed often beyond recognition. French civilians and soldiers continued to be impacted by the devastated population and landscape well beyond the 1918 armistice to then face similar destruction in the Second World War (1939–45). In the decades following the war the landscape was also altered by the swelling numbers of memorials and cemeteries, a constant reminder of the cost and impact of war.
Focus Questions

1. Looking at the large photograph *Group portrait of five French civilians*. What type of civilian is missing from the photograph (think about age and gender)? Where were the young men who are missing from Jack and Bert’s photographs?

2. Compare *Interior of a bombed church* or *Bombed Houses*, what would it have been like for French people to have their homes, livelihoods and sacred places devastated by war? How would they have felt? How would you feel if your home, church, school, town or favourite place was the focal point of a war?

3. Looking at the image *War cemetery in Annoeullin*. This cemetery is one of 100s of official military cemeteries and memorials which are scattered throughout France and Belgium. How important do you think this is for Australians? What do you think is the impact of these cemeteries and memorials for the people of France and Belgium?

4. Why is it considered important to remember the war and those who died?

5. Why do you think Jack and Bert photographed French civilians and bomb devastation in France and Belgium?

6. Some of the civilians photographed would have billeted Australian soldiers in their homes and barns. What do you think the French people would have liked or disliked about having the Australians living with them?
3. Trip of a lifetime

At a time when international travel was prohibitively expensive and time-consuming for many Australians, the First World War presented young Australian men with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. While serving their country, young men could travel, learn new skills and assist Britain to resist the imperial ambitions of Germany, spurred on by widespread reports of atrocities. In addition to these incentives the public pressure to enlist and support those already overseas was intense within many communities, fuelled by government and the media.

Having a real bonzer time and a bonnie day too, could spend a week here the place is better than I reckoned. So different to Aus. The people are funny. This is a trip of your life no doubt, hope to tell you all about it.

Jack Grinton, Cape Town, 5 July 1916

Once arriving in France in November 1916 Jack and Bert were not granted leave until early 1918, serving continually except when wounded. At the end of the war Jack and Bert where each able to take additional recreational leave during which time they photographed many of the places they visited including Scotland, Paris and the French Riviera.

Just a card to say I am ok and having a gorgeous time running about France and Belgium … Although it has been rather cold I’ve very much enjoyed myself. There’s plenty of sport in these parts with dancing etc. well in fact they are dancing mad over here.

Bert Grinton, 10 February 1919

Captured German guns at the Place de la Concorde
Paris, March–April 1919
Focus Questions

1. Why is this section of the exhibition entitled Trip of a Lifetime? What does this title refer to?
2. From the images on display list some of the places Jack and Bert visited when they had the opportunity to take leave. Are there any places pictured which you automatically recognise without referring to the labels?
3. Looking at some of the other ephemera on display, how do you think Jack and Bert travelled from the battlefields to these places when they were on leave?
4. What types of things would Jack and Bert have done whilst on leave for entertainment? How does this compare to what you enjoy doing when you go on holidays?
5. List the reasons why you think Australian men left their families and jobs to travel to Europe and fight on the Western Front? What incentives would you need to agree to go to fight in a war?
6. Look at the image Fishmongers. What country was this photograph taken in? What is the main subject of the image? Identify the differences between this scene and the present day?
7. Look at the image Cabaret du Ciel and Cabaret l’Enfer. What do you notice about this image? What do you think the photographer was trying to capture in this image? Do you think this image is successful or not?
8. Look at the image Bert with two family friends. If you had to describe Bert Grinton using only this image what adjectives would you use?
9. Contrast the experiences of Jack and Bert Grinton as captured in the images seen in the previous two sections (Living behind the lines & Burden of war) and in Trip of a Lifetime.
10. Look at the image Captured German guns at the Place de la Concorde. Why was artillery displayed in central Paris?
4. **Portraiture and remembrance**

**Portraiture**

Towards the end of the war the Grinton brothers, in particular Jack, experimented with portrait photography. Jack and Bert were not influenced by rank in their choice of subject but instead photographed their friends and fellow soldiers, sometimes on request. Using these men as subjects not only enabled the brothers to hone their technique but also produce a unique record of the men of the 38th Battalion and the Third Division. Some of these portraits remain unidentified, although it is hoped that through further research additional positive identifications will be possible.

**Remembrance**

While awaiting repatriation at the conclusion of the war, the army had to ensure soldiers remained occupied. They were offered education and training programs and were also able to take some recreational leave. Soldiers were also ordered to undertake duties such as replanting of crops and war graves work, which involved retrieving bodies from the abandoned battlefields and relocating field graves to official military cemeteries. The work they undertook in the months after the war gave Jack and Bert the opportunity to photograph places where they had fought and the field graves of their fallen friends. Such images are not commonly seen in military photography due to the temporary nature of field graves.

The field graves Jack and Bert photographed belong largely to men of the 38th Battalion who were killed along the Somme valley in the last months of the war during the 1918 allied offensive, the capture of Mt St Quentin and the breaching of the Hindenburg Line. They were initially buried in the field near where they had fallen and then relocated to military cemeteries in 1919.
Focus Questions

1. Why do people have portraits taken?
2. Why do you think Jack and Bert took portraits of fellow soldiers? Why do you think they photographed graves? Why would you photograph a grave?
3. Why are portraits and group photographs of soldiers displayed alongside graves?
4. What do you notice about the backgrounds of the portrait and group photographs? What does this suggest about the places where the images were taken?
5. What are the similarities and differences between the men photographed?
6. Look at the image 38th Battalion Soldier. How old do you think he is? Describe his stance in the photograph? What impression do you form about this soldier from this image? What do you think he is thinking about?
7. Look at the image Field grave of a 38th Battalion soldier (Private Dunn). What is the focal point(s) of this image? Is this a powerful image why/why not? What elements add to the impact of the image? What does this image make you think about?
8. Why are there no images of women? What do you think it was like for the soldiers to spend so much time with each other, with very little female company (unless in hospital or on leave) and so far from their family and friends? How important would their relationships with the other soldiers have been?
5. Quota 45: The journey home

After the armistice on 11 November 1918 the Australian government faced the immense task of repatriating all their service people. This included soldiers, nurses, administration and ancillary staff in addition to the wounded soldiers recovering in hospitals across Europe and the Middle East. This immense task was managed with a priority quota system and implemented over about 12 months. Soldiers like Jack and Bert who were not seriously wounded, had not served at Gallipoli and did not have wives and children were not considered a repatriation priority. They returned home with one of the later quotas, arriving in Melbourne nine months after the armistice.

