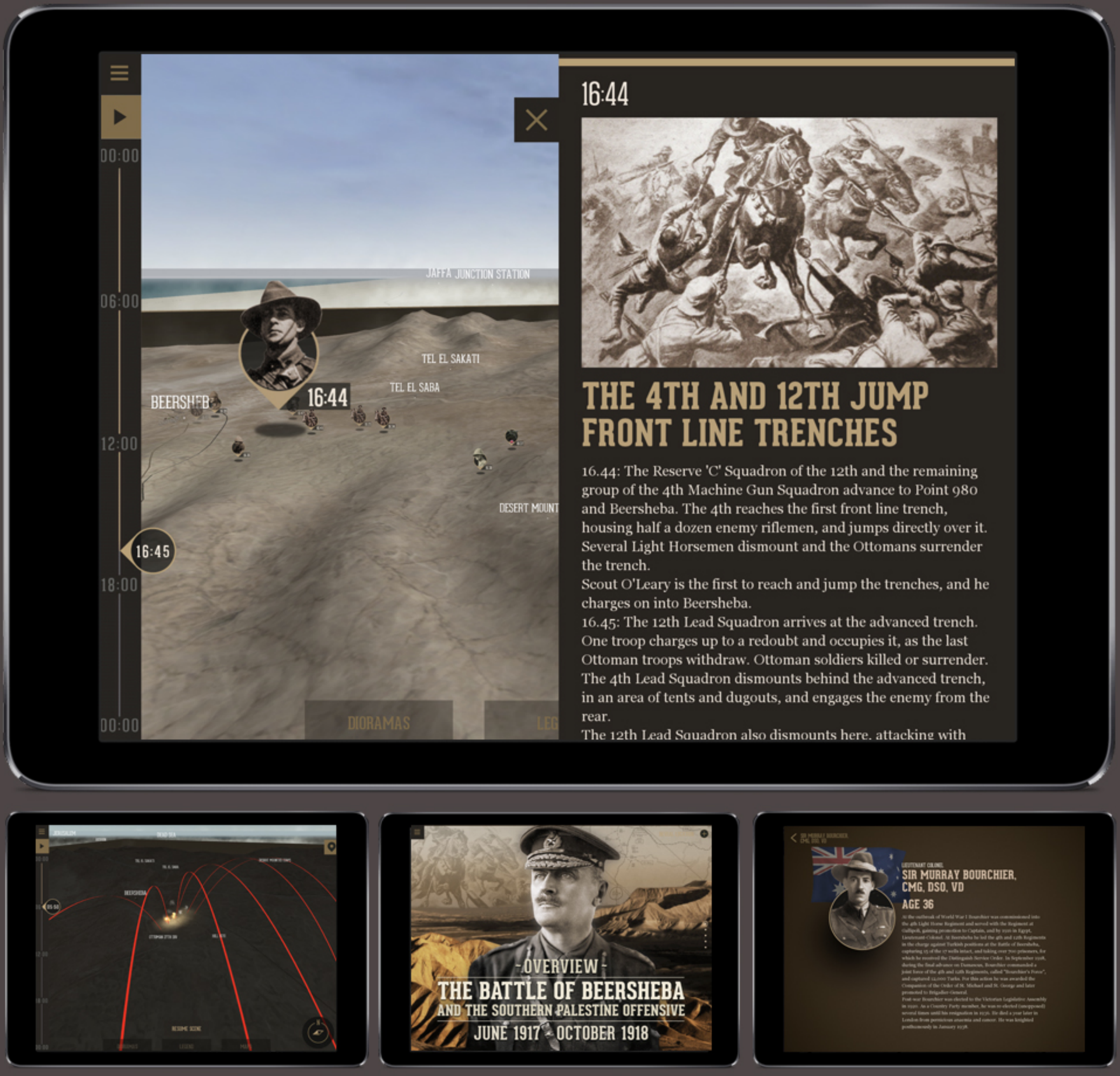
Teacher's Guide

The Battle Of Beersheba

31 October, 1917



www.abc.net.au/ww1-anzac/beersheba

Introduction

The resource *Battle of Beersheba* is a website and Android and iOS app about the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps' (ANZAC) involvement in the Battle of Beersheba and the Southern Palestine Offensive in World War I. The website and app were designed and developed by the ABC and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The resource is a rich collection of historical evidence, images, recollections, modern commentary and interactive graphic illustrations.
The *Battle of Beersheba* has been designed for use by Year 9/10 students studying World War I history, but can be adapted for use by other year levels.

http://www.abc.net.au/ww1-anzac/beersheba/

Curriculum Links

The *Battle of Beersheba* resource addresses the following Australian Curriculum: History (Humanities and Social Sciences) requirements.

