



COLOUR OF WAR THE ANZACS



ROBERT LEWIS

STUDYGUIDE



Synopsis

This is the story of Australia and New Zealand at war as never seen before. For the first time, only original colour footage is used to paint a vividly detailed picture of these closely allied nations, from the build up to World War Two to the end of the Vietnam conflict.

All the colour is real - not colourised - offering a rare glimpse of a time usually seen in black and white.

Newly discovered films, home movies and compelling first-hand accounts allow viewers a very personal connection to the war experience, both on the battlefield and on the home front. In colour, that shared history becomes even more intimate and involving.

Diary and letter extracts tap into the thoughts of ordinary people living through world-shattering events, and reveal with great poignancy how every part of society was touched by war.

Years of international research has unearthed footage of troops in Crete, Italy and North Africa in the 1940s, in the snows of Korea in the 1950s and the jungles of Vietnam in the 1960s. There is film of Eleanor Roosevelt's and Lyndon B. Johnson's visits down under, women working on the land and in factories, and children playing dress-up as soldiers and nurses. Much of the material was shot unofficially by civilians and servicemen, providing an eyewitness account of life in troubled times.

Narrated by Academy Award winning actor Russell Crowe, this powerful and moving three-part series captures the feelings of people caught up in history and the mood of two countries as they take their places on the world stage.

Curriculum Links

Curriculum links for this series include middle and upper secondary levels in Australian and New Zealand History, English, Studies of Society and the Environment and Media Studies. *Colour of War — The Anzacs* has been classified M 15+ with the consumer advice: medium level violence, mature themes.



using this guide

For a study of the Second World War this guide has been structured around Episode One: *Children of the Empire*, Episode Two: *Fighting Back*, and the first ten minutes of Episode Three: *The War That Never Ends*. For a study of the Vietnam War within the broader context of the Cold War, the guide is structured around the last 40 minutes of Episode Three. In both areas the two key questions are:

- What does this series help us to understand about the experience of Australians and New Zealanders in the wars?
- How does the series construct and present these histories within the format of documentary film?

An overview of the Second World War

During the 1930s Germany was expanding its territory. In 1939 it threatened to invade Poland. Britain and France warned that if Germany invaded, they would declare war. Germany, though, did invade Poland on 1 September, and two days later Britain and France declared war.

As Australia and New Zealand were part of the British Empire, the prime ministers of those countries immediately announced that their nations were also at war with Germany. For the next six years Australian and New Zealand land, air and sea forces would be spread across the world, involved on three major war fronts, often simultaneously.

- Look at the summaries of these different campaigns and developments, underlining each place mentioned. Use an atlas to locate them on a blank outline map of the world.

1939: Australia and New Zealand at war

With the coming of war, both Australia and New Zealand had to decide whether to defend their own borders because of their fears that Japan might attempt to expand her power throughout the Pacific, or whether they should commit troops to the far side of the world to help England. Japan had

pledged its neutrality, and England had assured Australia and New Zealand that Japan was not a threat; if Japan were to advance toward Australia the British naval base at Singapore would stand in her way.

Neither Australia nor New Zealand was well-prepared to fight a war. In these early days of the war it was “business as usual” while effective supply force and supply systems were developed. The navies were placed under control of the British; the armies began recruiting, and air force personnel were promised to help Britain’s Royal Air Force.

The War in Europe

In the summer of 1940, German forces quickly invaded much of Europe. By mid-1940 England was the only European nation still fighting against Germany. In the Battle of Britain, Germany’s Luftwaffe (air force) tried to control the skies so it could launch a sea-borne invasion of Britain. When this tactic failed Germany concentrated on bombing British cities, while the British countered by attacking German supply centres.

Australian and New Zealand aircrew volunteers were sent to Britain in large numbers, mostly as bomber and fighter crews. They flew hundreds of dangerous missions, eventually striking at the heart of Germany itself. When Russia and the USA entered the war during

1941, Germany faced overwhelming opposition. On D-Day, 6 June 1944, the Allies launched an invasion of Europe from the west. At the same time Russia pushed towards Germany from the east. There was fierce fighting in Italy, which involved many New Zealand troops. Germany finally surrendered on 8 May 1945.

