



# ANZAC GIRLS

EPISODES 4-6: WESTERN FRONT



FOREVER *young*  
FOREVER *brave*  
FOREVER IN OUR *hearts*



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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY ROBERT LEWIS



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## OVERVIEW

*ANZAC Girls* (6 x 58 minutes) is a dramatised series based on real events and five real nurses – Alice Ross King, Elsie Cook, Olive Haynes, Hilda Steele and Grace Wilson. Like the soldiers, these Anzac girls are our heroes. But they are also just ordinary girls – our sisters, our daughters, ourselves – looking for adventure, love, fun and friendship.

Beginning in the heady pre-Gallipoli days in Egypt, moving through the devastation of the Gallipoli campaign and the utterly unexpected casualty count, through the bitter months on the barren island of Lemnos, to the long hard years of the war in Europe and the Western Front, *ANZAC Girls* is personal, intimate and raw.

The nurses' world may be dominated by the war, by the army and by the hospitals, but they are bright, beautiful and lively young women in the prime of their lives. They have come to do their bit and serve their country, but they have also come seeking adventure and love.

Drawing on the diaries, letters, photographs and historical achievements of many women who witnessed the brutality of war, *ANZAC Girls* honours the centenary of World War 1 with the unique and rarely told history of the war through the nurses who served amidst bombing raids, poison gas and terrible disease – saving lives and transforming the spirits of the soldiers.

## CURRICULUM APPLICABILITY

*ANZAC Girls* is a relevant resource for middle and senior students (Years 9-12) in:

### Australian History Year 9

Depth Study: World War 1

- An overview of the causes of World War I and the reasons why men enlisted to fight in the war
- The places where Australians fought and the nature of warfare during World War I, including the Gallipoli campaign
- The impact of World War I, with a particular emphasis on Australia (such as the use of propaganda to influence the civilian population, the changing role of women, the conscription debate)
- The commemoration of World War I, including debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend

### English Year 10

- Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices
- Biography

### Media Arts Year 9 and 10

- Evaluate how genre and media conventions and technical and symbolic elements are manipulated to make representations and meaning
- Evaluate how social, institutional and ethical issues influence the making and use of media artworks

## 10 QUESTIONS

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10

## BEFORE WATCHING EPISODES 4-6

*ANZAC Girls* is a 6-part dramatised series following the lives of four Australian and one New Zealand nurse during World War 1.

Episodes 1-3 focus on the time up to and including the Australian and New Zealand campaign at Gallipoli in 1915. Episodes 4-6 focus on the Western Front in northern France and southern Belgium in 1916-1918.

This Study Guide looks at Episodes 4-6 of the series. If you have already watched Episode 1-3 you will find that you have already completed the activities below. If you have not seen Episodes 1-3 then complete these activities before watching Episodes 4-6.

### » EXPLORING IMAGES OF NURSES

**1** What is your knowledge of Australian (and New Zealand) nurses during World War 1? Complete the survey and record your answers *on the Table overleaf*. You will be able to come back and change any after watching *ANZAC Girls*.

**2** You have recorded what you think are the facts about the nurses, but what is your image of them? Write down any ideas you have about what sort of people they were, their motivation and their role. You will be able to test this knowledge and image as you watch *ANZAC Girls*.

**3** Are nurses part of your image or idea of the Anzac Spirit? Explain your response.

**4** Look at the 8 official and artistic images of the nurses in World War 1 on page 5. Write down the words that these images create in you as a viewer. Compare this with your own previous image.

**5** Look at the 9 other art works and historical photographs

about nurses on page 6. Write down the words that these images create in you as a viewer. How are they different from the previous set? Suggest why they are different. How do they compare with your original image? Do you need to change that image?

**6** Imagine that you could now talk to a World War 1 Australian nurse in your classroom. List the questions you would ask her. Discuss these with the class. From this discussion select the 'top 10' questions that you would like her to answer during your visit. *Record your 10 questions in the table below*. You will be able to come back to all your ideas after watching *ANZAC Girls*.

You are now about to watch *ANZAC Girls*. The series presents the war experiences of five nurses:

- Sister Alice Ross King
- Sister Elsie Cook
- Sister Olive Haynes
- Sister Hilda Steele
- Matron Grace Wilson

It focuses on a number of key themes:

- the nurses as real people
- the nature of the war and the nurses' experience of it
- the impact of the war on nurses' lives
- the nurses as heroic figures
- the nurses as part of the Anzac Tradition and Spirit

The Background Information on pages 7-8 will help you understand the historical context of the story.

Watch Episodes 4-6 which are set around the Australian and New Zealand campaign at Gallipoli in 1915 and answer the questions which explore the key themes in those episodes.

You should read the summary of Episodes 1-3 which bring the story up to the starting point of Episode 4, when the nurses have moved from Gallipoli to the Western Front.