Jack and Bert Grinton were relocated from France to England in May 1919 in preparation for return to Australia. The brothers were assigned to return home as part of Quota 45 which totalled 1544 personnel including 48 Officers, 10 Nurses, 179 Sergeants and 1307 Other Ranks. Quota 45 departed Devonport, Plymouth on 1 July 1919 on the HMAT Karmala. The journey home took 48 days with the boat stopping in Cape Town, Fremantle and Adelaide before reaching its final destination, Melbourne on 17 August 1919.

In his voyage report the officer in charge of Quota 45 on board HMAT Karmala relayed:

Health of troops throughout the voyage has been very good. Education classes, sports and amusements were held continued each day…Concerts have been given on board every night and no complaints whatever have been made by the Troops. Inoculation and ‘Voyage Pay’ have been completed. Every assistance has been given by the Officers and behaviour of the Troops has been good.

Major RS McLeish, OC Troops
1. How long was the journey to and from England? How did they travel? What did the soldiers do to fill in time during the trip?
2. Why did Jack and Bert Grinton not leave England to return to Australia until June 1919 when the war ended 11 November 1918?
3. Three images in this section focus around food or eating. Why do you think this is?
4. Look at the image *Australian nurses and a medical officer*. What would the war have been like for Australian nurses and medical personnel?
5. Look at the image *HMAT Karmala in Cape Town*. The sign on the pier warehouse reads ‘Welcome brave boys’. Many of the soldiers were very young; Bert was only 17 when he joined up. After the war ended would you describe the soldiers as boys? Why or why not?
6. Look at the image *Soldiers watch a ship’s crewman*. What do you think the crewman is doing (he may be testing the depth but it is not confirmed)? What do you think the two soldiers in the foreground of the image are talking about?
7. Look at the image *On the pier*. Notice that you can only see the backs of most of the soldiers. What does this represent or convey? What emotions would the soldiers be experiencing on returning to Australia for the first time in years?
8. Do you think the soldiers would have been happy or sad or have mixed feelings about returning home? What might they have missed about Australia while they were away? What might the soldiers have been sad to leave behind when the war ended?
6. Life after 1919

After returning together to Australia in August 1919, Jack and Bert remained extraordinarily close for the rest of their lives. Each went into farming, eventually raising families on neighbouring properties at Myers Flat on Bendigo’s outskirts. In later years they regularly attended 38th Battalion reunions in Bendigo and hosted reunion gatherings at their respective farms. When the Second World War broke out in 1939 both Jack and Bert were adamant that their sons should not go to war.

*Dad hated the war because he reckoned the Germans were human beings, war was just human beings killing human beings, it was kill or be killed.*

Dot Hammer (nee Grinton), Bert Grinton’s eldest daughter

These two brothers, who had served alongside each other in the trenches of France and Belgium and whose shared experiences and support of each other had alleviated the difficulties, traumas and deprivation of war, forged a bond that must have helped them face the years ahead. In the 1970s Jack’s younger daughter Jean accompanied her father on a visit to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Jean recalls her father becoming extremely emotional on viewing the realistic dioramas depicting battles on the Western Front. For Jean this was a glimpse of what her father and uncle had lived through and then lived with for so many years.

Jack and Bert each sustained an interest in photography throughout their lives. They continued to use the two Kodak cameras they had taken to war to capture scenes from their lives at home – family, friends and farming life. Many of these images are in sharp contrast to the scenes captured on the Western Front. Like many returned servicemen,
neither brother shared much of their war experiences with their families. Many of the images would have been harrowing reminders of all they had endured and lost.

Welcome home
Tragowel, August–September 1919
Collection, Bendigo & District RSL Museum and Eaglehawk Heritage Society
Courtesy of Jean Grinton and Dorothy Hammer

Focus Questions

1. Look at the image Welcome home. List some of the details this photograph contains (suitcase, coat, water tank, welcome sign, bunting flags, bird in cage, veranda, family and soldier (Bert), gum tree etc). Looking at the whole image in detail, why do you think this photograph was taken? Are there any elements which seem typically Australian?

2. Contrasting this image (Welcome home) with those in previous sections, what would it have been like for soldiers like Jack and Bert to return home? What would it have been like for their families?

3. What do you notice about the cake in the image Bert Grinton? Does Bert look different out of uniform? What do you think it was like for soldiers to pack their uniform away for the last time?

4. Look at the image Fred Grinton and Lucy Sutherland. Jack and Bert had two brothers, two sisters and their mother still on the farm – their father had died in 1913. Fred was between Jack and Bert in age but did not go the war. Why do you think Fred remained at home? What would the war have been like for him?

5. From looking at the images in this section (Life after 1919). What kind of life did Jack and Bert lead after the war? From these images what were the key things which were important to them?

6. How different would the return home have been if one of the brothers had been killed? What would it have been like for the Grinton family if both brothers had been killed during the war, or seriously disabled?

7. Look at the image Grinton relative. What impression do you get of this woman from this image? What elements in the photograph help create this impression?
8. Jack and Bert didn’t discuss much of their war experience with their family. They tended to only talk about it with fellow soldiers during 38th Battalion reunions. Why do you think this was? Why do you think they didn’t share these photographs with their family, why might they have put them away?

9. Jack and Bert continued to photograph life after the war. Why do you think this was? Why do people take and save photographs? What do photographs mean to you or your family?

Suggested follow-up activities

1. After looking at the images on display ask students to list the aspects of war which are well documented in the collection and those which are not. List the reasons why this may be? Research a particular aspect of the Western Front depicted in one of the Grinton images (or overlooked) and design a poster incorporating facts, personal accounts or images relating to this topic.

