

National Theatre of Great Britain production

WarHorse

based on a novel by Michael Morpurgo ♦ adapted by Nick Stafford
in association with Handspring Puppet Company



WAR HORSE AUSTRALIA SCHOOLS RESOURCE EDUCATION PACK

Researched and Compiled by Margie Moore OAM with extracts from
the National Theatre of Great Britain's War Horse education pack

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1. INTRODUCTION



*Albert Narracott (Jack Monaghan) rides adult Joey
Photo: Brinkhoff Mögenburg*

Australia is very privileged to have the National Theatre of Great Britain's adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's book, **War Horse** commencing in Melbourne in December 2012. This magnificent drama tells the heart-wrenching story of Joey, the beloved horse of a boy called Albert, who is sold to the cavalry at the outbreak of World War One and shipped to France. Joey is caught up in enemy fire and captured, and fate takes him on an extraordinary odyssey, serving on both Allied and German sides before finding himself alone in no man's land. But Albert cannot forget Joey and, still not old enough to enlist, he embarks on a treacherous mission to find him and bring him home.

At the play's heart are astonishing life-size horse puppets strong enough for men to ride, created by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company. These breathing, galloping, charging horses come alive on stage, their flanks, hides and sinews built of steel, leather and aircraft cables. Actors, working with these puppets, will lead Australian audiences on an emotionally-charged journey through history.

War Horse offers many opportunities for creative learning in schools, by exploring these themes:

- The strong connection Australians have with World War One, both through their own family history and the celebration of our sense of nationhood through the ANZAC's and the Australian Light Horse;
- Australians' passion for horses and their place in our world;
- The design, technology and craftsmanship of the magnificent puppets that are the central characters of the play;
- The adaptation of a favourite children's story by Michael Morpurgo into an award-winning piece of extraordinary theatre;
- The exploration of stories from World War One, including that of 'Sandy', the only horse to be returned to Australia after the war;
- The music and poetry associated with World War One and the National Theatre production of **War Horse**;
- Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders involvement in World War One, particularly in the Light Horse;
- The way communities rally around to support each other in times of war and other trouble.

This resource is built around these themes and should provide you with a range of background materials and ideas for exploring these themes with your students in the classroom. There are several references to websites throughout the document that have more interactive materials you can access.

We know the experience of seeing the production of **War Horse** will be one your students will never forget. It is truly a remarkable, creative journey that engages the heart, the mind and the imagination.

2. THE NATIONAL THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF WAR HORSE

Directors

Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris

Designer/Drawings

Rae Smith

Puppet Design and Fabrication

Basil Jones & Adrian Kohler
for **Handspring Puppet Company**

Lighting Designer

Paule Constable

Director of Movement and Horse Choreography

Toby Sedgwick

Puppetry Directors

Basil Jones & Adrian Kohler

Video Designers

Leo Warner and Mark Grimmer
for **Fifty-Nine Productions Ltd**

Music

Adrian Sutton

Songmaker

John Tams

Sound Designer

Christopher Shutt

Puppetry Consultant

Mervyn Millar

Associate Directors

Alex Sims and Kathryn Ind

Associate Puppetry Directors

Finn Caldwell and Toby Olié

*Reprinted with kind permission from the National Theatre **War Horse** Education Pack*
http://warhorseonstage.com.s3.amazonaws.com/files/London_WarHorse_EduPack_WE.pdf

National Theatre of Great Britain

The National Theatre has three theatres – the Olivier, the Lyttelton, and the Cottesloe – and because of the way work is scheduled, you can see several different productions, from brand new plays to world classics, in the course of a week.

There are free exhibitions, a spectacular and innovative outdoor summer festival, as well as a shop and many places to eat, drink, meet friends or read a book. You can listen to live talks, debates and interviews with leading figures from the arts in our Platform series – or enjoy them as podcasts on our website. And you can go behind the scenes on a Backstage Tour in person or online.

Young people, adults, families and schools across the country get involved in theatre through the NT's learning programmes. We build our own sets, paint our own scenery and make our own props and costumes, all on site. You can even hire a costume for your local theatre group or for a fancy dress party. We share our resources and skills with emerging talent, freelance artists and other theatre companies, to help promote the development of theatre throughout the UK.

We also have plays in London's West End and on Broadway (War Horse and One Man, Two Guvnors), and on tour. Live broadcasts from the NT are seen regularly all over the world as part of National Theatre Live.

Handspring Puppet Company

Handspring Puppet Company was founded in 1981 in South Africa and two of the co-founders, Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones, continue to run the company. They create imaginative shows for children and adults and their puppetry is considered the best in the world. The Handspring Company present performances all around the world.

The company provide an artistic home and professional base for a core group of performers, designers, theatre artists and technicians who collaborate with them on a project basis. Based in South Africa they continue to explore the boundaries of adult puppet theatre within an African context.

An actor struggles to die onstage, but a puppet has to struggle to live. And in a way that's a metaphor for life.
(Handspring Puppet Company)

Adapted from <http://www.handspringpuppet.co.za/>

You can hear Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones talk about how they came up with the ideas for the puppets in **War Horse** in the TED talk http://www.ted.com/talks/handspring_puppet_co_the_genius_puppetry_behind_war_horse.html



Global Creatures is an international entertainment group that develops new and exciting theatrical productions to take to audiences around the world. The animatronics arm, The Creature Technology Company, invents and deploys the latest in animatronic design.

Their hugely successful production *Walking with Dinosaurs - The Arena Spectacular*, based on the award winning BBC TV series, represents a new entertainment genre all on its own. The production is a spectacle of unprecedented size and quality, which captivates young and old alike. The *Walking With Dinosaurs* tour was the number one tour worldwide in 2010.

They are also working in collaboration with DreamWorks Animation on an arena spectacular based on the hugely successful film *How to Train Your Dragon*, which premiered in Melbourne in March 2012.

Global Creatures has announced *King Kong*, which will be produced in co-operation with the estate of "Kong" creator Merian C. Cooper. Directed by Daniel Kramer, and written by Tony® nominee Craig Lucas, *King Kong* will have music by BAFTA winner and Grammy® nominee Marius de Vries, with several other musical collaborators to be announced. *King Kong* will have its World Premiere in Melbourne in early 2013.

In addition to these productions, Global Creatures has announced a partnership with Bazmark (the multi-media company founded and owned by Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin) to produce a stage musical adaptation of the first movie of Baz Luhrmann's ground-breaking Red Curtain Trilogy, *Strictly Ballroom*. Sydney will host the world premiere of this show in 2013.

3. THE STORY OF WAR HORSE

SYNOPSIS

The play begins in an English village with Ted Narracott, a farmer, buying a young horse at auction as part of a drinking bet. The farmer's son Albert and the young horse, who he names Joey, become fast friends. Albert trains Joey to work around the farm, pulling a plough, which is unusual as he is bred as a hunter. World War One is announced and there is a call for men and horses to be sent to the war. Ted sells Joey at an auction to the military as he needs money to keep the farm going. Albert is devastated at the loss.

The horse is bought by Major Nicholls, a local military leader, who promises Albert he will take care of Joey because he realises how important the horse is to the boy. In the training camp Joey meets another stallion, Tophorn, who is the horse of one of the other officers. They initially have a stand off against each other but soon become good friends who always ride together with their officers.

They set off for the French battlefields but sadly, in his first battle engagement, Major Nicholls is killed and Tophorn and Joey are captured by the opposing German army. Luckily they are sent to stay on a local farm where they are looked after by a German soldier, Friedrich, who loves horses, and a young French girl called Emilie. They become very attached to both horses.

Albert hears that Major Nicholls has been killed and decides to enlist in the war in order to find Joey; even though he is only sixteen (he tells the military he is older than he is). He travels to fight in the trenches in France. Around this time, in order to try to save the horses from battle, Friedrich puts them to work pulling an ambulance wagon. Unfortunately another soldier commandeers them to pull a heavy artillery gun, and although Joey is used to working a plough, Tophorn is not and he dies, exhausted. Joey escapes between the trenches into the middle of the German and Allied (English, Australian and French) warfare area, an area called 'no man's land', where he is caught up in barbed wire. A temporary truce is called and one soldier from each of the German and Allied sides comes into no man's land to work together to free him. They toss a coin to decide who will take him back with them, and the Englishman wins.

Joey is taken to the veterinary officer at the local English army base. Miraculously Albert has also been sent to this hospital base as he has been temporarily blinded by poison gas during the fighting in the trenches. The vet at the hospital decides Joey is too badly injured to be made well and decides he must be 'put down'. Luckily Albert whistles and Joey recognises him. They are reunited.



Tophorn and Joey rearing to fight
Photo: Brinkhoff Mögenburg

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

The Horses

Joey, the young horse (colt)
Joey, the older horse (stallion)
Topthorn, the other stallion in the troop

The Family

Ted Narracott, Albert's father who buys Joey as part of a bet
Albert Narracott, the boy who befriends and trains Joey
Rose Narracott, Albert's mother
Arthur Narracott, Ted's brother and Albert's uncle
Billy Narracott, Arthur's son and Albert's cousin

The Villagers

The Song Man and Woman, who lead the villagers in the songs in the play
Chapman Carter, the auctioneer who sells the horses and in the army becomes Sergeant Carter
Major James Nicholls, who takes Joey to war
Thomas Bone, later Trooper
John Grieg, later Trooper

British Army

Sergeant Allan, an army recruiter
Captain Stewart, owner of the horse Topthorn and friend of Major Nicholls
Sergeant-Major Thunder, Albert's training officer
Private David Taylor, who becomes Albert's friend and fighting companion
Sergeant Fine, Albert and David's commanding officer
Taff, a Welsh sentry who sees Joey in 'No man's land' and goes to save him
Callaghan, a British soldier at the army camp
Martin, the army veterinary officer

German Army

Captain Friedrich Müller, a kind soldier who is good with horses and cares for Joey and Topthorn
Colonel Strauss and Dr Schweyk, who insist Joey and Topthorn pull an ambulance
Lance-Corporal Klausen, who insists Joey and Topthorn carry a heavy gun through mud
Manfred, the German soldier who leaves his trench to help Joey in 'no man's land'

French Farmers

Paulette
Emilie, Paulette's daughter



Albert (Jack Monaghan) with Joey the foal
(puppeteers: Ellie Burrow and Jack Parker)



Albert (Jack Monaghan) with Joey the adult
Photos: Brinkhoff Mögenburg

MICHAEL MORPURGO

Michael Morpurgo is a favourite British children's author, and was the UK's Children's Laureate from 2003-05. He is also a grandfather to six children. He has written over 100 books, including stories about animals, picture books, retellings of legends and myths, historical fiction (such as **War Horse**) and fantasy novels. **War Horse** and *Why the Whales Came* have both been made in films.

Michael Morpurgo writes mainly about issues that affect children. He was born in 1943 and started teaching in a small country school in Kent. It was while teaching that he discovered he could tell great stories that children wanted to listen to. This led him to his career as a children's author.