The war in North Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East

Between 1940 and 1942 Australians and New Zealanders played an important role in North Africa, the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. Naval ships were active in the Mediterranean against the Italian navy from 1940, and supported Australian troops at Tobruk. The ships took supplies to the besieged troops by night, frequently under heavy attack from the German Luftwaffe.

Troops had been sent to the Middle East early in 1940. They were successful in defeating the Italians at Benghazi and the Vichy French forces in Syria. The biggest test came against German troops who were trying to take the strategically important port of Tobruk. Allied troops dug in and were able to hold off repeated and determined attacks. The Germans had contemptuously referred to the defenders as “rats” in their holes — the Australians took on this title with pride and called themselves the “Rats of Tobruk”. Australians were



also a prominent force in the defeat of the Germans at the Battle of El Alamein in 1942.

Australian and New Zealand troops were sent to defend Greece and Crete in 1941. However this was a disastrous campaign and they were forced to retreat after many casualties, with thousands taken prisoner.

The war in Asia and the Pacific

The Pacific War began because Japan was trying to obtain supplies of raw materials, such as rubber and tin, which were vital to its industrial expansion. Japan was also seeking to create an empire in Asia. She launched invasions of Thailand and Malaya and attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. The United States of America was the only country with sufficient naval power to oppose Japan in the Pacific, but the Japanese missed their most vital target during the Pearl Harbour attack: the American aircraft carriers.

The Japanese soon fought their way down the Malayan peninsula towards Singapore, where a supposedly mighty British force was ready to repel them. But Singapore fell in February 1942 and thousands of Allied troops, including over

15,000 Australians, became prisoners of war. The Japanese advance towards Australia was eventually stopped in New Guinea, first by Australian soldiers and then with the help of American forces. The Japanese invasion fleet was defeated in the naval battles of the Coral Sea and Midway; her army suffered its first major defeats at Milne Bay, Buna and Gona early in 1943; throughout the remainder of the war they suffered defeats in New Guinea and Borneo, yet it was not until 15 August 1945 that the tenacious Japanese surrendered, and then only after atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The war on the home front and in Australian waters

At home, both in Australia and New Zealand, men and women were conscripted into industries essential to the war effort. Initially women fulfilled roles such as nurses in the services, but as increasing numbers of men were sent overseas to fight, women were allowed and encouraged to join the air force, army and navy in new support roles. Engineers and labourers were conscripted into the Civil Construction Corps to construct landing strips and to build roads to carry supplies to the northern front at Darwin. Women did

essential work in factories but despite doing the same work most did not receive pay equal to that of their male counterparts. Wives, sisters and mothers, aided by the Women's Land Army, took up the burden on farms when thousands of farmers went overseas. However, the main role for most women continued to be that of homemaker, a job made much harder and more demanding by the blackouts, rationing, shortages and the tragedies of wartime life.

Wartime difficulties generally brought people together, but there were tensions caused by black market operators, wartime restrictions, the presence of the free-spending American forces and strikes on the wharves and in the coal mines. At times of great crisis, such as the bombing of Darwin and the shelling of Sydney and Newcastle by Japanese submarines, some Australians acted selfishly by hoarding goods and ignoring what was best for the community. But most Australians and New Zealanders on the home front did voluntary work, accepted shortages and discomforts, and supported the troops in the struggle for victory.

Responding to the film

The Australian and New Zealand experience of the Second World War is shown in Episodes One and Two and the first ten minutes of Episode Three. After watching these episodes carry out the following activities.

Why did Australians and New Zealanders take part in World War Two?

A key issue in exploring any country's participation in a war is to ask why it became involved in the first place. In the case of Australia and New Zealand this involvement initially meant fighting a war on the opposite side of the globe.

- Why is this program sub-titled *The*





Anzacs? Historically, culturally and emotionally, what does *Anzac* mean to Australians and New Zealanders?