Year 9: Depth Study – World War I (1914–1918)

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Students investigate key aspects of World War I and the Australian experience of the war, including the nature and significance of the war in world and Australian history.

This includes:

- An overview of the causes of World War I and the reasons why men enlisted to fight in the war. (ACDSEH021)
- The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I, including the Gallipoli campaign. (ACDSEH095)
- The impact of World War I, with a particular emphasis on Australia including the changing role of women. (ACDSEH096)
- The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend. (ACDSEH097).

Historical Skills

- Use chronological sequencing to demonstrate the relationship between events and developments in different periods and places. (ACHHS164)
- Use historical terms and concepts. (ACHHS165)
- Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry. (ACHHS166)
- Evaluate and enhance these questions. (ACHHS167)
- Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods. (ACHHS168)
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources. (ACHHS169)
- Process and synthesise information from a range of sources for use as evidence in an historical argument. (ACHHS170)
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources. (ACHHS171)
- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past. (ACHHS172)
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own). (ACHHS173)
- Develop texts, particularly descriptions and discussions that use evidence from a range of sources that are referenced. (ACHHS174)
- Select and use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies. (ACHHS175)

The key elements of the program are as follows:

Element	Description
3D Narration	The most innovative element of the app. It tells the story in graphic documentary format, with the viewer's perspective constantly being moved between the opposing forces and around the battlefield area. The key imagery of the story is a mixture of dioramas and animation, with a linking narration and extensive sound effects. This can be viewed as a continuous narrative, or it can be stopped and navigated in any order at any time.
Explore Each Event	There are separate time stops available during the story, and several of these stops have multiple events associated with them. Events may include: profiles (of characters mentioned), videos (e.g. interviews on features such as weapons), photographs from the time and diary extracts that can be read or listened to. This is a great way to explore the stories of the battle.

Element continued…	Description continued…
Campaign Overview	This is a short, written summary, with accompanying illustrations on a 3D map, which explains the major strategic aims of the campaign and some of the key events. It is a useful summary of the Southern Palestine Offensive and the place of the Anzacs within it.
Dioramas and Models	These are interactive scenes and rotating models that detail the men, places and machines of war.
Photos and Videos	Photos and footage from 1917–1918. It also includes an analysis of the battle by Mesut Uyer, Associate Professor of Ottoman military history at the University of New South Wales.
Diaries	There are also audio transcripts of diaries taken from soldiers' recollections at the time, which are used in the 'Events' segments.
Personnel	These include profiles of key participants from both the Anzac and British armies, particularly military leaders and soldiers whose diary extracts are used in the resource.
Military Trees	These are useful in helping students make sense of the terminology used to describe the way military forces of both sides (battalions, companies, platoons, etc.) were organised.
Podcasts	These podcasts serve to provide the wider context of the events of World War I.

Activity	Description	Curriculum Application	School Level
1. Overview of the Battle of Beersheba and the Southern Palestine Offensive	Students examine the 'Campaign Overview' and 'The Battlefields' to appreciate the broader context of the Battle of Beersheba and the Southern Palestine Offensive.	History Geography English	Secondary
2. Key Events and Turning Points	A detailed review of the battlefield scenes and timelines to determine the chronology of the battle and its significance.	History	Secondary
3. Walers: Animals in War	Students examine various sources to create an Annotated Visual Display on Walers. They then create a concept map outlining the various roles that other animals played during the war.	History	Secondary
4. Military Tactics	Students explore the strengths and limitations of military strategies utilised during the Battle of Beersheba.	History	Secondary
5. Signals Intelligence	Students investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the technology employed by Signals Intelligence during the Sinai and Southern Palestine campaign.	History Technologies	Secondary
Curriculum Links	How the resource and Teacher's Guide address the Australian Curriculum: Historical knowledge and skills for Year 9/10 students.	History	Secondary

Activity 1: Overview of the Battle of Beersheba

To find out about the Battle of Beersheba, you first need to know some overarching information about the Southern Palestine Offensive.