He gets his ideas for his books from the world around him, which includes living in Devon and engaging with farm life and children. He begins his writing process by dreaming and inventing the story line and characters. This can go for quite a while. He calls this his 'dreamtime'. When he starts to write, he writes quickly and usually writes his books in 2-3 months. His favourite authors are Robert Louis Stevenson (*Treasure Island*), Rudyard Kipling (*The Just So Stories*) and Ted Hughes (*The Iron Man*).

Other books written by Michael Morpurgo include: *Kensuke's Kingdom* (which is a thoughtful adventure story set in an island in the Pacific); *Private Peaceful* (a touching account of a young First World War soldier's final day); *The Butterfly Lion*; *Farm Boy*; *Billy the Kid*; *Alone on the Wide*, and *Wide Sea*. Michael has received many awards and prizes for both his books and the work he does for and with children www.farms4citychildren.co.uk.

Adapted from http://michaelmorpurgo.org/about_michael.html

Michael Morpurgo talking about the production of **War Horse** and its journey to the stage.



Michael Morpurgo,
Photo by Graham Barrett

'The journey of **War Horse** from my little village of Iddesleigh in Devon where it all began, to the West End via The National Theatre has been a story in itself, a story of great good fortune. A chance conversation in the local pub nearly 30 years ago with an old soldier who had been to the First World War as a 17 year old 'with 'orses' as he said. Then there was the discovery that over a million horses died in that dreadful war – and that was just on the British side – and that most of them that survived were sold off after the war to butchers in France. The book nearly won the Whitbread Prize but didn't, and then languished, rarely read thereafter for 25 years but kept in print by kind publishers all this time.

In 2005, unbeknown to me, director Tom Morris at the National Theatre was looking for a way to bring Handspring Puppet Company to the theatre. These unique puppeteers from South Africa made life-size puppets who take centre stage in their shows. Out of the blue I heard **War Horse** was being thought of as a possible future production, involving Handspring. So how did Tom Morris ever come across my book? Well, his mother read it by chance, knew he was looking for a story with an animal at its heart, and gave him a copy of **War Horse** to read.

During two years of workshops and preparation the team came together. Marianne Elliott joined Tom Morris to direct, and the show was on. I think we all knew by now that with the design, the puppets, the music, the lighting, the actors, the story, we had the potential to create a unique theatrical experience. I witnessed some of their difficulties. It was a hard road, but everyone seemed utterly determined to make it work. And did they make it work?

Two seasons later, seasons where every ticket was sold, Joey trotted off to the West End. **War Horse** is my wife Clare's favourite story. And she has wonderful taste, in stories, and in men. Well that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

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<http://warhorselondon.nationaltheatre.org.uk/the-show/michael-morpurgo/>

Read more about Morpurgo's attitude to war and the genesis of the **War Horse** story in this article -
<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/showbiz/morpurgo-war-horse-is-a-story-i-had-to-write-6933220.html>

For more information on Michael Morpurgo, go to the National Theatre Education pack – page 10
http://warhorseonstage.com.s3.amazonaws.com/files/London_WarHorse_EduPack_WE.pdf

4. THE AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE IN WORLD WAR ONE:

THE MOUNTED SOLDIERS OF AUSTRALIA

Horses have played a special role in Australia's history. In the first 100 years of European settlement, being able to ride a horse was the only form of transport available. In military terms, being on horseback gave an advantage to police, soldiers and troopers who were described as 'Light Horsemen'.

When war broke out in 1899 between Britain and the Boers of South Africa, Australian troops were sent to assist. Initially they were seen as inexperienced, but soon proved themselves as fine riders and able to match the Boer farmers' unconventional methods of fighting on horseback. They were also used to the rugged countryside and harsh conditions. Australia became a Commonwealth in 1901 and the foundations were soon laid for the Commonwealth Military forces.

THE AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE



www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia

'The Australian Light Horseman combines with a splendid physique a restless activity of mind...on every variety of ground — mountain, plain, desert, swamp or jungle...he has proved himself equal to the best. He has earned the gratitude of the Empire and the admiration of the world'.

(Field Marshall Lord Allenby to General Chauvel)

In 1914 Australia joined the war against Germany again to support Britain and the allied forces. Australia sent sixteen Light Horse regiments to the war largely made up of young country lads, many of whom took their own horses. They saw it as a big adventure.

They had to pass a riding test and a strict medical test to get into the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). They were then issued with their

uniforms - the AIF jacket, cord riding breeches, and leather 'puttee' leggings bound by a spiral strap. They wore the famous Australian slouch hat, often decorated with emu feathers, and a distinctive leather bandolier that carried 90 rounds of ammunition.



Australian soldier in WW1 uniform, from www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/manual-for-dress-equip-and-conduct/manual-for-dress-equip-and-conduct-6.-pictorial-dress-ww1

If a man's horse met army standards, the Commonwealth bought it for about £30 (\$60). Many men were given remounts—army horses bought by Commonwealth purchasing officers from graziers and breeders. These were called 'walers' because they came from NSW and were strong, great-hearted animals that were a mix of thoroughbred and stock horse and had speed, strength and stamina.

Each horse was branded with the Government broad arrow and an army number on its hoof. In camp, the horses were tethered by head and heel ropes between long ropes called picket lines. In front of each horse was placed its saddle and equipment. The men slept close by in bell-shaped tents—eight men to a tent, feet to the centre like the spokes of a wheel.

Each day the Light Horsemen watered, fed and groomed their horses and cleaned the horse lines before breakfast. Then they did their training. Most were already expert horsemen and riflemen. The rest was drill and mastery of the mounted infantry fighting technique. The Light Horsemen were infantrymen who rode their horses into battle. Each regiment lived and fought as a series of four-man 'sections'.

When they went into action, three men would dismount to fight as infantry while the fourth man led the four horses to cover until they were needed for a further advance or quick withdrawal. Everything the Light Horse trooper needed for living and fighting had to be carried by him and his horse. His extra clothing, food and personal possessions were in a canvas haversack carried over the shoulder. Across the other shoulder hung a one-litre water bottle and his rifle/bayonet. He carried his ammunition in a bandolier, a belt across his chest.

The horse was carefully fitted with a special military saddle, designed to carry a remarkable array of equipment with comfort. Across the front of the horse was strapped a rolled greatcoat and waterproof ground sheet. Mess tin, canvas water bucket and nosebag with a day's grain ration, were slung at the back of the saddle.

When fully loaded, walers often carried between 130 and 150 kilos. And, in the years of war to come, they would have to carry these huge loads for long distances, in searing heat, sometimes at the gallop, sometimes without water for 60 and even 70 hours at a stretch.

Adapted from www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia

GALLIPOLI — THE BEGINNING OF ANZAC



Australian soldiers landing at ANZAC Cove

Anzac_Beach_4th_Bn_landing_8am_April_25_1915.jpg

On 1 November, 1914, Australia's First Infantry Division and the first four Light Horse regiments sailed for England in a fleet of transport ships. Special stalls were built for the horses below decks and the Light Horsemen worked very hard to care for their mounts and exercise them in the limited space available. Some walers died on the voyage and all of them suffered terribly in the tropics. Each man spent much of his spare time tending his horse. This helped reduce the death rate and strengthened the relationship between them. The journey was rerouted to Egypt, where the troops continued training.

The first of the Light Horse arrived at Gallipoli in May. Anzac Cove, scene of the first infantry landing (and named for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps based there for several months), was already a bustling little port.

Hundreds of men swam into the cove, ignoring the Turkish shells that burst over them. By August, when a huge attack was launched on the Turks, there were ten regiments of Light Horse at Anzac. The 3rd Brigade—the 8th, 9th and 10th Regiments—was to make a dawn charge across a narrow ridge called The Nek.

Plans went horribly wrong and nine tiers of Turkish trenches packed with riflemen and machine gunners waited for the Australian attack. The first line of the 8th Light Horse charged and was shot to pieces. Most men ran only a few yards before they fell. The second line of the 8th went over the top and they too were cut down. The first line of the 10th Regiment went to their deaths in the same way. The second line waited for the attack to be cancelled. Then, through an error, they too charged. In three quarters of an hour 234 Light Horsemen were dead and 138 wounded in a futile action. They had shown remarkable courage and discipline. Never again would these qualities be wasted so tragically.

Adapted from <http://www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia>



Australian Imperial Force light horsemen, 1914

EGYPT — MAGDHABA AND THE CHARGE OF BEERSHEBA

Only two regiments—the 13th Light Horse and part of the 4th—were sent to the Western Front in Europe. The rest stayed to protect the Suez Canal in Egypt, which was of strategic importance as it linked the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, from invasion by the Turks.

Led by General Chauvel, commander of the Anzac Mounted Division, they fought off the Turks at many major battles, two of the most notable being at Magdhaba and Beersheba. Both towns were strategic as they had wells that held the precious commodity of water in the desert. General Chauvel kept in touch with the battle on horseback, often under heavy artillery fire, while some other senior British officers stayed by telephones, some kilometres from the action.

At Magdhaba, outnumbering the Australians by more than ten to one, the Turks initially pushed them back. But the Light Horsemen made attacks at dawn and charged the Turks in their trenches. As the final charge of fiercely yelling troopers was almost on top of the trenches, the Turks dropped their guns and surrendered. It seemed too late to stop the apparently crazed Australians. The Light Horsemen jumped down into the trenches and shook hands with the startled Turks. They were delighted not to have to kill the enemy they had learned to respect at Gallipoli. They had already proved themselves as formidable infantrymen. The Turks called them “the White Ghurkas” – a reference to their deadly skill with the bayonet.

The Arabs called them “The Kings of the Feathers” as the Light Horse wore splendid emu plumes in their hats which were small squares of emu hide with the long, brown-tipped white feathers still attached. Even when a Regiment did not wear

the plume on parade or in battle, the men kept one in their kit and tucked it in the hatband when they went on leave. It was the proud badge of the Lighthorseman.

After a long period of battles to capture Gaza, a new English Commander-in-Chief arrived - Sir Edmund Allenby. He formed all his mounted units into the Desert Mounted Corps under General Chauvel. The Light Horse respected Allenby. And, for his part, Allenby respected the Light Horse. He had commanded a squadron of Australians in the Boer War. He knew what they were capable of; and they were to play a vital role in his plan to break the Turkish line. Instead of attacking Gaza again, he would strike at the other end of the line, Beersheba. First, he arranged for a British officer to "lose" some faked papers, which made the Turks believe that a new assault on Gaza would be covered by a mock attack on Beersheba. Then he planned a series of secret night marches in which the British infantry prepared to attack Beersheba from the west and south while the Desert Mounted Corps under Chauvel would sweep out to the waterless east and attack from the desert.

Adapted from <http://www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia>

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Watering the horses at Beersheba

From: Auckland War Memorial Museum, Williams Album 213

www.alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog?topic_id=1105601

The attack on Beersheba was launched at dawn on 31 October 1917, and lasted throughout the day. The British infantry captured most of their objectives. But the Australians and New Zealanders had to make dismounted advances across open ground against two strongly defended hill-forts.