- Discuss why Australia and New Zealand become involved in the 1939 outbreak of war in Europe.
- As an extension of the previous discussion, examine from the program the New Zealand school children's 1939 re-enactment of the coronation of King George VI. What does it suggest about New Zealand's history, heritage and its national values and culture? In the program are there any examples from the 1930s, and from early in the war, of scenes depicting the Australian way of life, that may be compared to the New Zealand situation?
- Discuss whether the program suggests that the values, attitudes and loyalties of Australians and New Zealanders changed during the war.
- Write a short story where the events being narrated take place on Anzac Day, 25 April 1945. The story may be set either in a war zone or on the home front. It may not necessarily be about soldiers. (You may first like to discuss in class the plot and character possibilities.)
- Working in small groups, create a set of war-time posters. These may be either for the purposes of military recruitment, keeping up citizen morale, food parcels for soldiers, propaganda aimed at the enemy, messages calling for volunteers for hospital, factory and farm labour etc. (You will find samples of original posters on the internet and in books about war-time propaganda.)
- You are a newsreel cameraman arriving at a war zone, joining the troops, filming war-time action and returning home to Australia or New Zealand. Write a diary of your experiences, observations, feelings and thoughts over one month. (You may need to research the kind of equipment and other necessities that cameramen required during World War Two.)

The use of colour film

- One of the claims made by the filmmakers is that the use of colour

impacts upon the audience differently from the use of black and white. Discuss what these differences might be. How do you immediately react when you find a film you are about to see is in black and white — and why? (You may want to compare this reaction to your attitudes to the use of black and white in contemporary rock music clips, or in sequences from popular television dramas that show “flash-backs” of the past.) In discussing these issues draw on particular examples from the program, such as the sequences of the Dunbar family in Sydney in 1940, or the gathering for the Rats of Tobruk families. Play these scenes again, with the colour controls reduced to mono, and discuss your reactions to what you see.

- As well as colour film stock, the program also features selected extracts from people's letters and diaries, presented by actors in voice-over on the soundtrack. Discuss the purpose of this, and its effect on you, drawing attention to specific examples to support your view.
- What has the stronger impact in the film — the colour home movie film or the spoken documents? Try this experiment. View the Dunbar family segment (approximately 12 minutes into the first episode) with the sound turned off. Then listen to it with the vision blanked out. Finally, watch and listen at the same time. Discuss what gives this segment its power. Is it the use of colour, the editing (the way the different camera shots are put together to create a scene or a sequence), the subject matter? Is it the poignancy of the story, the power of the real words being spoken? Or a combination of any of these elements?
- After reading the summaries of the different battle fronts presented in this study guide, debate in class whether the narrative of the series is determined solely by the availability of colour footage, or whether the narrative offers an accurate and adequate view of the events presented on-screen and on the soundtrack. (You may wish to view

other documentary films about World War Two which predominantly use black and white film footage; as an example, compare this program's references to the Kokoda Trail to those in other documentary films that refer to the war in New Guinea.)

- Write a letter from home to a relative in a war zone. Imagine that this letter is later used on the soundtrack of a film that is either set at that time (fiction), or a film that presents what it was like to live during that time (documentary). Plan what you think should be seen on-screen while the letter is read on the soundtrack. To do this, it would be appropriate to construct a shot-by-shot storyboard so that the entire scene may be visualised. Remember that to create an impression of a camera shot all you need are rough line illustrations portraying settings, stick figures and objects.

Representing people's war experiences

- Discuss whether the program presents a diversity of people's attitudes and opinions about war. (Select specific examples of people's thoughts, statements, actions and behaviour, from what you see and hear depicted in the program.)
- Do any of the views surprise you — for example, where soldiers speak of hatred, and of killing prisoners?
- Discuss the sequence of the gas experiments in Queensland. Do any of the attitudes of the men surprise you? For example, how do you explain their willingness to volunteer and then remain involved in the experiments? Write a diary kept by a volunteer of his experiences during these experiments.
- The Anzac tradition is mentioned several times in the series. Does the depiction of soldiers in the program reinforce that image, or does it challenge or modify it? Give evidence from the film to support your views.
- Discuss the depiction of women in the program. Do you think the representations are stereotyped or

does the use of colour film and the presentation of “real” people successfully personalise them? Look, for example, at the two contrasting attitudes expressed by women at the end of the war about their hopes and expectations.