2. Look at the postcards displayed in the exhibition – ask students to imagine if they were away in France fighting in the First World War:

- Who would they write a postcard to?
- What would they write home about – remembering too that mail could take three months to reach Australia?
- What information would they leave off a postcard and why?
- Should the postcards and letters of soldiers have been censored? Why or why not?
- How important would it be for the soldiers to receive mail from their friends and family (and vice versa)? What impact might receiving no mail have on a person or a Battalion?
- The embroidered silk postcards were made by French women and sold to Australian soldiers – how important would this industry have been for these women and why? What do the designs on the postcards represent?
With these factors in mind students can design their own postcard - choosing a
decoration, an image or photograph for the front and composing text to be sent home
on the back.

3. Design a map showing the places where soldiers fought during the First World War
and the places they were recruited from.

4. Ask students to write a diary entry for a week on the Western Front – perhaps
focusing on a particular battle or life behind the lines for soldiers.

5. Organise a class discussion or debate analysing issues such as war, conscription,
democracy or gender focussed around the statement “It is the duty of every man to fight
for his country”.

6. Collect information from newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the internet
relating to current conflicts. Examine the justifications used today for participating in
these conflicts. Are these arguments similar or different to those used to support the
First World War? Under what circumstances do students feel they would be prepared to
go to war?

7. Brainstorm words and images associated with the word ‘Anzac’. In what ways does
our idea of Anzac represent us as individual Australians and as a nation? Who or what is
excluded from this image? What would the Anzacs of Gallipoli and the Western Front
think of the importance we give to their experiences today?

8. Design a propaganda poster to encourage soldiers to sign up for the army? How
would you encourage men to leave their families and jobs and travel to Europe or the
Middle East under such dangerous and difficult conditions?

9. Organise a visit to another museum or historic collection of First World War items or
look at online collections - perhaps list some of the essential items that soldiers would
have carried with them during the war or investigate the life or experience of another
First World War soldier. Students may also wish to investigate their own family links to
the First World War by talking to their parents or grandparents. Students can then access
the war records of their family members through the national archives.

10. Students could write a script or piece of creative writing exploring the experiences
and lives of a soldier or soldiers on the Western Front – perhaps from the perspective of
Jack and Bert Grinton or one of their friends using the photographs and material
displayed as a starting point.

11. Read a piece of historical fiction set during the First World War (such as A Rose for the
Anzac Boys by Jackie French – a list of suggested titles is provided at the end of this
package). What are the key themes explored in the novel? What messages about the war
is the author trying to convey? Does the war seem like a positive or negative experience?
What techniques does the author use to convey this to the reader? Is the depiction of the
war accurate? List the sources you might consult if you were to write your own piece of
historical fiction based on the First World War.
12. As a class or in small groups create a collage of words and images (using multi-media) to represent some of the key themes which are represented in the Grinton photographs and the exhibition.

13. Compile a list of questions you would ask Jack and Bert Grinton about their photographs, the war or their lives if they were alive today. How might you answer some of these questions?

14. Research the experience of soldiers or civilians from another country impacted by the First World War such as France, England, Germany, Turkey, Russia, America etc. Compile information or images describing the First World War experience from their perspective.

15. Research the experience of an official war photographer or war artist during the First World War. How did their experience before or during the war influence their portfolio of images or artwork?

16. Compare and contrast the images of war captured by a First World War official Australian photographer and an official photographer during another conflict such as Korea, Vietnam, East Timor or Iraq.

The First World War – Overview

The First World War was an industrial war of global proportions that caused death and injury to millions, brought about the collapse of empires, acted as a catalyst for European revolutions and another world war and forcibly altered the landscape of Europe forever. It is estimated that the war resulted in the death or injury of up to 37 million military personnel and civilians. Australia’s involvement demanded a devastating national sacrifice that touched every family, town and city, leaving an indelible mark on the young nation’s identity. From a population of less than five million, almost 40 per cent of adult males aged between eighteen and forty-four enlisted. Of the 331,814 Australians who served, around 65 per cent (over 216,000) were casualties – killed, wounded, gassed or taken prisoner.

The outbreak of war was greeted in Australia with public enthusiasm. In response to the overwhelming number of volunteers, the authorities set high physical standards for recruits. Most of the men accepted into the army in August 1914 were sent to Egypt to meet the threat the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) posed to British interests in the Middle East and the Suez Canal (sometimes referred to as the Eastern Front).

Middle East - Gallipoli

After four and a half months of training near Cairo, the Australians departed by ship for the Gallipoli peninsula, with troops from New Zealand, Britain, and France. The
Australians landed at what became known as ANZAC Cove on 25 April 1915 and established a tenuous foothold on the steep slopes above the beach. During the early days of the campaign, the allies tried to break through Turkish lines, while the Turks tried to drive the allied troops off the peninsula. Attempts on both sides ended in failure and the ensuing stalemate continued for the remainder of 1915. The most successful operation of the campaign was the evacuation of troops 19–20 December 1915 with no more than a few casualties amongst the retreating forces.

**Europe – Western Front**

After Gallipoli the AIF was reorganised and expanded into five infantry divisions which from March 1916 were progressively transferred to France. The AIF mounted division that had served as additional infantry remained in the Middle East. When the other AIF divisions arrived in France, the war on the Western Front had long been settled in a stalemate, with the opposing armies facing each other from trench systems that extended across Belgium and north-east France, from the English Channel to the Swiss border. The development of machine-guns and artillery favoured defence over attack and compounded the impasse, which lasted until the final months of the war.

Throughout 1916 and 1917, the Australians and other allied armies repeatedly attacked, preceded by massive artillery bombardments intended to cut barbed wire and destroy enemy defences. After these bombardments, waves of attacking infantry emerged from the trenches into no man's land and advanced towards enemy positions. The surviving Germans, protected by deep and heavily reinforced bunkers, were usually able to repel the attackers with machine-gun fire and artillery support from the rear. These attacks often resulted in limited territorial gains followed, in turn, by German counter-attacks. Both sides sustained heavy losses.