By late afternoon, the two strongpoints had fallen, but there were still heavily manned trenches protecting the town. Time had almost run out. Brigadier General Grant of the 4th Light Horse Brigade suggested to Chauvel that two of his regiments, the 4th and 12th, make a mounted charge against these remaining defences. Such a thing had never been heard of - a mounted charge across three kilometres of open ground against entrenched infantry supported by artillery and machine guns. But the sun was almost setting and many of the horses had already been without water for nearly 48 hours. Chauvel agreed.

The two regiments formed up behind a ridge and moved off into a classic, three-line charge formation, going from walk-march, to trot, then canter.

The Turks recognised the advancing horsemen as mounted infantry and the order was given, 'Wait until they dismount, then open fire' (as was their usual approach, with one man holding the four horses and the other three proceeding on foot). Field guns were sighted on the cantering lines, ready to fire. Then suddenly, about two kilometres from the trenches, the Light Horsemen spurred to a gallop with wild yells, drawing their bayonets and waving them in the dying sunlight. Though the Turks opened fire on them they couldn't reload their guns fast enough to hit many of the horsemen and most of their shells burst behind the charging line of horsemen thundering towards them.

'At a mile distant their thousand hooves were stuttering thunder, coming at a rate that frightened a man - they were an awe inspiring sight, galloping through the red haze - knee to knee and horse to horse - the dying sun glinting on bayonet points...'
Trooper Ion Idriess, Australian Light Horse Studies Centre, alh-research.tripod.com/toc.htm

By nightfall, Beersheba was taken by Allenby's army. Of the 800 men who rode in the charge, only 31 had been killed. Mounted infantrymen and their superb walers had carried out one of the most successful cavalry charges in history - against what seemed impossible odds. The fall of Beersheba swung the battle tide against the Turks in Palestine; and changed the history of the Middle East.

After many more battles the Turks saw that further resistance was hopeless and signed an armistice. On 31 October the war in the East was over - 11 days before the armistice on the Western Front.

Adapted from www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia

You can read a firsthand account of one of the Light Horsemen at Beersheba on this 60-minute transcript sixtyminutes.ninemsn.com.au/stories/liambartlett/313356/the-charge

ABORIGINES AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS IN WW1



Private Archie Murphy, a former Police Tracker from Hay, New South Wales, and John Morwick Smith, (seated) of the 6th Light Horse regiment, taken in the Middle East in early 1918. Photo courtesy of Marie Smith. www.awm.gov.au/education/box/03_res_book.pdf

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have contributed to Australia's military forces for many years. Exact numbers are not known, however Aboriginal trackers served in the Boer War and approximately 400 to 500 served in World War One.

Generally, Aborigines have served in ordinary units with the same conditions of service as other members. Many experienced equal treatment for the first time in their lives in the army or other services. However, upon return to civilian life, many also found they were treated with the same prejudice and discrimination as before.

The indigenous Australians who fought in World War One came from a section of society with few rights, low wages, and poor living conditions. Most Aborigines could not vote and none were counted in the census. When war broke out in 1914, many Aborigines who tried to enlist were rejected on the grounds of race; others slipped through the net. By October 1917, when recruits were harder to find and one conscription referendum had already been lost, restrictions were cautiously eased.

During World War One, of the 400-500 men of Aboriginal extraction enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces, 118 or just over 20% of men of Aboriginal origin saw service in the Australian Light Horse. Many Aboriginals had been stockmen and were confident riders and worked well with horses. So many enlisted that nearly one group of reinforcements for the 11th Light Horse Regiment was composed of men of Aboriginal origin, the only time this happened during the war.

Like the rest of Australians who enlisted, these men were from many different professions and differing levels of education. They served with similar results as the larger population. Once in the AIF, there was nothing to separate the men of Aboriginal origin to other soldiers. They served as Australians and did so with pride and distinction.

Adapted from an article by Peter Londey, Military History Section, Australian War Memorial Encyclopaedia, www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous.asp

Australian Light Horse Studies

alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog/1853730/aboriginal-light-horsemen-servicemen/

Citation: *The Australian Light Horse, Aboriginal Light Horsemen, Those who served*

For more information and lesson plans on Aboriginal involvement in World War One, go to the Australian Light Horse Studies Centre

alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog/1852530/lesson-11-aboriginal-light-horsemen-lesson-plan

LIGHTHORSEMEN IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM

The two Light Horse regiments which served in France and Belgium, where **War Horse** is staged, were the 4th and 13th. They were sent to the trenches as infantry reinforcements, as at Gallipoli. They were also sent to reconnoitre enemy positions on the Allied front line. Men of the Light Horse often rode in support of the Australian advance and played a vital role in the Allied offensive. They would charge machine gun posts on dangerous ridges in widely scattered groups. When the enemy gunners opened fire, the Light Horsemen galloped to cover, swung out wide to each flank, then moved on the gun positions from both sides at once. The German gunners usually surrendered.

In the closing stages of the 1918 advance, many roads were impassable and bad visibility prevented aerial reconnaissance. Mounted troops became the "eyes" of our armies. When the armistice was declared on 11 November 1918, Light Horsemen were spearheading the Allied advance.

Adapted from <http://www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia>

5. AUSTRALIA'S HORSES IN WORLD WAR ONE:

THE HORSES STAY BEHIND

Victory had a sour note for the men of the Light Horse. Many had planned to buy their horses from the army. They dreamt of the good times they and their beloved walers could enjoy back home. But word quickly spread 'The horses stay behind'. Because of quarantine regulations, it was impractical to take tens of thousands of army horses back to Australia. Then an order was issued that all walers were to be classified A, B, C and D, according to their condition and age. All C and D horses were to be shot. They were first to have their shoes removed and their manes and tails cut off. Iron and horse hair was saleable. Worse, the horses were to be skinned after being shot and their hides sold as leather. Horrible as these orders seemed, many men thought that this would be better than leaving their horses to be cruelly treated. Some tried to have their walers included in the C and D group. Veterinary returns filed at the Australian War Memorial suggest that approximately two-thirds of the horses were transferred to the British, mainly Indian Army cavalry, to continue their working lives.

Adapted from <http://www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse/the-mounted-soldiers-of-australia>

THE STORY OF SANDY



Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges, KCB, CMG, Commander of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), holding the bridle of his favourite charger, Sandy. The horse is a 15.3 hands high bay gelding with a white star. They are standing in front of the tents of the 1st Australian Division at Mena Camp, Egypt, prior to embarkation to Gallipoli.
<http://mhhv.org.au/?p=830#more-830>

Sandy, a 16-hand chestnut, was the only war horse to return of over 136,000 sent to World War One from Australia. November 2014 will mark the 95th anniversary of his return to Australia, after a tour of duty which included the coast of Gallipoli, Egypt and France.

Sandy was one of three horses assigned to the commander of the Australian 1st Division, Major General Sir William Bridges. The Australian 1st Division was the first ashore at Gallipoli. However, very few of the animals were put ashore, as Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood decided there was not room or requirement on Anzac Cove and sent the horses back to Alexandria. General Bridges died on May 18, 1915 from wounds he received three days' earlier when shot by a sniper in Monash Valley at Anzac Cove.

Sandy, who was presumed to be offshore at the time of Bridge's death, was eventually shipped back to Egypt. According to legend, it was the dying wish of General Bridges that Sandy be returned to Melbourne at war's end. Sandy remained in Egypt until he was transferred to France during March 1916. In October 1917, Senator George Pearce, Minister for Defence, called for Sandy to be returned to Australia for pasture at Duntroon. In May 1918 the horse was sent from Calais to Swaythling in England. After three months of veterinary observation, Sandy was declared free of disease. In September

1918 Sandy boarded the freighter Booral, from Liverpool, arriving in Melbourne in November. Sandy was turned out to graze at the Central Remount Depot at Maribyrnong, a stretch of land in a bend of the Maribyrnong River that was the staging point for horses bound for the wars. Although he was originally intended to go to Duntroon, he was turned out to graze for the next six years at Remount Hill, the home and training ground of the Light Horse Brigade. With age Sandy's eye sight failed, and his growing debility prompted the decision to have him put down as a 'humane action' in May 1923.

Sandy's proud head and neck were mounted and became part of the Australian War Memorial's collection. His carcass was buried somewhere in the paddock, believed to be not far from the remount headquarters.

Adapted from the article by Jason McGregor and filed under the category WWI to 1939, at the Military History and Heritage Victoria website, <http://mhhv.org.au/>

ROMANCE AND REALITY

The men of the Light Horse were dramatic, almost glamorous figures and it is still easy to see their exploits as some splendid adventure. Much of it was adventurous and in the hardest campaigns, lighthorsemen still found time to laugh and play jokes on their mates, hold race meetings, organize concert parties, annoy British military police in Cairo - and generally made the best of their gruelling life. These were the things they liked to talk about after the war.

But almost every man in the Light Horse had endured hardships that are scarcely imaginable to us today. They had lived for weeks, sometimes months at a time with only one litre of water a day. They had survived for long periods on tough army biscuits and tinned bully beef that melted to a greasy mess in the heat of the desert. They'd gone for weeks without being able to wash, their bodies crawling with lice. Many nights, they slept on a blanket soaked with horse sweat. They often risked death, sometimes had to kill men in ugly hand-to-hand combat, and saw lifelong friends die horribly. And after it was all over, many of them saw their beloved horses shot in the terrible execution lines.

If you had been lucky enough to meet a member of the Light Horse they might have shown you snap shots, medals, souvenirs of Egypt - the bric-a-brac of war. They probably would have been happy to tell you about some of their adventures.

Adapted from www.lighthorse.org.au/resources/history-of-the-australian-light-horse, taken from the series **Australians at War**

For Australia, as for many nations, World War One remains the most costly conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of which over 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner. Of the 136,000 horses shipped from Australia to fighting fronts in the war, only one, Sandy, was returned to Australia.

If you can surmise that 50% of the population at the time was male then roughly one in 30 of the total male population went to World War One from Australia and a third of those men took their horses with them.

Adapted from www.awm.gov.au/atwar/ww1.asp

USEFUL REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

The National Theatre

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

War Horse the Production

www.warhorseonstage.com

Australian War Memorial

www.awm.gov.au

Australian Light Horse Association

www.lighthorse.org.au

The Waler Horse Society of Australia

www.walerhorse.com/whsa/

The Australian Army

www.army.gov.au

National Archives of Australia

www.naa.gov.au

Military History and Heritage Victoria

<http://mhhv.org.au/>

6. WAR HORSE LESSON ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been designed to assist you with classroom preparation in relation to seeing the Australian production of the play **War Horse**. We hope that this resource will assist your students to expand their knowledge and skills in relation to the themes and aspects of this unique production and of course to further enhance their experience of the performance. The activities are broadly designed for students in Years 5-12 and we encourage you to consider your students' level when selecting activities to suit their age and stage of development.

The activities included in this resource provide opportunities for students to explore the story line and characters of the play; the history of Australia's involvement in World War One, in particular the Light Horse; and the features of the production of **War Horse**. The activities set out in this guide cover a range of curriculum areas and age groups. You should consider adapting and rephrasing the activities to suit the student age and the curriculum focus and outcomes used in your school.