- Write a short story about a young woman who works in a military field hospital.
- This program is rare in that it tries to represent both the Australian and New Zealand experience. Discuss whether you think this is successful. Does one predominate over the other, and if so, why? Are you always aware of which nationality is being shown at any one time? By viewing sections of the program with the sound turned down, discuss whether you can tell if the scenes being presented are of Australians or New Zealanders, and whether the “home front” scenes are shot in Australia or New Zealand. Does the program attempt to differentiate the Australian experience from the New Zealand experience, or to accentuate their similarity? Draw attention to examples.

The soundtrack: creating the effect

- There are three different uses of voice-overs in the film: the voices of actors reading the words of real people; historic recordings of people from the time; scripted narration by Russell Crowe. Select some examples of each and discuss their impact and effectiveness.
- There is a variety of music in the film: songs from the era, recorded by their original performers; a specially written background soundtrack score. Choose some sequences then discuss the impact and effectiveness of each.
- What were the most popular recorded songs of the World War Two era? Did the words of any of these tunes actually refer to the war in any way? Put together an illustrated magazine article about the music and the artists (composers, vocalists, band leaders and musicians. (An alternative would be to present this as a set of web pages which

include sound files of some popular songs.)

The Cold War

Responding to the film

The wars in Korea and Vietnam are examined in Episode Three: *The War That Never Ends*. These two wars are considered, historically, to be part of the general and ongoing era known as the Cold War, which extended from the late 1940s to the collapse of Soviet Russia in the 1990s. After watching this episode, carry out the following activities.

Australia and New Zealand participation

- Discuss why Australians and New Zealanders fought in the Korean and Vietnam wars.
- View and write a film review of the 1970 American comedy movie set during the Korean War, *M*A*S*H*. (from which the long-running TV series of the same name was later based), including a discussion as to whether the film gives us an adequate image of what it was like to be there.
- The Cold War was an anxious time in both countries. Look at the sequences in this episode on nuclear weapons testing. Discuss Australia's involvement in this program.
- What does the New Zealand *Handbook for Nuclear Warfare* help you to understand about people's attitudes and values at the time?
- Research and write an informative-style magazine article about the relevance, effectiveness, power and influence of the Peace Movement and the Vietnam Moratorium marches either in Australia or New Zealand during the 1960s and 1970s. You may illustrate this essay with photographs and other illustrations, such as banners and slogans, and, if possible, include interview material based on the memories of those who may have participated or lived through the era.
- Many popular films of the era, such as horror and science fiction stories, used Cold War scenarios: fear of

invasion (from outer space), social paranoia (disguised aliens and traitors in our community), fear of nuclear war and modern technology (mutations and futuristic devastation). In pairs or small groups, write a Cold War short play, set either in Australia or New Zealand, and act it out to the class or present as readers' theatre.

Documenting the Vietnam War on film

- As a class, discuss what you know of the Vietnam War. Look at questions such as: why it began and ended; which nations were involved; why it is that Australia and New Zealand (and other parts of the world such as the United States of America and France) now have Vietnamese communities. Discuss any other news and documentary films you have seen of the Vietnam War (black and white or colour). What general and specific images do you retain in your memory and imagination of these films that give you an impression of the war (for example, rice paddy fields, helicopters and napalm)?
- What kind of war is presented in this episode that is different from the World War Two experience shown in the program? List the key elements and describe the way they are presented. Discuss whether this alters or confirms your previous image of the nature of this war.
- Discuss the soldiers' attitudes towards war and death as quoted in this episode. Do you think they are typical of the attitudes of most Australian and New Zealander soldiers who participated? How could you establish this?
- From the series, discuss your perceptions of the attitude of people at home to the war in Vietnam. Does the program show a change in people's attitudes to the war over time? Write two letters to the editor of a national newspaper; the first letter should be written from a time early in Australia and New Zealand's participation in the Vietnam War, showing your feelings and thoughts about the issue, and the second should be written some years later.

What may have happened in the intervening years to affect the content of the second letter?