In July 1916 Australian infantry were introduced to this type of combat at Fromelles, where they suffered 5,533 casualties in 24 hours. By the end of the year about 40,000 Australians had been killed or wounded on the Western Front. In 1917 a further 76,836 Australians became casualties in battles, such Bullecourt, Messines, and the four-month campaign around Ypres, known as the battle of Passchendaele.

In March 1918 the German army launched its final offensive of the war, hoping for a decisive victory before the military and industrial strength of the United States could be fully mobilised in support of the allies. The Germans initially met with great success, advancing 64 kilometres past the region of the 1916 Somme battles, before the offensive lost momentum. Between April and November the stalemate of the preceding years began to give way, as the allies combined infantry, artillery, tanks, and aircraft more effectively, demonstrated in the Australian capture of Hamel spur on 4 July 1918. The allied offensive began on 8 August at Amiens and built momentum with Australian successes at Mont St Quentin and Péronne leading to the capture of the Hindenburg Line. In early October the Australian divisions withdrew from the front for rest and refitting. Germany surrendered on 11 November.

**Middle East – Light Horse Brigade**

Unlike their counterparts in France and Belgium, the Australians in the Middle East fought a mobile war against the Ottoman Empire in conditions completely different from the mud and stagnation of the Western Front. The light horsemen and their
mounts had to survive extreme heat, harsh terrain, and water shortages. Nevertheless, casualties were comparatively light with 1,394 Australians killed or wounded in three years. The campaign began in 1916 with Australian troops participating in the defence of the Suez Canal and the allied reconquest of the Sinai peninsular. In 1917 Australian and other allies advanced into Palestine and captured Gaza and Jerusalem; by 1918 they had occupied Lebanon and Syria. On 30 October 1918 Turkey sued for peace.

**Flying Corp and Navy**

Australians also served at sea and in the newly formed flying corps. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN), under the command of the Royal Navy, made a significant contribution early in the war, when HMAS *Sydney* destroyed the German raider *Emden* near the Cocos Islands in November 1914. The Great War was the first armed conflict in which aircraft were used; about 3,000 Australian airmen served in the Middle East and France with the Australian Flying Corps, mainly in observation capacities or providing infantry support.

**Women**

Australian women volunteered for service in auxiliary roles, as cooks, nurses, drivers, interpreters, munitions workers, and skilled farm workers. While the government welcomed the service of nurses, it generally rejected offers from women in other professions to serve overseas. Australian nurses served in Egypt, France, Greece, and India, often in trying conditions or close to the front, where they were exposed to shelling and aerial bombardment.

**Home Front**

The effect of the war was also felt at home. Families and communities grieved following the loss of so many men, and women increasingly assumed the physical and financial burden of caring for families. Anti-German feeling emerged with the outbreak of the war, and many Germans living in Australia were sent to internment camps. Censorship and surveillance, regarded by many as an excuse to silence political views that had no effect on the outcome of war, increased as the conflict continued. Social division also grew, reaching a climax in the bitterly contested (and unsuccessful) conscription referendums held in 1916 and 1917. When the war ended, thousands of ex-servicemen, many disabled with physical or emotional wounds, had to be re-integrated into a society keen to consign the war to the past and resume normal life.

For further information please see the Australian War Memorial's website:

The Grinton brothers and photography during the First World War

By 1914 cameras were becoming increasingly popular in Australia. Many of the men in the first contingent of soldiers sent to the Middle East carried with them inexpensive hand-held cameras. Soon after the onset of war, Kodak redirected the marketing of pocket cameras, such as the one purchased by Jack Grinton in 1916, as the Soldier’s Kodak. Throughout 1914 and 1915 Australian soldiers could use their cameras despite official prohibition. In the absence of any official Australian war photographers, images captured by soldiers and nurses provided much of the photographic record for the Gallipoli campaign. Media outlets often purchased images taken by amateur soldier photographers in the Middle East to illustrate events for Australians at home.

Photographs and published accounts of the war on the Western Front were strictly controlled by the British War Office for reasons of security and image. At the insistence of Australian war historian CEW Bean, English press photographer Herbert Baldwin was appointed in late 1916 to record Australian forces in Europe. In August 1917 he was replaced by two Australian photographers, Frank Hurley and Hubert Wilkins. Their brief was to create a historical account of the war through photographs while meeting the publicity and propaganda demands of the army, press and government. The conflict inherent in these instructions, and certain techniques employed by war photographers – such as composite photography, image manipulation to emphasise particular features, staged shots or re-enactments – limit the historical reliability of some official images.
While crucial to enhancing the war record, official photographs must be viewed within the context they were created and considering the purposes they were used for.

Due to this strict censorship, the possession and use of a camera on the Western Front by Allied soldiers or civilians was prohibited under threat of court martial and imprisonment. As a result, soldiers were often forced to leave cameras behind or discard them on their way to the trenches. These strict regulations remained throughout the war, with regular reminders issued to Australian soldiers of the illegality of personal photography.

While on board the troop transport HMAT Runic, Jack Grinton noted the prevalence of cameras among the soldiers in his diary. Ten days later, when the ship docked in Cape Town on 14 July 1916, he purchased his first camera, an Autographic Vest Pocket Kodak. He later gave this camera to Bert after purchasing the more professional No. 1A Autographic Kodak Junior at photographic dealer JF Duthie while on leave in Edinburgh in January 1918. Both brothers took photographs throughout their time overseas and the composition of their shots improved greatly. Jack in particular was a true amateur photographer in the sense that he taught himself basic developing and printing techniques. While in training camp in England in the later part of 1916 he experimented with processes such as the contact method, and used trial and error to print his own photographs in his hut. He continued to practise basic developing and printing when time and circumstances allowed in France, and sustained this interest in photographic processes throughout his life.