Some websites are suggested throughout this resource. We recommend you visit the sites and assess the suitability of the content for your particular school environment before teaching the associated activities.

This pack has been developed around two themes: **War Horse – the play and production** and **The Realities of World War One for Australians**. Through the exploration of these two themes, we hope you will be able to explore how the diverse and extraordinary theatrical mediums in the play work together to produce a compelling piece of drama and how they also cover cross-curricular areas of study within your school. There are suggested activities encompassing subject areas of English, Drama, Music, History, Art and Design.

We also encourage you to read and adapt some of the exercises from the National Theatre's **War Horse** education pack, www.warhorseonstage.com.s3.amazonaws.com/files/London_WarHorse_EduPack_WE.pdf

You can book one of our schools pre-performance workshops available prior to Wednesday matinees, followed by a Q&A session with the cast.

1. War Horse – the Play and Production

Understanding the story and characters of **War Horse**

An insight into Michael Morpurgo's novel

The theme of ancestry in the play and production

How music contributes to dramatic themes in the play

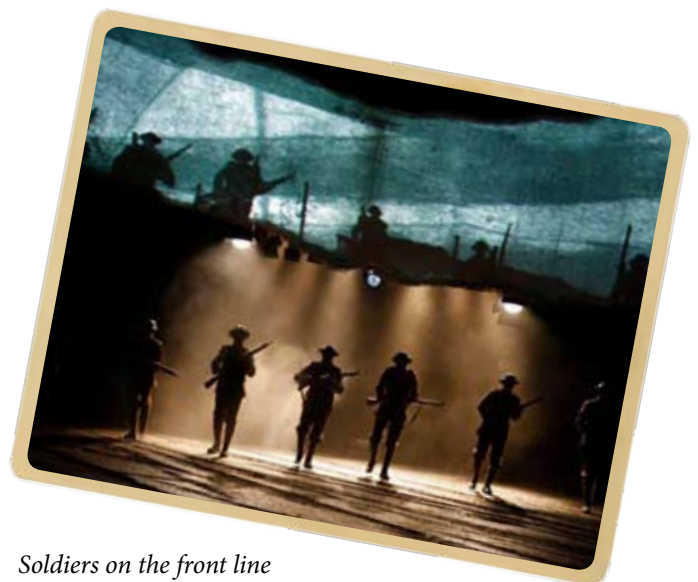
Exploring horse puppetry in the play

2. Being at War – the realities of war for Australians

Letters home and the impact of the war on Australia

Poetry of Australian war horses

Life for Australian soldiers in WW1



*Soldiers on the front line
Photo: Simon Annand 2011*

6.1. WAR HORSE — THE PLAY AND PRODUCTION

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY AND CHARACTERS OF WAR HORSE

The following activities in this section will help familiarise your students with the story and identify the main characters of **War Horse**. It will also involve students in examining the *Mustering and Sequestering Scene* from **War Horse** and discuss how it functions as a dramatic piece of writing.

Suggested Activities:

- Read the synopsis of the play **War Horse** which is based on the book by Michael Morpurgo (refer to page 6 of this guide).
- Discuss with the students the timeline of the story:

Ted Narracott, Albert's father, buys Joey at auction

Albert teaches Joey to work on the farm

Joey is sold to Major Nicholls to take to war and meets Topthorn (the other main horse character in the play)

They ride to battle and Major Nicholls is killed and Joey and Topthorn are captured by the German army

The horses are cared for by Friedrich Müller and Albert enlists to try to find Joey

The horses are put to work pulling heavy artillery guns and Topthorn dies

Joey escapes into 'no man's land' and is rescued by a German and Allied soldier

Joey is taken to a base hospital where he is reunited with Albert.

- As a class, examine the personalities of the main characters in the play: Ted, Albert, Joey, Rose, Major Nicholls, Topthorn, and Friedrich Müller. Brainstorm the characteristics of each and devise a storyboard of how they relate to each other. Consider time, place, circumstances, relationships and how their actions at particular moments reflect their character.
- Read through the following extract from the script of the play by Nick Stafford—the *Mustering and Sequestering Scene*—after allocating roles for these central characters:

Ted Narracott, Albert's father who sells Joey at auction

Albert Narracott, Ted's son and the boy who befriends and trains Joey

Rose Narracott, Albert's mother

Villagers (All)

Chapman Carter, the auctioneer who sells the horses

Captain Stewart, horse recruiter

Major James Nicholls, who buys Joey and takes him to war

Joey

EXTRACT FROM WAR HORSE ACT I, SCENE 11

Village Green

11 August 1914

Mustering/Sequestering Scene

Enter Ted, pulling Joey. (Joey doesn't meet Topthorn in this scene.) Joey flinches and resists.

Ted Come on, Joey. I know, I know, I ain't Albert...c'mon, you bugger...

Joey rears. Unfreeze.

All And the bayonets flash like lightning to

The beating of a military

Beating of a military

Beating of a military drum.

Ted Major Nicholls?

Nicholls Yes.

Ted Edward Narracott, sir.

Nicholls Volunteering him?

Ted I'm doing my bit, sir. I paid a record price fer him.

Nicholls Yes, I remember.

Ted Now he's the finest horse in the parish.

Nicholls I've seen his paces — but it's not you who rides him out is it?

Ted (*shakes head*) That's my boy. I ain't got long, sir. Officer's horse, I'd say.

Nicholls You would, would you?

Sergeant Carter admires Joey — aware, of course, of what Ted has done.

Sergeant Carter No splints, no curbs, good feet and teeth. Sound as a bell, sir.

Nicholls A hundred pounds, then.

Sergeant Carter One hundred.

Ted Thank you, sir.

One hundred pounds is counted into his outstretched hand.

Enter Albert.

Albert Father! Father! You've sold him? You've sold Joey to the army? Joey's my horse!

Ted A hundred pounds.

Enter Rose.

Albert But he's mine — I won the ploughin'!

Rose Albert!

Nicholls Steady on, young man.

Albert (*to Rose*) He's sold him to the army —

Ted A hundred pounds, Rose —

Albert You promised. You promised!

Rose Ted, what are you doing ...?

Albert Dad, please — I promise I'll never defy you again and he'll never kick you ever again —

Ted No, no, he's never kicked me —

Albert — yes he did ...

Ted Shut up, boy.

Albert That means he's not right for the army, don't it? He's got a nasty streak! He kicked me!

He begins to take Joey away.

Nicholls Young man. Come here. That's an order: come!

Freeze all except Nicholls, Albert and Joey (and then Stewart).

Albert Sir ...

Nicholls Now, then. Albert, is it?

Albert (*nods*) Sir ...

Nicholls Has Joey kicked you? Has he?

Albert shakes his head.

And has he a nasty streak?

Albert (*shakes head*) He is spirited, but that's the best thing about him.

Nicholls I thought so.

Albert If Joey's goin' I'm goin' too. I'm volunteerin'.

Nicholls How old are you?

Albert Nineteen.

Nicholls Is that the truth?

Albert (*beat; the head shake again*) Sixteen.

Nicholls Joey's quite a horse, isn't he? I've seen you riding him, and I've sketched him. I'll show you one day. We could do with men like you, Albert, you're spirited the way he is, but you're not old enough — so

your place is at home with your father, and Joey's is with the army. You have my word as an officer that he'll be well cared-for. He'll be my mount, so I'll care for him myself. That's a promise.

Albert But how long will he be gone?

Nicholls A few months at most. We have to nip this threat in the bud, Albert. The Germans are already in France, and if we don't stop them now, who knows where they'll go next. You're helping us to bring this war to a swift end.

Albert And then I can buy 'im back, sir? After it's over?

A moment as Nicholls struggles with his answer. Stewart (having dismounted Topthorn, perhaps when Billy joined him) answers where Nicholls cannot:

Stewart You can buy him back.

Nicholls Captain Stewart!

Stewart Sir.

A moment.

Nicholls (to Albert) Say goodbye to him now.

Albert Now, sir? Right now?

Nicholls Say goodbye, Albert.

Albert Joey. Joey boy ... I promised I'd never let anything bad happen to you ... but you have to go away with that man ... he's called Major Nicholls ... he's promised we'll be together again. So you do yourself proud in France, Joey. You drive those Germans out, then you come home, it's just a few months, you'll be back by Christmas, you will.

- Unpack this scene for your students, and explain how the stage directions influence the way the dialogue is spoken and how the action unfolds. Discuss techniques used in the language that help create tension and convey drama through the use of dialogue, vocabulary and punctuation. How does the use of spelling convey the background and accents of the villagers Ted and Albert compared with those of the British Army officers?
- Discuss what is happening in the scene and where it sits in the context of the play's development. Examine your list of characteristics for Albert and his father Ted. How does this scene reveal the differences between the two characters? Discuss how they are portrayed through their dialogue and in their interaction with Joey and his behavioural responses to them. Why does Albert try to lie about his age and the personality of Joey?
- What do we know as an audience, with our knowledge of the war, which the characters in the play do not? Discuss the use of dramatic irony and how this makes the scene's conclusion all the more poignant.
- Why does Captain Nicholls struggle to respond to Albert's question about buying Joey back at the end of the war? Why does he rebuke Captain Stewart who confirms that Albert will be able to buy him back? Refer to section one of this pack and discuss what happened to horses from Australia at the end of the war.



Joey and Albert (Jack Holden)

Photo: Simon Annand 2011

AN INSIGHT INTO MICHAEL MORPURGO'S NOVEL

Michael Morpurgo was inspired to write **War Horse** after studying a painting by F.W. Reed from 1917, of British cavalry horses in World War One charging up a hill towards the German positions, towards the wire. Some were already entangled in it and he was shocked by the horror of the scene. At the same time he met an old man in his local pub who had been in World War One who described to Michael first hand his experiences there with his beloved horse.

He started investigating the place of horses in World War One and found that over a million horses had been sent from Great Britain, and in total over 8 million horses died on all sides during the course of the war. He decided to write his story from the horse's perspective as they did not take sides and were the innocent victims of the war.

As part of the following activities, students will:

- Explore the stimuli Michael Morpurgo used for writing **War Horse** and how these stimuli are reflected in the play;
- Examine the way animal characters in a play can tell a story and be given human characteristics (anthropomorphism);
- Explore how animals are characterized in a variety of literary contexts;
- Discuss the story of how horses were cared for in World War One;
- Investigate some of their own family stories.