Instructions: use the Campaign Overview, The Battlefield scenes and other materials from the resource to respond to the inquiry questions below. Use the right hand side tab in The Battlefield view to find the exact time signatures for important events.

Inquiry Question	Response (in your own words)	Where to Find Information
Who were the Allies in the Battle of Beersheba? Who were their opponents?		Campaign Overview
The Ottoman defence line for Sinai and Southern Palestine began and ended at which cities/towns?		Campaign Overview
Why do you think that the British High Command replaced General Archibald Murray with the newly promoted General Edmund Allenby?		Campaign Overview
What was Allenby's new strategy to take control of Gaza? What were the advantages of this strategy?		Campaign Overview
When did the Battle of Beersheba begin? Why was a speedy attack essential?		Campaign Overview
What was it that the 12th and 4th Australian Light Horse brigades ordered to do? Was this successful?		Campaign Overview
What were the casualties on each side?		Campaign Overview
Was Allenby's manoeuvring strategy for the overall Sinai and Southern Palestine		Campaign Overview

Campaign successful for the Allies? Explain your answer.		

Activity 2: Key Events and Turning Points

This activity examines key moments in the battle that influenced the outcome. It is followed by questions that look at larger concepts, such as change and continuity in the environment or the motivations of key personnel.

Use the Campaign Overview, The Battlefield scenes podcasts and other materials from the resource to respond to the inquiry questions below. Use the side tab on The Battlefield scenes to find the exact time signatures for important events. Fill in the table below by stating what happened at Beersheba at each of the times given.

Time	**Key event**	**Where to find information**
05:55		The Battlefield:
12:15		The Battlefield:
16:41		The Battlefield:
23.15		The Battlefield:

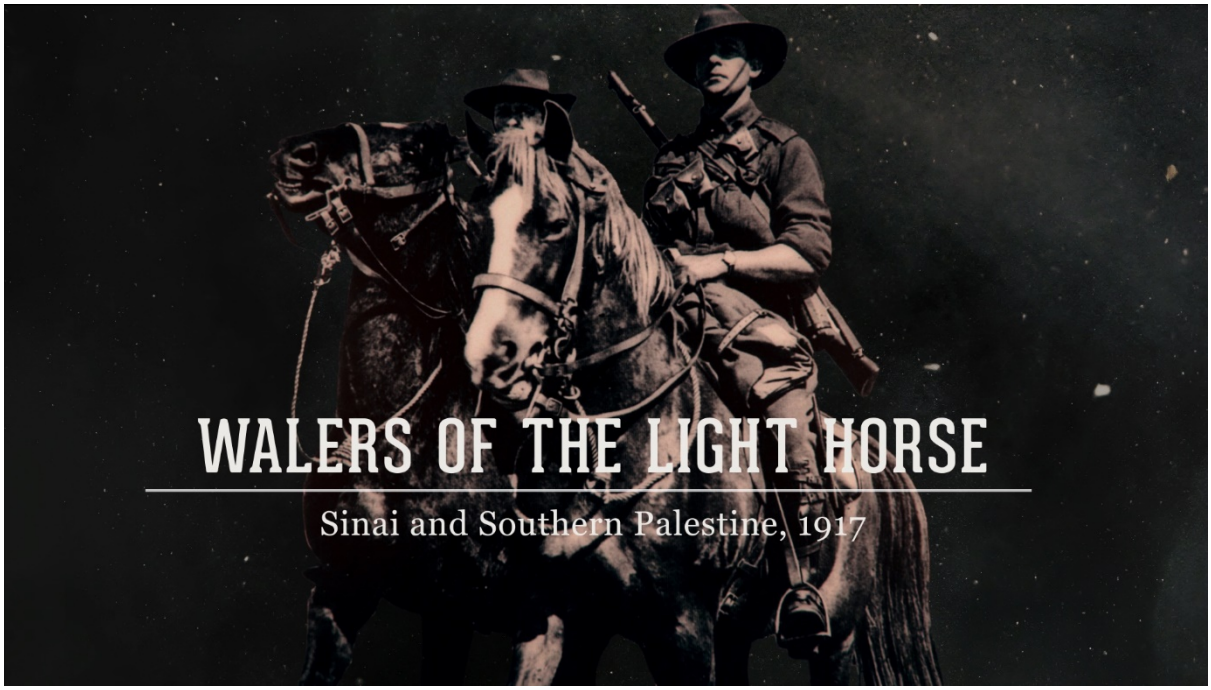
Activity 3: Walers: Animals in War

Instructions

- Create an Annotated Visual Display (AVD) on Walers.