The brothers did not dispose of their cameras as military regulations insisted but nor did they take photographs of all aspects of army life. As infantry soldiers and not war photographers, there were times when it would have been impossible for them to take photographs even if there had been no prohibition. When moved up to front-line positions, soldiers were required to leave much of their personal belongings in dug-outs or billets behind the lines, taking with them only essentials such as rifle, bayonet, ammunition, bombs, bandages, rations and water. Raiding a German trench, performing sentry duty or actively fighting in a large-scale offensive were not times for taking snapshots. Jack and Bert’s images instead capture aspects of war often overlooked by official photographers. Theirs is a deeply personal record of everyday life for soldiers behind the line on the Western Front, of the men they fought alongside, people they met, places visited, the impact of war on France and their journey home. Perhaps most moving are the images of field graves in the Somme valley. These graves held men of the 38th Battalion who had died alongside Jack and Bert in the August Allied offensive along the Somme and in the final push through the Hindenburg Line.

In its scope and content this is a collection of immense significance. What heightens the power and uniqueness of the images is their very survival. The photographs, captured on notoriously unstable cellulose nitrate film, endured a war from which Jack and Bert were fortunate to return home. The collection was then stored for 90 years in a central Victorian shed, subject to the seasonal extremes of temperature and narrowly escaping destruction in a farm clean-up. By chance a family friend and local heritage society member saw the negatives and recognised their significance. Given their age and history they were in remarkable condition, perhaps due to the quality of the film Jack and Bert purchased and to low humidity levels during storage. To ensure the preservation of the collection, hundreds of hours have been dedicated to cataloguing, digitising and
organising long-term storage in conjunction with research and display to share it with a wider audience.

Photographing war

Courtesy of Colin Harding, Curator of Photographic Technology
National Media Museum United Kingdom

http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/

The response of every individual writer, artist, journalist or photographer to the challenges of war, while often mirroring that of society as a whole, is deeply personal and subjective. Within the realms of photography and cinematography, changing technologies play a crucial role, as the limitations of apparatus and process dictate the images that photographers aspire to create. Changes in camera technology and photographic processes have profoundly influenced war photography – from the Crimean War to the present conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Innovations such as shorter exposure times, portable cameras and improved lenses have transformed the photography of conflict. However, as well as purely technical considerations, we must also consider the critical importance of personal, political, aesthetic and cultural factors in shaping the nature of war photography.
War is often regarded as the mother of invention. However, it may equally well be
considered the mother of creativity. From Homer’s *Iliad* to Goya’s *The Disasters of War* or
Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem* our seemingly innate compulsion to destroy each other
has inspired some of the greatest works of art. This is not surprising. No human activity
engages our emotions as totally as war. War places individuals and societies in the most
extreme of situations and, consequently, provokes the most extreme responses – both
good and bad.

The invention of photography was publicly announced in 1839. From the outset,
photography’s ability to capture the forms of nature with unparalleled precision and
fidelity aroused enormous interest and debate. The absolute ‘truthfulness’ of and
objectivity of the photographic image was widely regarded as its most important
attribute. The first war photographs – a few daguerreotypes – were taken during the
United States war with Mexico (1846–48), but the first systematic photographic coverage
of a conflict occurred a few years later during the Crimean War (1854–56).

Of the photographers who worked in the Crimea, the most famous was undoubtedly
Roger Fenton – a leading figure in British photography who was commissioned by a firm
of publishers, Thomas Agnew and Son, to create a photographic record of the war.
Fenton was an exceptionally competent photographer, renowned for his technical skill.
However, he was forced to operate under severe difficulties dictated by the hazards of
war and the extremes of climate, and also by the limitations of his equipment and the
process that he used.

Fenton used large format glass-plate cameras, and the collodion or wet-plate process
required long exposure times – up to 20 seconds or more. Moreover, each plate had to
be sensitised immediately before exposure and developed immediately after exposure,
necessitating some form of mobile darkroom. In Fenton’s case this took the form of a
converted wine merchant’s wagon, which unfortunately proved to be a very tempting
target for Turkish artillery.

Given these circumstances, it was impossible for Fenton to capture any scenes of actual
fighting – even if he had wanted to do so. Indeed, it is remarkable that he was able to
achieve what he did – over 300 photographs showing scenes of camp life, portraits of
commanders and heroes, panoramas of battles and carefully posed *tableaux vivants* – the
beginnings of a long tradition of staged war images. Fenton showed no scenes of death,
although his letters and diary reveal that he saw plenty of evidence of the horrors of war.

By the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, photographic technology had not
advanced significantly. However, for the first time some of the realities of war were now
being recorded. Scenes of combat were still out of the question, but photographers such
as Mathew Brady, Timothy O’Sullivan and Alexander Gardner did not hesitate to capture
the horrific aftermath of battle. After viewing some of Brady’s photographs, the jurist
and author Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote:

The closing decades of the nineteenth century witnessed fundamental technical
developments in photography. In the 1880s the introduction of pre-coated or dry-plate
negatives freed the photographer from the need for a mobile darkroom, since the plates
were sold ready for use and could be processed at leisure. Faster exposure times and
improved lenses (including the first telephoto lenses) meant that photographers were no
longer reliant on tripods, and the first hand-held cameras transformed the range of
subjects available and heralded the birth of ‘candid’ photography. Coincidentally, improvements in printing technology, particularly the introduction of the half-tone process, meant that reproductions of photographs could now be printed both effectively and cheaply. Photographic illustrations became increasingly common in the many illustrated magazines popular around the turn of the century, and soon began to appear in daily newspapers.

It was not only journalists who carried a camera to war. Since the 1890s, photography had ceased to be the preserve of the professional or the scientifically minded enthusiastic amateur. George Eastman’s invention of the Kodak camera in 1888, followed by the Brownie in 1900, had transformed photography into a truly popular and democratic pastime. Millions of people were now able to make a photographic record of their lives simply by, in Eastman’s famous advertising slogan, ‘Pressing the Button’.

Given that for most soldiers, military service was the defining event of their lives, involving travel, new friendships and many new experiences, it was perfectly understandable that many packed a snapshot camera in their kitbags. This phenomenon was first observed during the Boer War, when many serving soldiers carried compact roll-film cameras, such as Folding Pocket Kodaks or recently introduced Brownies, to record their comrades and experiences. While the majority of these photographs were taken for purely personal reasons, some found their way into the pages of the growing number of popular illustrated magazines.