Suggested Activities:

- Read the following account in the *Evening Standard* newspaper of how Michael Morpurgo came up with the idea of writing **War Horse**:
<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/showbiz/morpurgo-war-horse-is-a-story-i-had-to-write-6933220.html>
Discuss with the students the following:
 - a. How Michael Morpurgo's family was directly affected by the war
 - b. How books, poems, plays and music affected his attitude to war?
 - c. Why hearing the story told by the old man in the pub and seeing the painting inspired him to write about the war?
 - d. How he investigated what happened in the war and especially what happened to the horses?
 - e. Why he decided to tell the story of **War Horse** from the horses' perspective?
- Ask your students to remember a pet or animal they have known well and to write down the special qualities that animal has/had and why the animal meant something to them. Describe a situation where their animal brought them comfort at a time when they were upset, unhappy or afraid.
- Divide your students into pairs and ask them to interview each other about their pet – build a profile as they go about its name, its colouring, its age, how they were connected, what its especially endearing characteristics were. Students are to bring in a photo if they have one.
- Discuss with the students how animals are often given human characteristics – this is called *Anthropomorphism*. Stories where animals are attributed human characteristics are found in fables (Aesop's Fables), fairy tales (Brothers Grimm), myths, legends, modern stories ('Alice in Wonderland', 'Lord of the Rings') and film and television (Walt Disney and other animated movies).
- Students are to choose a story from one of these traditions and investigate how the central animal in the story is given human characteristics. Encourage the students to retell a well-known story from an animal's perspective.
- Build up a class database of the characteristics different animals are given in the stories. Compare commonalities and differences.

- Discuss with your students how the horses Joey and Topthorn are given human characteristics in the play/ story of **War Horse**, keeping in mind what Michael Morpurgo says about using the horses to tell the story.

‘...in the writing of (**War Horse**) I knew I had to tell the story of the soldiers of both sides at the front, and of the families, and people in France and Belgium, whose villages and farms were turned into battlefields. My horse would witness it all, the pity and the futility and the huge senselessness, and the hope, too. I would see it and feel it through his eyes. So it is Joey, a farm horse from Iddesleigh in Devon, who tells the story, whose fortunes we follow as he struggles to survive in the mud and nightmarish wasteland of war. I was convinced I’d found the best way of telling this story’



*Topthorn and Joey ride into battle
Photo: Brinkhoff Mögenburg*

THE THEME OF ANCESTRY IN THE PLAY AND PRODUCTION

Ancestry is a strong theme that runs through the story of **War Horse** and was a major influence in the play's production. Tom Morris, one of the directors of the production, had a grandfather who served in World War One and looked after horses as part of the British Army.

Read the instructions that Tom found in his grandfather's letters, offering advice and guidance as to how to care for horses during wartime.

Hints on horses

From Matthew Beaumont Parrington, estate manager and farmer, to his son who was going to war.

Parrington was co-director Tom Morris' great-grandfather.

Ashprington, Totnes, Devon

September 29, 1914

...Now for hints on horses although I do hope you won't have to go after all. The war must change in its nature entirely before long. It can't possibly last as it is and where it is...

When campaigning, there are lots of little things you can do with horses which may save you a lot of trouble and a lot of danger. First about food: you will have that all in your instructions I suppose, but for an ordinary horse doing ordinary work, 15lbs good oats and about 10lbs – 12lbs of clean hay or other bulky food per day. Also when you get a chance give a few beetroot or other roots cut up in their corn. Carrots are the best. A horse should be fed three times a day but you must feed when you can, water as often as possible but never just before fast work. When you off saddle at night let them drink as much as they like before food when they come in tired.

Never sit in the saddle when you are not wanted there, always dismount. And if you come to a very stiff climb always get off and lead your horse if you can or if you may. You will be surprised what these little considerations do for a horse. And you must remember that mounted troops are only useful so long as their horses are fit and well.

After a long journey, never take off the saddle until his back has cooled (this applies to collars and harness too) down. Slacken the girth and lift the saddle a little and put it back again until the back is cool. Then unsaddle and put on cloth. Then a very good plan is to go round in the evening when horses are picketed and feel their ears. If they are cold and damp they must be dried. Rub till they are dry with your hands if you have no cloth. Horses which have been a little overdone will often go wrong in the night if care is not taken in this way.

Then lumps and bumps. Never mind if it's a bruise or a sprain, bathe it immediately you stop work for the day with a sponge and fresh supplies of hot water till the place feels quite cooked through, then put a bandage (not tight) round it to keep away the cold. If there is no hot water, get a linen bandage or several and wrap them loosely round the places after thoroughly wetting them in cold water, and mind they keep wet all night. In the morning if he must work or not, put the wet bandages on before starting and leave them on all day, but of course they must be tight enough to keep from slipping.

If you can, always take hoods with you for putting on the horses at night after their heads and ears have been well dried. No one knows the great benefit this is. Never put a damp rug on a horse. If he is very hot when he has finished work and a cold wind blowing, put a thick pad of hay or straw or dry litter on his loins, then throw a rug loosely over it. This will enable a horse to dry without getting cold, also without wetting his cloth through with steam. Horses out of condition, especially young ones, you will have a lot of trouble with in this way as, after hard work, they keep breaking out into fresh sweats and will soon start shivering, when inflammation may set in at any moment. A third of a pint of whisky with twice or three times the quantity of water poured down his throat will often do wonders for a tired working horse and bring him to his feed, and it can never do any harm.

*Reprinted with kind permission from the National Theatre's **War Horse** Education pack, page 37.*

Suggested Activities:

- Ask your students to think about the influence of their grandparents. What are some of the stories or lessons they have learned in life that they shared? Ask them to bring in any letters they may have received from their own grandparents to show the class.

- Encourage your students to think about their own lives and the things that matter to them most. Ask them to write a letter to their future imagined grandson/daughter about the challenges they face today. What advice would they offer them to help them navigate their way through life?
- Discuss stories and advice handed down through generations of families. Why might these be particularly powerful stimuli for writers/ theatre makers?
- Speak with family members about some of their own family stories or legends. This could inspire some creative writing or be used to create a display: of family recipes, traditions, myths, photographs, for example.
- Ask students to bring in an object linked to one of the family stories/traditions that they have researched —medals, jewellery, traditional clothing, farm equipment, books etc.—or an object, artwork or text that could inspire them in the way Morpurgo was inspired by the painting.
- Read the following extract from the script of **War Horse** out loud. Discuss the significance of Billy's grandfather's knife and the responsibility that this means for Billy to carry it into battle with him.

Billy Father, I'll work hard. I don't want to go to France.

Arthur You'll be all right. I'm too old, so this time I'll stay for the farm. I've summit for you.

He takes out a knife.

Your grandfather's knife. He carried it in Afghanistan in 1878, and then it uz mine, in South Africa. We both served to safeguard the Empire and we both survived, and now it's your turn, the third Narracott to serve. You look after this and it'll look after you, and if you ever have cause to use it, me and your grandfather will be guiding your hand. Well, goodbye.

Billy didn't want to go to war but the pressure from his father to enlist in order to continue the Narracott's patriotic support was too great. How was this war different to the 1878 Afghan war and the Boer war that Arthur fought in? What happened to those that didn't enlist? How were they treated by society and was this fair? Consider the effects the sudden departure of the men in these communities had and the changes this meant for the town people who remained behind.

In the play Albert pretends he is older in order to follow Joey into battle. This was not uncommon and many boys as young as 14 signed up. Talk with your students about conscription and the concept of boy soldiers. Research what is happening in other countries where children are forced to fight for despot leaders.

- Research Australia's history in regards to conscription or mandatory military service, known as National Service. Set up a debate with your class with teams for the affirmative and negative to argue the case for the use of bringing in compulsory National Service again for young people aged 14 - 18.
www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs164.aspx

HOW MUSIC CONTRIBUTES TO DRAMATIC THEMES IN THE PLAY

In **War Horse**, running alongside the story of a boy and his beloved horse is a theme of a village going to war and the impact this has on the community. One of the ways the production conveys this sense of community is through folk song.

Indeed one of the central characters in the play is the Song Man/Woman, who represents the living spirit of the village.

As part of these activities the students will:

- Explore how this sense of community is created specifically through the songs sung as part of the world war experience;
- Listen to and describe how the songs written for the play are orchestrated;
- Discuss the impact of this orchestration and the style the songs are written in;
- Sing the song 'The year turns round again';
- Examine the scene from the script where this song is sung and discuss its function;
- Orchestrate a folk song of their choosing.



Joey (puppeteer: David Grewcock) meets Goose
Photo: Brinkhoff Mögenburg

Suggested Activities:

- Discuss and list the characteristics of the Devon village community that Albert's family belonged to. What are the unifying features of this community? How did they support each other and create a sense of belonging in both peace and wartime?

Composer Adrian Sutton and songwriter John Tams have written the music especially for **War Horse**. The Song Man/Woman plays a specific role in the play. S/he is like a Greek chorus adding commentary, context and insight at certain moments within the play. The Song Man/Woman sings the following song 'The year turns round again' at the beginning of the play in the scene where Albert is trying to teach Joey to plough a field:

And I'll wager a hat full of guineas
Against all of the songs you can sing
That someday you'll love and the next day you'll lose
And winter will turn into spring
But there will come a time of great plenty
A time of good harvest and sun,
Till then put your trust in tomorrow, my friend
For yesterday's over and done —
Ploughed, sown, reaped and mown

- Listen to this song on the composer Adrian Sutton's website www.adriansutton.com/wp/?page_id=82
- Discuss how the music is used to give a sense of time moving on whilst evoking strong emotions. Discuss how the composer does this (He uses the farming image of the barleycorn being ploughed, sown, reaped and mown and how every year this happens again. This image is an analogy for the men being sent to war and that life does go on even when some are lost and mown down). The music is melancholy and has a sense of foreboding. How does the repetition of the melody in different ways contribute to the meaning of the song?
- Listen carefully to the song again and list the instrumentation the composer uses – wind instruments and harmonium¹ accompany the vocalist; this leads into lyrical French horn, trumpet and clarinet solos accompanied by strings and harmonium; the vocalist returns accompanied by strings in a chorale-like setting that gives a feeling of celebration, finishing with the plaintive French horn melody as life turns round again.
- Discuss with the students how this instrumentation further helps to tell the story and create a mood and sense of melancholy. Why has the composer chosen to use the harmonium in this song and what effect has it on the listener?
- Read the extract from Act 1, Scene 5, the 'Growing Up Scene' from the script in which 'The year turns round again' is sung by the Song Man/Woman. Discuss how the song helps to convey drama through the music, and to highlight the continuous movement of time. Examine ways in which the song acoustically describes the journey from colt to thoroughbred, as Baby Joey transforms into magnificent Adult Joey before our eyes. Pay particular attention to the many stage directions in this scene.

EXTRACT FROM WAR HORSE ACT I, SCENE 5, 'GROWING UP SCENE'

Enter Song Man/Woman.

Song: "Snowfalls". (Dialogue and song take place simultaneously.)

Albert runs a short distance and turns to face Joey. He calls him with the whistle.

He whistles again. Joey won't approach because the boy is facing him.

Song Man/Woman And I'll wager a hat full of guineas
Against all of the songs you can sing —

Albert crouches down facing away from Joey and whistles again. This time he comes.

That some day you'll love and the next day you'll lose

And winter will turn into spring —

Joey and Albert exchange a nose blow.

Albert Clever boy, Joey lad. Who's a smart boy?

Joey springs away.

Winter: February 1913. Snow. Albert learns to groom Joey. Joey is stronger and more coordinated.