Source 1

Watch the Walers Diorama, examine the sources provided, answer the questions below and conduct your own additional research as required to help you create your AVD.



Source 2

> *'Walers were the type of horse used by light horsemen in the campaign in the Middle East during the First World War. The light horse combined the mobility of cavalry with the fighting skills of infantry. They fought dismounted, with rifles and bayonets. However, sometimes they charged on horseback, notably at Magdhaba and Beersheba. The smallest unit of a light horse regiment was the four-man section: one holding the horses while the other three fought.*
>
> *The horses were called Walers because, although they came from all parts of Australia, they were originally sold through New South Wales. They were sturdy, hardy horses, able to travel long distances in hot weather with little water.*
>
> *Horses usually need to drink about 30 litres of water a day. However, during the campaign they often went for up to 60 hours without water, while carrying a load of almost 130 kilograms, comprising rider, saddle, equipment, food, and water.'*
>
> ('Horses used in the First World War (Whalers),' Australian War Memorial, https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/horses.)

Source 3

'A.W.E and Taffy – Ready for the Track,' 1090 Sig. Corp. A.W. Edwards, 1st Light Horse Regt. in Palestine (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Collection PXA404).

Source 4

'In days to come we'll wander west and cross the range again;
We'll hear the bush birds singing in the green trees after rain;
We'll canter through the Mitchell grass and breast the bracing wind:
But we'll have other horses. Our chargers stay behind.
Around the fire at night we'll yarn about old Sinai;
We'll fight our battles o'er again; and as the days go by
There'll be old mates to greet us. The bush girls will be kind.
Still our thoughts will often wander to the horses left.
I don't think I could stand the thought of my old fancy hack
Just crawling round old Cairo with a Gyppo on his back.
Perhaps some English tourist out in Palestine may find
My broken-hearted waler with a wooden plough behind.
No; I'd better shoot him and tell a little lie:
"He floundered in a wombat hole and then lay down to die.'

(Major Oliver Hogue, AKA 'Trooper Bluegum' of the 14th Light Horse Brigade.)

Source 5

'During WW1 Australia sent 39,348 Walers overseas to the AIF. [Altogether, around 139, 000 were sent to France, India, the Western Front and the Middle East during WWI.] Many Light Horsemen enlisted with their horses with a government promise that they would be able to bring their horses home with them. On the outbreak of peace, costs became important and it was deemed too costly to have horses repatriated to Australia - except for one horse, 'Sandy,' owned by General W. T. Bridges who died at Gallipoli in 1915.
Quarantine was offered as a reason for not permitting the Walers to return to Australia. However, the horses would have had a long sea voyage, giving time for problems to emerge.
Many of the fit horses were sold to the Indian Army.'

(Museums Victoria,
https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/59a0b7bb21ea700cdceb395c.)

Source 6

'We have a special affinity with horses. Let's take the light horsemen who were on patrol in the Sinai for example. If those horses made a noise or snorted, or stamped, or called for a mate, they could reveal their position. So when a trooper put his hand on his neck, that horse knew to freeze.

He also could move through those desert sand hills very silently. They could rely on one another. If the trooper was shot or injured in any way, there are many stories of horses carrying the trooper back to base camp.'