By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, photography’s popularity as a pastime had increased still further and snapshot cameras had improved in quality and convenience. The concept of an extremely compact camera, small enough to slip into your pocket, may seem like a fairly recent innovation. However, like most things in photography the idea has been around for a lot longer than you might think.

One of the first and most successful ‘compact’ cameras was the Vest Pocket Kodak, or VPK as it was usually known, introduced in 1912. The Vest Pocket Kodak took its name from the American word for a waistcoat. The VPK took pictures sized 1 5/8 by 2 ½ inches. When closed, the camera measured just 1 x 2 ½ x 4 ¾ inches (about 25 x 63 x 120 millimetres) – small enough to slip conveniently into a waistcoat pocket. In use, the lens panel pulled out on a pair of lazy-tongs struts.

In 1915 a new model was introduced – the ‘Autographic’ Vest Pocket Kodak. An American inventor, Henry Gaisman, had in 1913 taken out a patent for a roll film with a thin carbon-paper-like tissue between the film and the backing paper. A small window in the back of the camera could be opened to uncover the backing paper. Pressure from a metal stylus caused the backing paper to become transparent, exposing the film. Using autographic film, photographers could ‘write’ information that would then appear on their finished prints. George Eastman paid Gaisman the then enormous sum of US$300,000 for his patent rights, and the entire range of folding Kodak cameras, including the VPK, was re-designed to use autographic film.

The Autographic VPK was by far the most popular choice of camera, particularly with American infantrymen. It was widely advertised as ‘The Soldier’s Kodak’ and owners were encouraged to ‘Make your own picture record of the War’. Jack Grinton bought an Autographic VPK camera in Cape Town en route to England in 1916. While on leave in Edinburgh in January 1918, he subsequently bought a No. 1A Autographic Kodak Junior
camera, a larger model of roll-film camera that produced bigger negatives, 2 ½ by 4 ¼ inches. Sales figures rocketed. In 1914 about 5500 VPKs were sold in Britain. The following year over 28,000 were sold. It became the most popular hand camera of its day, with record sales of around two million.

Despite such reports and the impressive sales figures, it would be wrong to assume that cameras were a common sight in the trenches. Comparatively sophisticated cameras such as the VPK were too expensive for many enlisted men to consider buying, and the simpler and cheaper box cameras were too bulky and conspicuous. It was among the officers and technical support troops, such as engineers and medics, that camera usage was most common. They could afford better quality and more compact cameras, did not have to carry large amounts of personal equipment, often had access to transport and, crucially, had more freedom of action. Often this wartime photography was the natural continuation of a pre-war hobby.

Obtaining fresh supplies of film or plates was always a problem, as was finding somewhere to develop and print them after they were exposed. It was while he was in the comparative comfort of his training camp in England in 1916 that Jack Grinton taught himself the basics of developing and printing his photographs. The official censors, for obvious reasons, did not allow undeveloped films to be posted home and consequently it was often weeks or months before exposed films were developed.

Very few photographs of actual fighting were taken – partly because the use of cameras on the front line was actively discouraged, but more probably because these amateur photographers had far more important things to worry about than getting a good ‘snap’. Taking photographs was officially frowned upon as being a potential security risk. Most of the snapshots taken by soldiers mirror the conventions and subject matter of domestic vernacular photography – daily life behind the lines, local sights and people, stray animals adopted as pets, and so on. For most, the grim realities of war were not considered to be a suitable subject. There was official censorship, but there was also a high degree of self-censorship. Although rare, photographs of atrocities were, however, sometimes taken. A distressing sub-category of military snapshots are so-called ‘trophy’ photographs. Soldiers have always collected trophies – be it plunder or even body parts – and ‘trophy’ snapshots began to be taken as soon as cameras became widely available. These were usually private documents designed to be shared among colleagues as a rite of passage.

Today, digital cameras, mobile phone cameras and the Internet have moved trophy photos into the public domain. A cursory search on the Internet will reveal many examples of these obscene parodies of the domestic snapshot. A digital camera is now a common possession among soldiers – far more common than a VPK camera was in the trenches of the First World War. Where once photographing war was the province of photo-journalists and a few amateurs working under difficult circumstances, now the soldiers themselves are all photographers. They record their war, their fun, their observations of what they find picturesque, their atrocities – and then swap images among themselves and email them around the globe.
Introduction to conservation of photographic collections

Introduction

- Since its invention in 1839, photography has enjoyed enormous success. It has gone from being something rare and mysterious to commonplace. Because photographs are everyday items we don't always give them the care that they need.
- All photographs, old and new, require special care. Many photographs, including modern colour photographs, are unstable, and fade rapidly if they are not processed properly in the first place, if we display them for long periods and if we do not store them appropriately. In some cases, this can result in the loss of the photograph.
- Compromise - find a balance between using and preserving collections. However, there is much that can be done to preserve the photographs in your care, through careful and thoughtful handling, storage and display.

Development of photography

- Camera obscura as early as 1038.
- Photochemistry the by-product of other research in 17th and 18th centuries.
- Niepce – 1822 & 1827
- 1839 the ‘birth’ of photography – Daguerre & Fox Talbot
- Albumen paper & wet collodion process – from 1850s
- Gelatine dry plates & film negatives - 1880s
- Collodion and gelatine emulsion papers – 1880s
- Developing-out papers – from 1885
- Colour photography – from 1903

**Types of photographs**

- daguerreotypes
- ambrotypes
- colour photographs
- opaltypes
- salted paper prints
- platinotypes
- cyanotypes
- albumen prints
- collodion prints
- carbon prints
- silver-gelatine prints
- slides
- safety film negatives
- tintypes/ferrotypes
- glass plate negatives
- Cibachromes
- modern colour prints on resin-coated papers

It is CRUCIAL to identify what process or processes were used in a photograph BEFORE you do any conservation work! Consult with an accredited conservator with experience in photographic conservation where you can!