- “Good afternoon, Vietnam!” Plan and record a radio broadcast intended for either your country’s troops, or as propaganda aimed at the enemy. (You may want to work in small groups to present this as part of a web page site, featuring messages of support from home to the soldiers, or as a larger radio program, including interviews with personnel and recorded popular music of the era — a viewing of such American movies as *Apocalypse Now* may help you with ideas.)
- View, discuss in class then write a film review of the Australian movie, *The Odd Angry Shot*. Include in your discussion and in the review whether the film offers an insight to the Australian experience of the Vietnam War.

The use of colour film

- Discuss whether the colour film of the Vietnam War has the same impact and effect on audiences as does colour film of the Second World War.
- During the episode there is much emphasis on the naval collision of HMAS *Melbourne* and the American warship *Frank E. Evans* that took place off the Vietnamese coast. Discuss whether this is because the narrative is being dictated by the nature and amount of the colour film available, or whether the event is important enough to justify the amount of screen time given to it.
- Write an article discussing how you would re-present any section of the series as a short propaganda film. (To do this, construct a film storyboard based on camera shots in the series. You may need to research the difference between documentary and propaganda film messages and perhaps view some examples of propaganda film.)

In review

- This episode ends with a voice-over from the First World War talking

about the Anzac tradition. Discuss the meaning this tradition has for us today. (You may wish to look at the way Anzac Day is currently observed in Australia, New Zealand and in places elsewhere such as Gallipoli and France, and compare this with the way Anzac Day has been commemorated in past decades.)

- The filmmakers claim that, “colour brings a fresh look to the topic, highlighting the human side of the story ... you can’t disconnect from the film in the way you can with black and white footage, it transports you back there ... Combined with the colour film, the use of diaries and letters personalises the war experience to create an evocative and intimate viewpoint.” Do you agree? Write a review of this series, addressing this key claim and supporting your views with evidence from the film.
- The issue of conscription — the compulsory drafting of people into the armed forces — has always been hotly debated in Australia whenever the government has attempted to introduce it. Research the history of Australian conscription from World War One onwards, then debate the following question in class: under any circumstances should conscription be introduced in Australia?
- In groups, plan and construct a portrait, extending from World War One to the present, of one family’s ongoing experience during times of war. You could present this as an illustrated biography in the form of a set of large wall posters, or as a magazine or family journal, or as a web site. It may even be presented as a film or video documentary. It may be entirely fictionalised, or you may draw on factual details from the family history of your own relatives and others.

Selected reading list

General

Patsy Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1984.
Michael Andrews, *Defending Australia: The Anzac Spirit*, Watts Publishing,

Alexandria, NSW, 2004.

Jill B. Bruce, *Anzac Day: Australian Forces in War and Peace*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, NSW, 1997.

Roger Dunscombe et al, *Media 2*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 2004.

Hamish Keith, *New Zealand Yesterdays: A Look At Our Recent Past*, Readers Digest Services, Sydney, 1984.

Michael King, *New Zealanders at War*, Heinemann, Auckland, 1981.

Stewart Ross, *Propaganda*, Wayland, Hove, East Sussex, 1993.

World War Two

Garry Disher, *Total War: The Home Front 1939-1945*, OUP, Melbourne, 1983.

Timothy Hall, *Darwin 1942: Australia’s Darkest Hour*, Methuen Australia, Melbourne, 1980.

Nancy Keesing (intro), *The Home Front Family Album: Remembering Australia 1939-1945*, Weldon Publishing, Sydney, 1991.

Michael McKernan, *All In! Australia During the Second World War*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1983.

Joanna Penglase and David Horner, *When the War Came to Australia: Memories of the Second World War*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1992.

Philippa Poole, *Of Love and War: The Letters and Diaries of Captain Adrian Curlewis and His Family 1939-1945*, Lansdowne Press, Sydney, 1982.

The Cold War

Derek Heater, *The Cold War*, Wayland, Hove, Sussex, 1989.

Peter Love and Paul Strangio (eds), *Arguing the Cold War*, Red Rag Publications, Carlton North, 2001.

Stewart Ross, *Causes of the Cold War*, Hodder Wayland, London, 2001.

The Korean War

John Hooker, *Korea the Forgotten War*, Time-Life Books, Surry Hills, NSW, 1989.