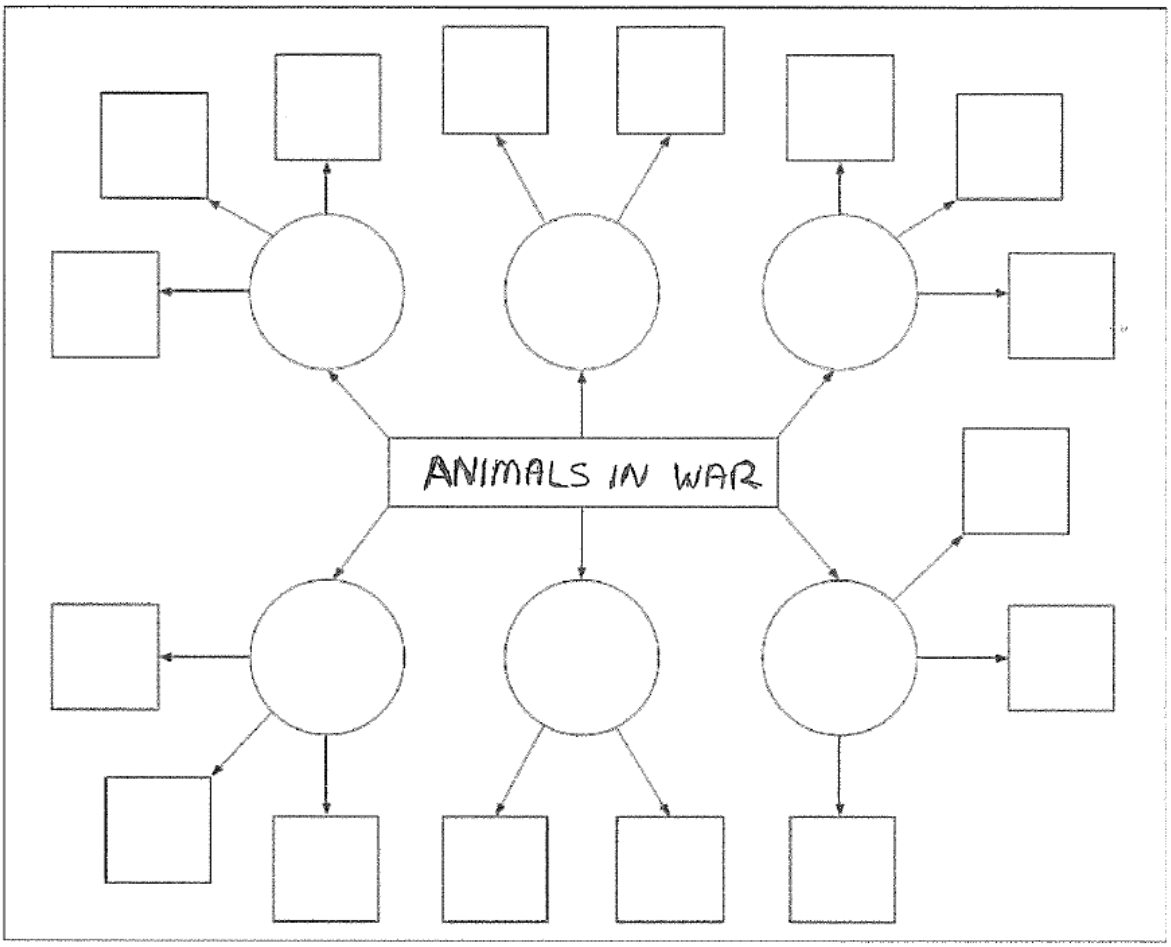
(Jill Mather, quoted in Nyadat Gawley, 'The Walers: Our WWI Partners Who Never Made it Home,' *Independent Australia*, 23 July 2015,
https://independentaustralia.net/australia/australia-display/the-walers-our-ww1-partners-who-never-made-it-home,7976.)

1. How did Walers get their name?
2. For how long were Walers sent overseas as war horses?
3. What qualities did Walers possess that made them suitable as war horses?
4. How many Walers were transported overseas during World War I?
5. Describe the bond between the trooper and his Waler. Why was this so important?
6. What happened to the Walers at the end of World War I? How did the troopers feel about this?

Other Animals in War

Not only horses were sent to war, many other furry and feathered creatures played a vital part in World War I.

Create a concept map that shows the types of animals that took part in World War I, what role they played during the war and how their relationship with the soldiers developed.



Where to Find Information

You will need to conduct your own research beyond the resource to complete this task.

Activity 4: Military Tactics

Instructions

In the table on the following page, identify the functions, strengths and limitations of the following tactics used in the Battle of Beersheba.

	Definition/Description	Function	Strengths	Limitations
Ottoman shallow trench				
Ottoman deeper trench				
Ottoman arrow-shaped trench				
The charge of the 4th and 12th Light Horse Brigades				

Where to Find Information

- Materiels (Diaries), Official report – 4th Australian Light Horse report.
- Materiels (Diaries), Lieutenant Colonel Bourchier – 4th Australian Light Horse report.
- Materiels (Diaries), Trooper Ion Idriess – Excerpt from the book, *The Desert Column* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1932).
- Materiels (Diaries), Captain Jack Davies – Letter.
- Dioramas – Ottoman Trench.
- The Battlefield – 05:50, 16:25, 16:41 and 16:44.