**Chemistry & deterioration basics**

- Two main mechanisms of deterioration: sulphiding and oxidative-reductive deterioration (e.g. silver mirroring)

**Common types of damage**

- tears
- creases
- dog-eared corners
- insects
- abrasions & scratches
- indentations
- emulsion detachment
- fading
- yellowing
- colour change
- silver mirroring
- staining

**Common causes of damage**

- Poor handling
- Poor storage methods
- Inappropriate display methods
- Chemical changes in photograph
- Chemical changes in materials in contact with photograph
- Combination of above

**Handling photographs**

- Handle as little as possible
- Clean hands – gloves are recommended
- Proper support for photographs due to potential for brittleness
- Carry horizontally on a rigid support – even if already mounted
- Look at the condition of the mount or backing board
- Separate or interleave the photographs
- Digitise or make prints and use these for research where you can

**Labelling & repair of photographs**

- Do NOT use biro, ink pen or marker – a soft pencil ‘B’ applied with no pressure
- Do NOT use paper clips – for temporary labelling wrap a piece of paper around the whole photograph
- Do NOT use sticky tape or adhesives (especially those that contain sulphur) to repair a damaged photograph

**Storing photographs**

- Low temperatures with minimal fluctuations
- Moderate relative humidity 30-50% with minimal fluctuations
- Minimal light
- Protection from pollutants, dust and insects

**Improving your storage**

- Regular housekeeping & checks
- Minimise use of chemical cleaning product and insecticides
- Store flat and in layers
- Don’t store boxes of photographs on the floor – ensure good access
- Careful choice of storage boxes (PAT materials)

**General storage guidelines**

- The storage site should be in a central area of the building, buffered from extreme of climatic fluctuations which can occur near external walls, in basements and in attics. Don't store photographs in sheds!
- Storage site should not have any water, drain or steam pipes, particularly at ceiling level. Leaking pipes can cause a lot of damage. Storage systems should be easy to use and accessible. Ease of use and accessibility usually mean that things will get less damaged during handling. Frustration with a difficult system can lead to damage.
- Standard-size photographs, glass negatives and magic lantern slides should be stored vertically. This makes sorting through the collection to find things much easier than if they are stacked one on top of the other. It also avoids the situation where one photograph has to carry the weight of those stacked on top of it.
- Flat storage is preferred for larger photographs because they don't have the rigidity to support their own weight in vertical storage. If they are stored vertically they will tend to bow.
- Each photograph should have its own protective wrapper or enclosure to protect it. Further layers of protection should be provided. Individually wrapped photographs should be boxed.
- Labels should be provided on the outside of storage and housing systems, so that items can be located easily without having to search through and inspect every similar item.
The best materials to use for storing and displaying photographs

There are many materials which provide a very safe and protective storage environment for photographs. There are also materials which should not be used because they can accelerate the deterioration of photographs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>photographic-quality rag and wood pulp papers</td>
<td>poor-quality papers such as newsprint or butchers' paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plastics such as archival-quality polyester and polypropylene</td>
<td>black papers and boards—these often contain sulphur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographic storage paper</td>
<td>coloured papers and coated papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographic, museum or conservation-quality mount board</td>
<td>PVC (polyvinylchloride) a common plastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metal furniture with baked enamel finish</td>
<td>furniture made from uncured wood or recently painted furniture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wrappers, enclosures and mounts—anything which is in direct contact with the photographs—should be made from materials which are chemically inert, that is, they will not cause chemical damage to the photograph. Nor should the wrappers, enclosures and mounts cause physical damage.
- Preferred papers and boards for photographic storage are those made from cotton or linen, or wood-pulp papers which have been treated to remove harmful chemicals. Research shows that papers containing alkaline buffering, which are used widely for storing archives and works of art on paper, should not be in direct contact with photographs, but can be used for outer storage layers – PAT rather than acid-free!
- Plastics used widely for photographic storage are archival-quality polyester films such as Mylar and polypropylene. Tyvek, a spun, bonded polyethylene is also suitable for wrappers for photographs.
- Abrasion is a major problem for photographic emulsions, especially for gelatine. Therefore, the material which is in direct contact with the emulsion must be very smooth and slick, like the surface of the photograph. An already abraded photographic emulsion will abrade Mylar and photographic storage paper.
- Boxes should be made from good-quality materials. If non-archival boxes are to be used they should be lined with a good-quality paper or board.
- Ideally, storage furniture should be metal, with a baked enamel finish. Wood gives out active chemicals, sometimes for many years. Wood polishes and varnishes also contain substances which can damage photographs.

Materials to avoid are:
- poor-quality papers
- sulphur-containing materials.
- plastics such as polyvinyl chloride - PVC

Ideal conditions for the display of photographs

- Light is essential in a display environment, but must be set at levels which will not adversely affect the collection. Original historic photographs and colour prints are sensitive to light. Therefore:
  - the brightness of the light should be less than 50 lux; and
- The UV content of light should be less than 30µW/lm and no greater than 75µW/lm.
- The ideal storage temperature for photographs is quite low and is often thought to be too cold for the comfort of people visiting or working in the museum, gallery or library. Therefore the compromise temperature for the display of photographs has been set at 21ºC.
- Relative humidity is in the moderate range of 30–50%RH, with fluctuations kept to a minimum, as for storage.
- The emphasis should be on providing a buffer zone between the photographs and the extreme or fluctuating conditions. Display cases and frames provide layers of protection from extreme or fluctuating conditions.
- Protect photographs on display from pollutants, dust and insects.
- It is important to use appropriate materials and methods when displaying photographs: to ensure the long-term preservation of the collections (PAT materials).

For further information you can visit reCollections – Caring for Collections across Australia
In particular the chapter on caring for collections of Photographs:

Studio Arts Information (Unit 4 Outcome 3)

Role of Exhibition / Curatorial Rationale

- The exhibition had a role to play in publicising the significance of the collection.
- It was part of the Gallery’s commitment to working with local community heritage groups in assisting them to build their capacity to look after their collections and providing specific professional advice for highly significant and difficult to look after collections.
- It highlights the part Bendigo played in WWI
- It provides a counterpoint to official war photography

Conservation concerns:

Condition reports

- These will be generated by Bendigo Art Gallery as it is the touring Gallery.
- These will be completed at each touring venue at the start and end of the exhibitions duration.
Framing

- The photographs are conservation framed with PH neutral matts and backing board.
- Perspex frames are used for ease with travelling; they are lighter in weight and less fragile.
- The photographs are permanently framed as this was cheaper than using temporary frames. The framer gave support sponsorship and this made framing cheaper.