Song Woman and Song Man And the snow falls, the wind calls
And the year turns round again —
And like Barleycorn who rose from the grave —
A new year will rise up again.

Joey has run some distance. He waits for Albert, who catches up and celebrates their togetherness.

¹A harmonium is a free-standing keyboard instrument similar to a reed organ. Sound is produced by air being blown through sets of free reeds, resulting in a sound similar to that of an accordion. The air is usually supplied by bellows operated by the foot, hand, or knees.

Albert You're a beautiful boy, Joey. I think the world of you.

Albert somersaults into summer: June 1913.

Song Woman and Song Man But there will come a time of great plenty
A time of good harvest and sun
Till then put your trust in tomorrow, my friend
For yesterday's over and done —
Ploughed, sown, reaped and mown
And the year turns round again —

Albert lies down with his hat over his face. Joey goes to him and nudges it off with his nose.

Albert Get off. You silly donkey.

Song Woman and Song Man And like Barleycorn who rose from the grave —
A new year will rise up again.

Rain. Albert puts a sugar cube in one hand and holds both arms out with clenched fists.

Albert All right then, you think you know everything? There's no way you'll know which hand it's in.
Joey finds the sugar cube.

Eh, you got me! Good boy. Good boy.

Joey's enthusiasm builds into a rear. Albert is delighted. He can't believe the playfulness and athleticism of his horse.

Hello? What's that, then? Do that again! Whey up, boy!

Albert tries to train Joey to rear up again by jumping himself. He puts all his horse whispering skill into the effort.

Joey does nothing in response. He is entirely still. Then he runs with an explosion of energy.

Albert's idea: "I'll watch him like a hawk — and the next time he rears I'll give him the signal at the same time so he'll learn to associate the signal with the rear".

Joey rears again and Albert catches him with the signal.

And whey up, boy! Yes! Yes!

Joey picks up on Albert's excitement and goes capering into the field.

Albert chases him, desperate to settle him and try it for real. Has the lesson truly gone in?

Albert gets Joey to settle. He gives him the cue. Joey responds with a rear.

It's worked! Albert is a horse trainer! The best moment of his life!

Albert rewards Joey with a lovely nuzzle so Joey will never forget this. One more, just to cement it, so Joey will be able to rear on cue whenever Albert wants.

Albert gives the cue —

And whey up, boy!

— and at the top of his rearing up, Baby Joey makes way for grown Joey, so it is grown Joey whose front hooves hit the ground — and 2 years have passed. It is July 1914.

Song Woman and Song Man

Phoebe arise

A gleam in her eyes

And the year turns round again —
And like Barleycorn who rose from the grave —
A new year will rise up again.

Albert That's it. Come on, Joe. You ready for a ride? Come on, Joe. Come on, boy.
Good boy, Joey. Good boy.

Joey takes Albert on his back.

Exit Joey and Albert. Walking, into a trot, into a glimpse of a gallop.

- Listen to the excerpt from the score of the play 'First Gallop' at www.adriansutton.com/wp/?page_id=82 and compare the lyrical folksong with this rhythmically charged motivic excerpt which grows in dynamics as it becomes more heavily orchestrated. Discuss the composer's intention to create the sense of a galloping horse. How does the rhythm contribute to the evocation of thundering hooves? The excerpt ends with another plaintive French horn melody dying away – what do you think this might symbolize? Neither Albert nor Joey is aware at this point how the calling of the army's bugle will shatter their free country idyll. Is the sound of the horn an ominous foreboding? Discuss how the composer's choice of instrumentation helps develop and amplify the drama unfolding on stage.
- Compare 'First Gallop' to the final excerpt 'Charge' from www.adriansutton.com/wp/?page_id=82. Both pieces of music convey movement and emotion. How do the rhythm, melody and instrumentation convey the horses' and soldiers' fear and confusion as they charge into battle? Do you think this battle ends in a positive way? How does the music help develop the story?
- Using percussion instruments and a select group of melodic instruments, improvise around the idea of a horse galloping, using the techniques that Adrian Sutton employed to such dramatic effect. Use a simple rhythmic motif, adding layers and dynamics to emphasize the horse and rider's movement. Use these musical ideas to convey a horse galloping freely in a field of sunshine as well as a horse galloping away from danger amidst gunfire in a battle. How will your music describe these two different situations?
- Ask your students to find a well-known Australian folksong that tells a story and arrange it for the instrumentation you have in class. This could be for orchestral instruments or melodic and non-melodic percussion. Consider the following in your arrangement:
 - Is the melody more lyrical or more rhythmic? How will this affect your arrangement?
 - Does the storyline lend itself to a single instrumental solo or a denser more heavily orchestrated accompaniment?
 - Should the accompaniment change to follow the story e.g. build as the activity becomes livelier and faster? Or die away when something sad or melancholy is being described.
 - How can you create contrast and tension and release in your arrangement?
- Encourage your students to add some dialogue or improvise a scene that incorporates the arranged song as part of the narrative. How does this add to the dramatic function of the song?

EXPLORING HORSE PUPPETRY IN THE PLAY

'An actor struggles to die onstage, but a puppet has to struggle to live.
And in a way that's a metaphor for life'.

(Handspring Puppet Company)

In this set of activities the students will explore the use of horse puppetry in a variety of contexts. As part of these activities the students will:

- Learn more about the inspiration behind horse puppetry in **War Horse**
- Examine the way you can bring life to an inanimate object;
- Explore using simple puppetry techniques to convey emotion and tell a story

The use of puppetry in **War Horse** is astounding and what makes this production so unique. Handspring Puppet Company have taken some of the principles of Bunraku as inspiration for their puppetry in the play. Bunraku is an ancient form of Japanese puppetry, founded in Osaka in 1684. It requires three puppeteers to bring each puppet to life and they appear openly, in full view of the audience.

Three puppeteers also manipulate Joey, the main protagonist in the play. The audience knows the puppeteers are there but quickly become absorbed in the illusion of a horse to the point where Joey becomes real for them. In this way, the audience plays an active role in the performance, as their belief in the life and journey of Joey is critical to the success of the production's intentions and what makes their experience of **War Horse** ultimately so moving and memorable.

'Because so much of the story is reliant on believing and caring about the horses a huge amount of rehearsal time was devoted to researching the behaviour of the real-life animals and working out how best we might translate that into our puppet work. Tom Morris was particularly adamant that we avoid any traces of sentimentality or anthropomorphism ('humanising' or reading traits into animal behaviour) when dealing with the horses: we were going to portray them as if they were absolutely real. That's why, at times during the show, you might see the horses whinnying or making noise at seemingly dramatically inappropriate or sensitive moments; like real horses, our puppets give the sense that they are pursuing their own agenda rather than tuning too unnaturally into what is going on in the human world. That said, we were still keen to make sure that our horses had their own distinct character, and much time was spent with the Joey and Tophorn puppeteers drawing up lists of characteristics and tendencies that they felt were manifested in their respecting horses. We were all astonished to discover quite how much of a puppet's authenticity is dependent not on the puppeteer inside but on how the other actors in the space behave around the puppet'.

Polly Findlay, staff director on the original 2007 production of **War Horse**

We were all astonished to discover quite how much of a puppet's authenticity is dependent not on the puppeteer inside but on how the other actors in the space behave around the puppet'.

Following is a list that was drawn up to show the actors how to help out with the believability of the horse puppets:

PUPPET RULES...

1. Horses don't like it if you look them in the eye. Either avoid doing it, or expect a definite reaction away from you if you do!
2. Remember to relate to the whole body of the horse – not just the chest and the head.
3. If you're in direct contact with a horse puppet, you automatically become to some degree responsible for manipulating it. You therefore need to keep random movements with the puppet to a minimum. Everything reads when you're relating to a puppet – keep in mind a clear intention.
4. Keep in mind that the huge mass/immobility of a horse will affect most of the direct contact you have with the puppet. Grooming, for example, will end up being quite a vigorous action – there's a real exchange of weight as the horse leans into the brush. It's up to you to puppeteer the horse's weight in a situation like this – use the cane, reverse energy etc. Keep in conversation with the puppeteer to make sure you both know who's meant to be bearing what weight and when.



Albert (Jack Monaghan) with Joey
Photo: Brinkhoff Mögenburg

5. If the puppeteer's intention as the horse is to be giving you problems – not wanting you to shoe or clean them – it'll more often than not be up to you to puppeteer the more minute specifics of how that'll work, eg the difficulty of raising a hoof or whatever it is that you're doing.

6. If you're giving a horse a treat, remember to manipulate the force of the head down into your palm.

7. If you're manipulating the neck be careful not to make it bend back unnaturally: the puppet is physically capable of things that a real horse wouldn't be...

8. If you're directly holding the puppet (particularly the horses' heads around the mouth area) make sure you hold as much of it as possible – take a big handful! – to stop it from breaking.

9. If you're playing an intention to get the horse to do something, it's helpful to keep making noise – talking, cajoling etc – as puppeteers often can't see you to read exactly what it is that you're trying to do physically.

10. If you're playing a lack of confidence with the horse, make sure you give it a wide berth as you go round the back of it. If you're playing confidence, you can stay in close but keep patting/touching round the back of it till you come out of the horse's blind spot and back into safety.

11. Don't be tempted to balance the picture by matching the position of the head puppeteer – it looks much better to keep playing with different distances away from the horse.

12. A horse – particularly an untrained one – will lean into you if you lean into him. He will lean with all his weight and love it!

13. When urging a horse or communicating, small taps or tugs are better than an all-out tug of war. A light tap or a tickle on the ribs is more effective in making a horse move away than steady pressure. Take a lesson from flies.

*Reprinted with kind permission from the National Theatre's **War Horse** resource pack, warhorseonstage.com, page 17-18*

Suggested Activities:

- Ask your students to research Bunraku Puppetry and list the historical aspects and specific characteristics of this ancient artform. In this production of **War Horse**, Joey and Tophorn's puppeteers are situated at the head, at the heart and at the hind of each puppet horse. Why is this significant do you think? The horses are life sized and ridden by actors in the play. Ask your students to think about the factors they consider the most important in the skill of bringing a puppet to life.
- Breath is an integral factor in making each puppet live and lies at the foundation of Handspring's philosophy and art. Discuss with your students how you might go about giving life to an inanimate object. What other characteristics or behaviour might puppeteers use to create such life like horses on stage?
- Refer to the TED website video on how Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones (from Handspring Puppet Company) came up with the ideas for the puppets in **War Horse**
www.ted.com/talks/handspring_puppet_co_the_genius_puppetry_behind_war_horse.html
- Research and watch YouTube videos to examine the movements and sounds horses make when walking, trotting, cantering, breathing, neighing, eating, etc. Observe some of the behavioural and emotional indicators of a horse and how these are exhibited. How do we know if a horse is nervous, fearful, threatened, playful etc?
- In pairs of two, improvise a short scene with one student playing the role of a horse puppet and the other as the puppeteer or horse handler. Give the puppeteer a specific goal they need to accomplish during the course of the scene (for example: settling a nervous horse, leading the horse over a patch of ice, cajoling a horse to accept a new rider, feeding a horse etc). Encourage them to adhere to the puppet rules in order

to achieve their outcome. This is an exercise the creative team in London applied in the early stages of working with puppets. 'What we discovered creating a realistic characterization of an animal in an absurd fashion was a good building block for a compelling piece of drama.' (Tom Morris, co-director of **War Horse**, www.warhorseonstage.com/videos).