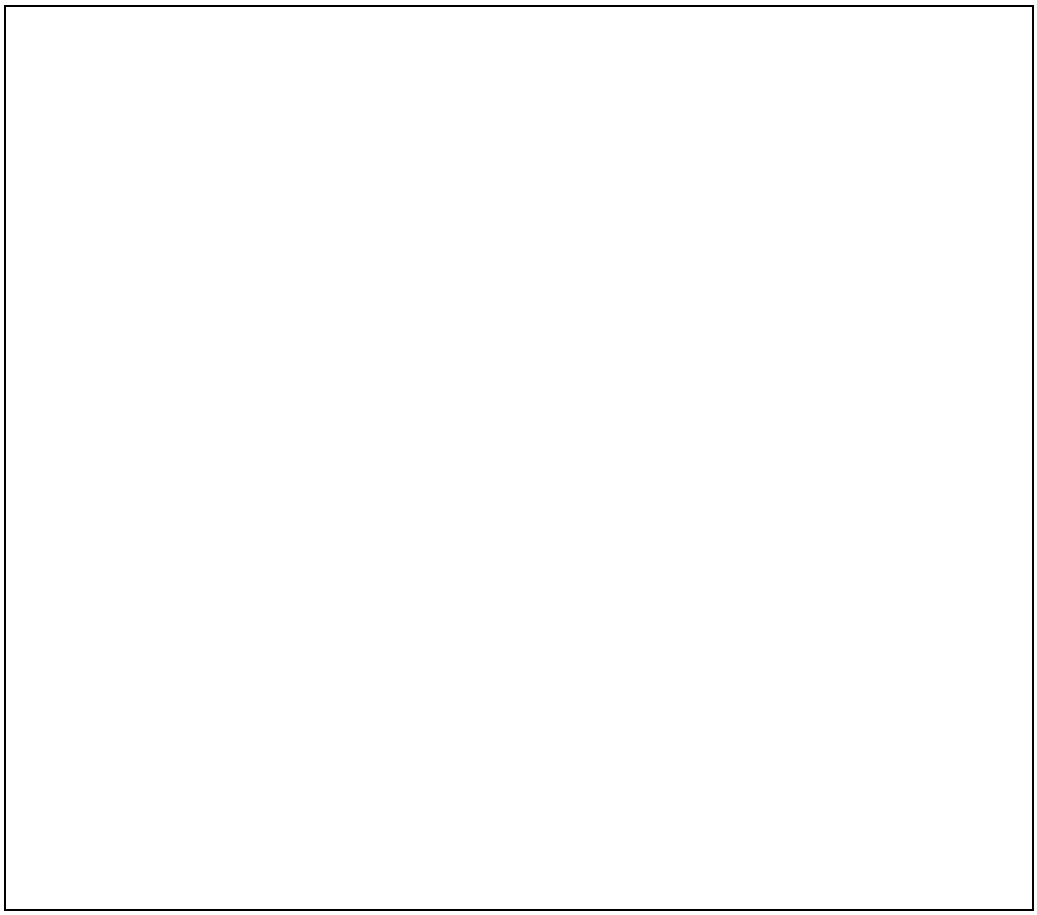
Activity 5: Signals Intelligence

View the Light Horse Signallers Diorama and answer the following questions.

1. Define each of the three arms of military intelligence used in the Sinai and Southern Palestine campaign.

TYPE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE	DEFINITION
SIGINT	
IMINT	
HUMINT	

2. Draw and label a heliograph.



3. Outline the advantages and disadvantages of the heliograph.

Advantages	**Disadvantages**

4. (a) Why do you think it was in use in both the British and Australian armies until the 1960s?

(b) What sort of technology/ies may have superseded its use in the past fifty years?

5. Examine the terrain map of the battlefield and the satellite image of Be'er Sheva, Israel (Beersheba), on Google Maps. Would the terrain surrounding Beersheba have helped or hindered the Light Horse Signallers? Explain your answer.

Where to Find Information

- Diorama – Light Horse Signallers.
- The Battlefield.
- Google Maps.
- You will need to research beyond the resource to complete this task.