Robert O’Neill, *Australia in The Korean War 1950-53*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Vol. 1, 1981, Vol. 2, 1985.

David Rees (ed), *The Korean War: History and Tactics*, Orbis Publishing, London, 1984.

The Vietnam War

Michael Dugan, *Vietnam War*, Macmillan Education Australia, South Yarra, 2000.

Mike Towers, *A Jungle Circus: Memories of Vietnam*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards, 1992.

(Additional note: most of the short stories and novels by American author Tim O'Brien are about the Vietnam War, and are written from authentic personal experience.)

Web sites

Australia's wars from World War One
<https://anzacday.org.au/history>
Australian War Memorial
www.awm.gov.au

Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs has numerous sites, including:

Australians at War - www.australiansatwar.gov.au

Australia's War 1939-45 - www.ww2australia.gov.au

Department of Veterans' Affairs - www.dva.gov.au

Visit Gallipoli - www.anzacsite.gov.au
Cold War resources for Australian students (mainly aimed at Year 12, but could be adapted):

www.achieveonline.com.au/resource/archive/11

Documentary and propaganda films:
<http://203.10.46.30/mre/623/S06-MediaInfluence/Contrasts-PropagandaDocumentaryFilms.html>

Family and Home in Australia in World War Two <http://john.curtin.edu.au/legacyex/families.html>

History Teachers Association of Victoria, with links to many sites:
www.htav.asn.au

Kokoda Trail - past and present:
www.kokodatrail.com.au

Korean War - a summary for junior students: <https://www.htansw.asn.au/member-resouces-junior-history>

Media Studies links for film production, storyboarding :<https://www.tes.com/au/teaching-resources/hub/media-studies/>

New Zealand National War Memorial:
www.nationalwarmemorial.govt.nz

New Zealand Ministry for Culture & Heritage History Group Projects:
<http://www.mch.govt.nz/what-we-do/our-projects>

New Zealanders at War:
<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war-and-society>

Film and TV

Pino Amenta & Catherine Millar (directors), *Sword of Honour* (Australian TV mini-series, 1986, about the Vietnam War).

Geoff Burton, Michael Caulfield, Tim Clarke & David Goldie (directors), *Australians at War* (ABC TV series in eight episodes, 2001; also see web site above and book of the same title by Peter Cochrane, ABC Books, 2001).

Francis Ford Coppola (director), *Apocalypse Now*, 1979 (American film about the Vietnam War).

Tom Jeffrey (director), *The Odd Angry Shot* (Australian feature film, 1979, about the Vietnam War).

New Zealand at War (six-part documentary series, 1995).

Chris Noonan & Phillip Noyce (directors), *Cowra Breakout* (Australian TV mini-series, 1985, about World War Two Italian prisoners of war).

Phillip Noyce (director), *Newsfront* (Australian feature film, 1978, about newsreel cameramen of the 1940s and 1950s).

Peter Weir (director), *Gallipoli* (Australian feature film, 1981, fictionalising the beginnings of the Anzac mythology.)

Colour of War – the Anzacs

A Film Australia National Interest Program in association with TWI, Nine Network Australia, ScreenSound Australia, NZ on Air, TVNZ and the New Zealand Ministry of Defence.

Writers/Directors: Paul Rudd, Ben Ulm

Series Producer: Paul Rudd
Producer: Anita Sheehan
Co-producer: Sally Regan
Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn
Year: 2004
Duration: 3 x 45 minutes

This study guide was produced by ATOM. For more information about ATOM study guides, The Education Shop, The Speakers' Bureau or Screen Hub (the daily online film and television newsletter) visit our web site: www.metromagazine.com.au or email: damned@netspace.net.au

Notice: An educational institution may make copies of all or part of this Study Guide, provided that it only makes and uses copies as reasonably required for its own educational, non-commercial, classroom purposes and does not sell or lend such copies.



For information about Film Australia's programs, contact:

National Film and Sound Archive of Australia
Sales and Distribution
PO Box 397 Pyrmont NSW 2009
T +61 2 8202 0144 | F +61 2 8202 0101
E: sales@nfsa.gov.au | www.nfsa.gov.au