- In groups of four assign the following roles: Joey; puppeteer (who manipulates the student playing Joey); Albert and Nicholls. Perform the following short scene incorporating everything you have studied to date about horses, characterization and puppetry.

Nicholls (to Albert) Say goodbye to him now.

Albert Now, sir? Right now?

Nicholls Say goodbye, Albert.

Albert Joey. Joey boy...I promised I'd never let anything bad happen to you...but you have to go away with that man...he's called Major Nicholls...he's promised we'll be together again. So you do yourself proud in France, Joey. You drive those Germans out, then you come home, it's just a few months, you'll be back by Christmas, you will.

Rehearse the scene in different ways, for example:

- Albert is distraught and Nicholls strict and unmoved by his anguish. How does this affect Joey's behaviour?
- Albert is cheerful and positive, Nicholls kind and encouraging. How does Joey respond?
- Albert is stoic, upset but holding it together, Nicholls is unemotional. How does Joey respond now?

When Tom Morris, the co-director of **War Horse**, started working at the National Theatre, he knew that he wanted Handspring Puppet Company to work there. His mother recommended he read the novel **War Horse** by Michael Morpurgo, which he immediately took to Nick Hytner, the artistic director of the National Theatre, and asked him to read a chapter describing the charge of the yeomanry in World War One. He describes the meeting as follows:

'and Nick Hytner said, "you mean we should make a piece of theatre in the Olivier, our big theatre, which is designed for verbal story telling on an epic scale and we should have a central character played by a puppet and that it shouldn't speak" and I said "yes!"

(Tom Morris, from The Making of **War Horse** DVD, www.warhorseonstage.com/videos)

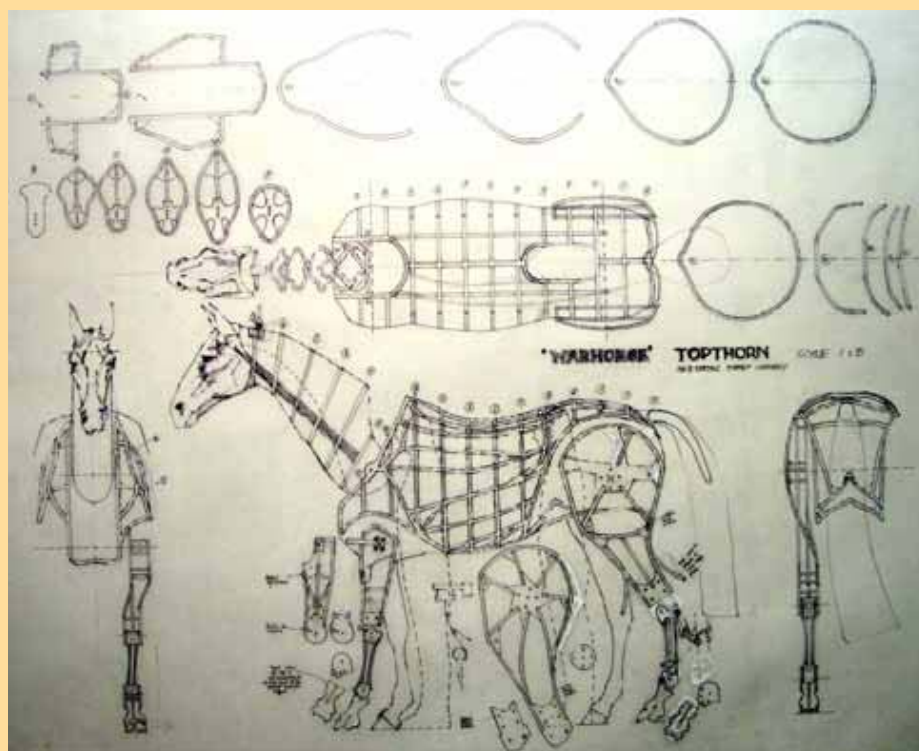
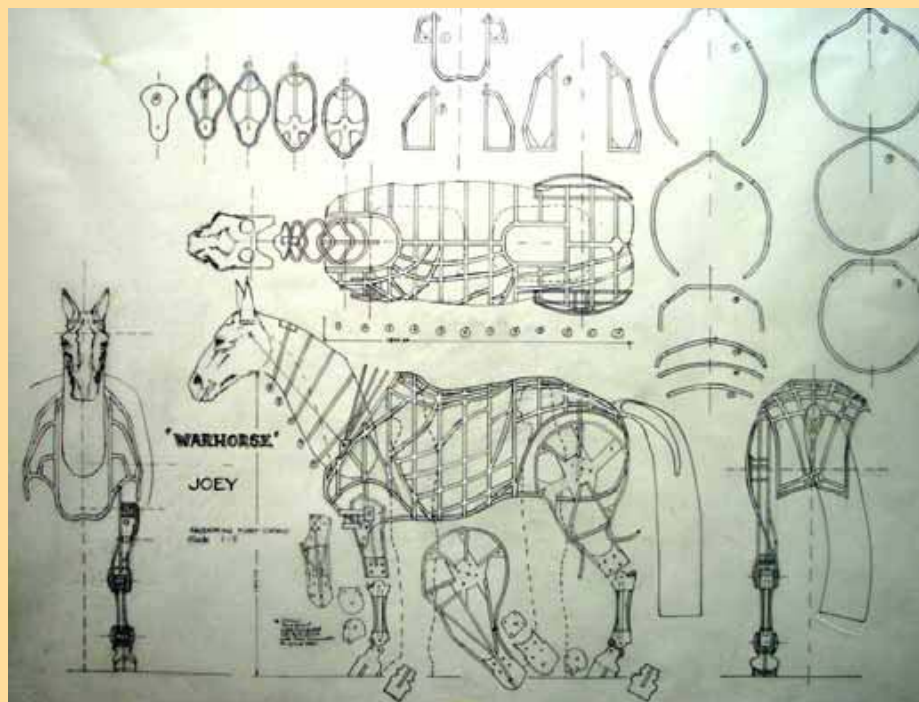
- Both Joey and Tophorn, the central horse characters in **War Horse**, don't speak. In pairs, ask your students to improvise short scenes between Joey and Tophorn without using any spoken language. Compare and contrast three scenes that describe their growing relationship.
 - Their first meeting when they eye each other with suspicion and hostility
 - As friends during the war when they understand and care for each other
 - At their parting, to express Joey's devastation when Tophorn dies

Encourage your students to adopt the horse movements, noises and expressions you have studied to create particular dramatic effects.

- Examine the pictures of the puppets (see next page) and discuss why you think these were created for the play? How do you think they are used and controlled on stage? Discuss what materials were used to create them and why.
- For the ultimate challenge, divide your class into three groups, with each group taking responsibility for the design and creation of the head, heart and hind of your horse. Taking the designs from Handspring as inspiration, re-create your own war horse puppet. Name, photograph and send us an image of your puppet with 'Australia' in the title to warhorse@nationaltheatre.org.uk

With your permission we will upload these to our website to share with schools around the world!

ADRIAN KOHLER'S DRAWINGS OF HIS PUPPET DESIGNS



Adrian Kohler's technical drawings for Joey and Tophorn

6.2. BEING AT WAR — THE REALITIES OF WWI FOR AUSTRALIANS

LETTERS HOME AND THE IMPACT OF THE WAR ON AUSTRALIA

For Australia, as for many nations, World War One remains the most costly conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. These activities will investigate the profound impact on those at war and those remaining at home, both during and after the war. As part of these activities the students will:

- explore the story of a young man killed during the charge at Beersheba;
- imagine what it would be like to be a young soldier at war for the first time;
- discuss how a letter home had to be carefully written;
- investigate the impact of the war on those who remained behind;
- investigate the impact of the war on those who came back wounded or affected by their experience, and their sense of loss;
- explore the Australian Light Horse history;
- investigate the story of Sandy – the only horse to come home.

Suggested Activities:

- Read the following letter written home to Trooper Ernest Craggs' mother by his commanding officer, Lieutenant Edward Ralston. Trooper Craggs fought in the 12th Light Horse Regiment, and was killed at the charge of Beersheba, aged 19.



Trooper Ernest Craggs

'the day before the fight, he was laughing and joking as usual and was full of spirit and through the long night ride. He rode into action just behind me and the last I saw of him, he was standing in his stirrups and cheering'. Ralston was wounded at this point and Sergeant John Bailey went on, 'He and I were wounded at the same time, he was hit in the head and chest. I helped him under the cover of his horse, which was killed. I held the poor boy's hands while he passed away. He only lived about ten minutes after he was wounded and did not have any pain, thank God'.

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=22728908&PIpi=50290244>

Craggs was later buried in the Beersheba War Cemetery

(AWM O4282.001 and PO 4282.002, p. 44 *Australian Light Horse*, Dept. Veterans Affairs, Canberra, 2007)

- Discuss the impact of what this letter must have meant to the family of Trooper Craggs – a mixture of profound sorrow at losing their young son and yet pride at the way he carried himself.
- Discuss with the students if they think this was the real story of what happened and what might have been the real end to the boy.
- Ask the students to write a diary entry imagining they are a young soldier like Trooper Craggs in France in the trenches during World War One or in the desert of the Middle East, away from home for the first time. Encourage students to describe their first night, thinking about what they might see, hear, smell, touch and taste. Remember to include how they are feeling, physically and emotionally, as well as the thoughts that they have about their situation.
- Rewrite this diary entry as a letter home to their family about their experience. Ask students to think about the things they can say to their families and those they can't.

- Research the history of the Australian Light Horse (pps. 9-14 of this guide). Discuss with the students how many of the Light Horse men took their own horse to war and many of them fought in family groups.
- Discuss with the students how the impact of their involvement in World War One changed Australia:
 - A feeling of nationhood was built for the first time;
 - The loss and injury of so many young men had a profound affect on the survival of the towns they came from and their future families;
 - The loss of so many horses meant that farming and working the land became more difficult;
 - Women had to take on roles and jobs they had never done before.
- Write an essay on the impact of these areas investigating:
 - the impact on the future of Australia's economy and population;
 - the emotional impact;
 - the way it informed Australians' sense of patriotism;
 - the way it changed how Australians saw themselves.
- Investigate the background of Major General Sir William Bridges. Why was he such an important military figure? Discuss why Sandy was the only horse, of the 136,000 sent from Australia, to return home. What happened to him? Discuss how the Australian soldiers must have felt at not being able to take their horse home at the end of the war. What is it about the bond between man and horse that is so powerful?



Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges, KCB, CMG, Commander of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), holding the bridle of his favourite charger, Sandy. The horse is a 15.3 hands high bay gelding with a white star. They are standing in front of the tents of the 1st Australian Division at Mena Camp, Egypt, prior to embarkation to Gallipoli.
www.awm.gov.au/education/box/03_res_book.pdf

According to legend, it was Major General Bridges' dying wish that Sandy be returned to Australia. He was shot by a sniper in Gallipoli and knew he would never return to Australia alive. Importantly, he became the only Australian killed in the First World War to have his remains returned to Australia and was buried at Duntroon.

In the extract from **War Horse** reproduced in this pack, Albert must say goodbye to Joey, as he is too young to join him in the British Army.

- Ask your students to imagine a scene where General Bridges must say goodbye to Sandy for the last time. Imagine he knows he is dying and will never see the Australian sun or landscape ever again. Ask them to write a short monologue for the character of General Bridges. How would his language and dialogue differ to Albert's in the play?

POETRY OF AUSTRALIAN WAR HORSES

The poems written by the Australian Light Horse and other Australian soldiers are very moving and express much about the deep-felt connection the men had with their horses. At this time many people remembered poems by heart and would often recite them at family gatherings. The famous Australian poet, Banjo Paterson, actually served in the Australian Light Horse, having a veterinary qualification, rising to the position of Major commanding the Australian Remount Squadron. He did not write many poems in this war but made several trips to and from Australia with the horses and served on active duty in France and the Middle East. In this activity we will investigate two poems written by Light Horsemen in World War One. As part of these activities the students will:

- explore two poems written by Australian Light Horsemen in World War One;
- discuss how these poems depict the relationship between the soldier and his horse;
- examine the way the poems are written and the devices used to strengthen the emotional impact of the two poems;
- write their own wartime poem based on their investigations of the soldiers' experience in World War One

Suggested Activities:

Old Horse O' Mine

Hoof-beats that rang on the crowded street,
Had never beat unto me
All the wealth of the gold in your old black hide,
All the grit of your loyalty;
But deep in the sand of a lonely land,
Out on many a far flung trail,
Your old hoofs spoke of a heart you broke
For me, that you might not fail.

Great eyes, that dusk'd in the green gums' wave,
Though I recked² not that you were there,
That danced or dulled at the whim mayhap
Of a fancy unaware –
How the mateship grew in the depths of you,

When the waste spread its gauntness wide.
How you parched with me, how you marched with me,
Through that Hell of a thirst denied.

Brave Soul that sprung in the colt of you,
Ungessed in the years far back,
Ere your Fate ran out from a land of streams
To the drought of a sun-blazed track -
For the days since seen, for the pals we've been,
When Old Time³ sees us through -
O! If then there be for the likes o' me,
A Heav'n - it must hold you too.

www.lighthorse.org.au

- Discuss with the students the main themes of this poem:
 - the connection between the horse and its rider
 - how their relationship deepened over the war
 - how the experience of war both aged and changed them

²'recked' is a shortened form of reckoned.

³Old Time refers to death

- Discuss how colours are used to evoke emotions and as a description in the poem
 - ‘All the wealth of the *gold* in your old *black* hide’ – the hide is black but the horse’s steadfastness is worth more than gold
 - ‘Great eyes, that dusk’d in the *green* gums’ wave’ – the contrast of the rural country side Australia they came from and what they are now experiencing
- Examine how the use of rhyming words and repetition reinforces the strength of the experience: how you *parched* with me, how you *marched* with me.
- Explore how the choice of words evokes the harshness of the landscape of the Middle East compared to the rural landscape of home – how the words describing the Middle East use more consonants and alliteration and have a more rhythmic quality; the words describing home are softer and more whimsical.

MIDDLE EAST	HOME IN RURAL AUSTRALIA
hoof beats rang	green gums’ wave
crowded street	a fancy unaware
deep in the sand	Ungessed in the years far back,
lonely land	a land of streams
far flung trail	
the waste spread its gauntness wide	
drought of a sun-blazed track	

The next poem refers to World War One and is inspired by the feelings of Australian Light Horsemen who, because of quarantine regulations, had to leave their horses in the Middle East on their return to Australia.

Farewell Old Warhorse

(Author unknown)

The struggle for freedom has ended they say,
 The days of fatigue and remorse,
 But our hearts one and all are in memory today,
 We are losing our old friend, the Horse.

The old quadruped⁴ that has carried us thro’
 The sand ridden caravan track
 And shared in the charge of the gallant and true
 With the boys who will never come back.

Oh those long weary days thro’ a miniature hell
 Short of water and nothing to eat,
 Each hour we climbed down for a few minutes’ spell
 And dozed safe and sound and your feet.

When the enemy shrapnel broke overhead,
 As we passed up that Valley of Death,
 You never once slackened in that hail of lead
 Though the boldest of all held their breath.

But we never forgot you, old Comrade and friend,
 When the QM Dump⁵ hove in sight.
 What the Buckshee⁶ to Gippo's⁷ we scored in the end
 And your rations were doubled that night.

Then came the long journey, the greatest of all,
 The cavalry stunt of the world.
 The sons of Australia had answered the call
 And the Ensign⁸ of Freedom unfurled.

And now we are leaving you footsore and worn
 To the land where the Mitchell grass⁹ grew,
 Where you frolicked like lambs in the sweet scented morn,
 To the song of the Dismal Curlew¹⁰.

So farewell to the Yarraman¹¹ old warhorse, farewell,
 Be you mulga bred¹² chestnut or bay.
 If there's a hereafter for horses as well
 Then may we be with you some day.
www.lighthorse.org.au

⁴ Four legged animal

⁵ The Quartermasters Store where food and supplies was stored.

⁶ An extra ration

⁷ Egyptians or gypsies

⁸ flag

⁹ Grass growing in a rural area of central Queensland and Northern Territory

¹⁰ A bird with an eerie cry

¹¹ A Queensland town known for breeding horses

¹² Bred in the tough scrubby part of Australia



Joey rears up
 Photo: Brinkhoff Mögenburg

- Ask the students to underline the words they don't know and investigate their meaning.
- Both poems finish in much the same way. Discuss why is this so and what are they referring to?
- Discuss where the horse has gone on its death in the Middle East.
- List what is learnt about fighting in the Light Horse from reading this poem
 - Many men were lost
 - They sheltered and slept beneath their horses, standing guard
 - They were short of water and had nothing to eat for many days
 - That the impact of the Light Horse was felt world wide
 - That they were shot at from above
 - That rations were left for them at checkpoints
 - These rations were shared between horses and men
 - Their horses were very important to them both for their friendship, their safety and their mobility
 - At the end of the war they had to leave their horses behind
- Encourage the students to choose an aspect of the Light Horse experience and write a stanza of a poem about it. Take into account the use of descriptive words, alliteration, repetition, rhyming words, and contrasting words describing landscape when writing their stanzas.
- Students should read their stanzas around the class as they are displayed on the board. The class vote on their five favourite stanzas to make into a class poem.
- This poem could be used as the lyrics for a class song or could be illustrated.

LIFE FOR AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR ONE

In this activity we will investigate the reality of life as an Australian soldier in World War One and what that means.

Suggested Activities:

- Encourage the students to investigate some of the following aspects of life for the soldiers of World War One by either investigating the War Memorial www.awm.gov.au/atwar/ww1.asp or Light Horse websites www.lighthorse.org.au or visiting a local war memorial, army or war museum:
 - Discuss what everyday life must have been like for Australians fighting in the war;
 - How they survived on what they had to eat and what they had to put up with;
 - What they wore - what living with lice in their clothes was like;
 - The space they had to live and sleep in;
 - What living in mud was like for them and their horses.
- Brainstorm with the students how they would feed soldiers who are on the move, have no refrigeration, have to carry everything they need and do not have access to firewood and were often in limited spaces where they were hiding from the enemy.
- The Australian World War One soldiers existed on a diet of Bully beef (tinned corned beef), rice, jam, cocoa, tea, some bread and something called Hard Tack, which lasted for a long time and was originally made by Arnott's Biscuits. Here is the recipe supplied by Arnott's on the War Memorial site:
(Adapted from www.awm.gov.au/education/resources/hard_tack)

HARD TACK

Recipe makes six biscuits.

Ingredients

1½ cups self-raising white flour
3 cups self-raising wholemeal flour
5 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons milk powder
pinch salt
1 cup water

Equipment

Large mixing bowl
Mixing spoon
Board and rolling pin
Baking tray

Method

Preheat the oven to 180C.

Place dry ingredients in a large bowl and mix together.

Make a well in the centre and add the water. Mix together until an even dough is formed.

Turn the dough onto a floured board and knead for a few minutes. Shape the dough into a ball and let rest for half an hour.

Divide the dough into three and then roll each ball into thick 1cm sheets.

Cut the rolled sheet of dough into 9 cm squares, using the edge of a steel ruler, rather than a knife. This pressing action helps to join the top and bottom surfaces of the biscuit and will improve the "lift" in baking.

Now make a regular pattern of holes in each biscuit, five holes across by five holes down (25 holes in all). The ideal tool to use to make these holes is a cotton bud with the cotton wool cut off or the thick end of a bamboo skewer. Push it through to the bench, twist slightly and withdraw. (Some historians claim that each biscuit had 49 holes.)

Place on a slightly greased baking tray, being careful that the biscuits are not touching. Form a wall around the outside edge with scrap dough. This will stop the outside edges of the biscuits from burning.

Bake on the centre shelf for 30-40 minutes or until golden brown. Be careful not to burn them!

Leave the biscuits on a cooling rack until they harden. Or switch off the oven and return the biscuits to the oven until it becomes cool.

- Design a menu for lunch at school using only the foods available (or reasonable substitutes) to the soldiers in World War One. Once prepared and eaten discuss with the students how they would manage on that kind of diet. Make sure the menu includes Hard Tack (though be careful as it is very hard and many soldiers broke their teeth trying to eat it).
- One of the first things soldiers are given when they join the army is a uniform. Consider the uniform of the Australian Light Horse in World War One. Look at photographs and refer to the background information of this pack. Consider the practicality of this uniform for both the soldiers and the horses who carried them.
- Research the significance of the Australian Light Horse slouch hat. Why did they use emu feathers as a feature of the Light Horse?
- What unifying features of our dress do we use today that represent and unite us? What do these say about who we are? Consider the impact this has in sport for instance – what are students' favourite sports or football team colours? What other emblems or totems are used today that send a message of solidarity and community?
- Examine your school uniform. What does it say about the ethos of your school? If you could design a new uniform or school hat, what would it say about your school and the students who attend it?
- Have your students design a new hat to represent your school. Ask them to use materials and motifs that communicate a specific message about who you are and what you stand for.



*5th Australian Light Horse on alert at Ghoranlyeh Bridgehead, Palestine, in 1918.
Imperial War Museum Photography Collection, Photo No. MH33938*

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We hope you have found this Education Resource Pack for **War Horse** Australia helpful.

For any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the Australian **War Horse** Learning programme, please contact Stephanie Hutchinson, Learning Programme Director at shutchinson@vivodarte.com.au

We look forward to welcoming you to a performance soon!