Conservation of negatives

- The negatives are made form cellulose nitrate which was originally used in the 1880s. This was pre-Safety film and can actually combust at temperatures of over 35º.
- The negatives were said to have survived being in high temperatures by the fact that they were in a closed biscuit tin which created a micro-environment inside.

Travelling

- The photographs and other ephemera have been mounted so that they can travel in their mount.
- Cameras and other objects will travel in purpose built crates.

Indemnification

- Insurance is not high for this exhibition as the photographers are not renowned and Kodak Cameras can be easily replaced. However each item has sentimental value and intrinsic historic significance.

Display

- With such a large number of photographs, the frames are double hung and clustered. The groupings are both chronological and thematic which relates to the subject.
- The framed works were laid out on large sheets of tyvek which is acid free foam prior to being hung. Due to the large number of works they were not sat on foam blocks as would be the case for larger paintings.

Lux Levels

- The centre section of the exhibition contains original works on paper so the lux level is kept at 45 which is the international lux level for sensitive mediums. The photographs, as they are reprinted have been displayed at a slightly higher lux level of 70-80 lux. These are printed from negatives using new materials which do not fade as easily as older photographs.

Handling

- This is mostly done with cotton white gloves or nitrile (powder free latex) gloves.
Height of paintings

- All paintings are hung at ‘eye level’ which means that the centre of the photograph is usually centred at 1500mm. This is typical of contemporary painting and is the house style for the Bendigo Art Gallery. It is different to the 19th century rooms, where paintings are hung much higher, simulating the Salon style hangs of European Galleries and utilising the wire system.

Role of Curator

Some of the roles included:
- sourcing the collection and working with the community groups to conserve and catalogue the works.
- Research and writing of the catalogue essay
- Media liaison and writing press releases
- Installation assistance and advice
- Education and public programs
- Managing the travelling exhibition component

Sponsorship:

- The exhibition was funded through grants and sponsors.
- The Gallery received a RETI (Regional Exhibitions Touring Support) grant, a Department of Veteran Affairs (Federal Government) grant and a Saluting Their Services Commemorations Program grant, all which were used to assist with the costs of framing and mounting.
- Our regular sponsors are acknowledged on the title wall.
- Templeton Studios gave support sponsorship in the way of reduced costs for framing. In return the Gallery acknowledges the company through inclusion of the logo on printed material and the panel wall.
- Exhibition partners included Bendigo RSL Museum and Eaglehawk Heritage Society who jointly own the collection. These organisations did not charge a copyright fee to use the images and in return they get to keep the newly framed works.
Suggested Resources

Online:
Australian War Memorial
www.awm.gov.au

Australians at War

Australians at War Film Archive

Australians on the Western Front 1914–18

The Diggers’ War
http://www.diggertours.com/

First World War – The war to end all wars
http://www.firstworldwar.com/
Gallipoli: The First Day (ABC 3D documentary site)
http://www.abc.net.au/innovation/gallipoli/

The Great War
http://www.greatwar.co.uk/

Imperial War Museum – UK
http://www.iwm.org.uk/

Museum of the Great War – Peronne (France)
http://www.historial.org/

National Archives of Australia

recollections – Caring for Collections across Australia
In particular the chapter on caring for collections of Photographs:

Museums:

Australian War Memorial
Teloar Crescent, Campbell
Canberra ACT 2612
02 6243 4211

Bendigo & District RSL Museum
Pall Mall, Bendigo
VIC 3550
03 5442 4513

Eaglehawk Heritage Society
Eaglehawk Court House
Sailors Gully Rd, Eaglehawk
VIC 3556
03 5446 9528

Shrine of Remembrance
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra
VIC 3001
03 9661 8100
www.shrine.org.au

Books:


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**Additional support material for students**

**Online:**

BBC Schools Online – World War One
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/worldwarone/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/worldwarone/)

History Trail – How to do History
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/htd_history/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/htd_history/)

Learning Curve – the Great War (National Archives UK)

**Books:**


**References – Education Package**


**Australian War Memorial:**

38th Battalion War Diary, Australian War Memorial.

HMAT *Karmala* War Diary, Australian War Memorial.


**Additional Sources:**


Grinton collection (photographs), Bendigo & District RSL Museum and Eaglehawk Heritage Society courtesy of Jean Grinton and Dorothy Hammer.

Interview with Dorothy Hammer (nee Grinton) conducted by Corinne Perkin, June 2008.

Interview with Jean Grinton conducted by Corinne Perkin, June 2008.

Postcards sent to and from Jack and Bert Grinton, 1916–19, Grinton family collection.

**Acknowledgements**

Bendigo Art Gallery would like to thank Museums Australia (Victoria) and the Department of Veterans Affairs for their financial support of the exhibition and tour; Bendigo RSL Military Museum, Eaglehawk Heritage Society and members of the Grinton family for the opportunity to work with this unique collection and the loan of items for the exhibition; the venues involved in the exhibition tour; and the following individuals and organisations for their particular support and assistance in the development of the exhibition and catalogue: Peter Ball, Bendigo RSL Military Museum; BPA Print Group; Jean Dunn; Wayne Eeles, Landscapes Photographics; Jean Grinton; Dorothy Hammer; Aylene Kirkwood, Eaglehawk Heritage Society; The Leckie Gallery; Macintosh Signs; Euan McGillivray, Museums Australia (Victoria); Lynn Twelftree, Lynn Twelftree Art & Design.

Most importantly we thank Jack and Bert Grinton for their extraordinary legacy. It is a privilege to glimpse their lives and to share these images with a wider audience.

Notes written by Corinne Perkin.
Bendigo Art Gallery is proudly owned and operated by the City of Greater Bendigo with additional support provided by Arts Victoria.

Corporate sponsors

Exhibition partners

This exhibition is indemnified by the Victorian Government.