### ANZAC NURSES QUIZ

Most nurses would have been born in:	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/> England <input type="checkbox"/> other	<input type="checkbox"/> Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/> Wales
The number of nurses who served was:	<input type="checkbox"/> 500-1000	<input type="checkbox"/> 1000-5000	<input type="checkbox"/> 5000-10 000	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 000+
Most Australian-born would have come from:	<input type="checkbox"/> NSW <input type="checkbox"/> VIC	<input type="checkbox"/> QLD <input type="checkbox"/> WA	<input type="checkbox"/> SA	<input type="checkbox"/> TAS
Most Australian-born would have been from:	<input type="checkbox"/> City	<input type="checkbox"/> Country		
Most would have been:	<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Married		
The most common age on enlistment would have been:	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 41- 45	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 46+	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 36-40
The most common year of enlistment would have been:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1914 <input type="checkbox"/> 1918	<input type="checkbox"/> 1915	<input type="checkbox"/> 1916	<input type="checkbox"/> 1917
Most would have died in:	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt <input type="checkbox"/> At sea	<input type="checkbox"/> England <input type="checkbox"/> Salonica	<input type="checkbox"/> France/Belgium <input type="checkbox"/> Palestine	<input type="checkbox"/> India <input type="checkbox"/> Persia
The most common religion would have been:	<input type="checkbox"/> Church of England <input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian <input type="checkbox"/> Protestant <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Roman Catholic	<input type="checkbox"/> Methodist <input type="checkbox"/> Church of Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/> None
The country or countries where most would have served are:	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt <input type="checkbox"/> Not Known	<input type="checkbox"/> England <input type="checkbox"/> Salonica	<input type="checkbox"/> France/Belgium <input type="checkbox"/> Palestine	<input type="checkbox"/> India <input type="checkbox"/> Persia
Would most have received service medals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
Would most have received other awards or commendations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
Would most have been wounded during the war?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
Would most have suffered illness during the war?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
The most common cause of death would have been:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Injury	<input type="checkbox"/> Illness	
The most common year of death would have been:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1914 <input type="checkbox"/> 1918	<input type="checkbox"/> 1915 <input type="checkbox"/> 1919	<input type="checkbox"/> 1916 <input type="checkbox"/> 1920	<input type="checkbox"/> 1917

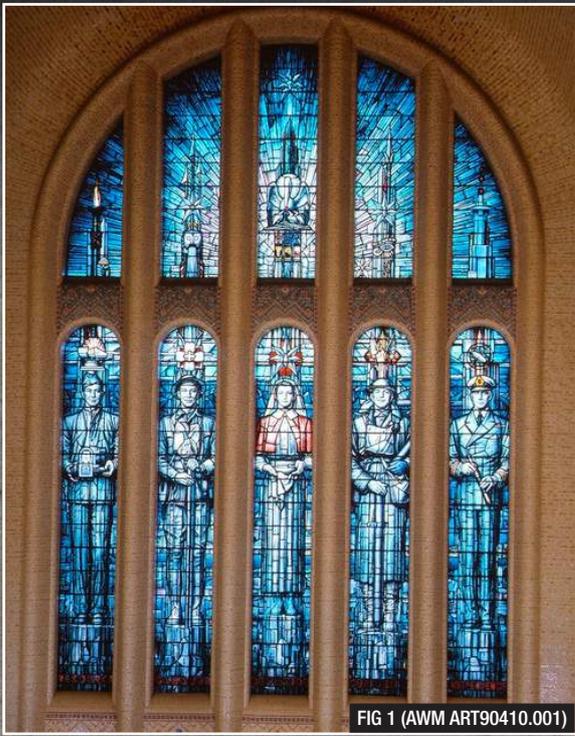


FIG 1 (AWM ART90410.001)



FIG 2 (AWM ART93103)



FIG 3 (AWM ART13338)



FIG 4 (STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA)



FIG 5 (STATE LIBRARY OF NSW)



FIG 6 (AWM E01304)



FIG 7 (AWM ART93184)



FIG 8 (AWM ART93081)



FIG 10 (AWM P01790.002)



FIG 11 (AWM P01908.026)



FIG 9 (AWM P01908.013)



FIG 12 (AWM P01667.002)



FIG 13 (AWM P01908.017)



FIG 15 (AWM ART94463.004)



FIG 14 (AWM ART90370)



FIG 16 (AWM H12554)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

*ANZAC Girls* explains the place and nature of service of the Australian and New Zealand nurses between 1914 and 1918, but this summary will help place the experiences of the nurses in the six episodes in context.

### » BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

In 1914 a series of political tensions in part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire led to the two great alliances, Britain—France—Russia and Germany—Austria-Hungary, going to war. At the outbreak of war, the Australian Government announced that, as Great Britain was at war against Germany, automatically, so was Australia.

Many people responded enthusiastically, and a volunteer army was quickly raised.

This army was sent to train in Egypt, before becoming a part of the British and allied landing force at Gallipoli, Turkey, on 25 April 1915.

Nine months later, and with many more volunteers having been sent to Gallipoli as reinforcements, the force was withdrawn, without having achieved its objectives.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, some Australian forces were sent to Palestine; most were sent to the Western Front — those areas of France and Belgium where the war was being fought against the Germans.

Heavy casualties were suffered on the Western Front, and pressure was on in Australia to keep sending reinforcements.

From 1916 to 1918 most of the Australian troops who were sent overseas served on the Western Front, while the Royal Australian Navy served in a variety of seas and oceans.



### » NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

At Gallipoli and on the Western Front the war was mostly fought from trenches. Conditions varied according to the weather.

The main feature of trench warfare was armies alternately attacking and defending open ground using machine guns, barbed wire, artillery and infantry soldiers on foot, though there were some set battles and cavalry actions.

On the Western Front troops were sometimes able to be relieved from the front or rear lines, and to take short periods of leave in Britain.

In the deserts of Palestine mostly the mounted infantry, called the Light Horse, moved against the Turks to capture strategic locations.

### » HOW AUSTRALIAN NURSES WERE INVOLVED

Australian women served in the Australian Army Medical Corps as nurses, and as other medical workers. There were also a number of Red Cross nurses who were sent to work with French hospitals, and other nurses and women doctors who served in French and British hospitals.

### » AUSTRALIAN NURSES

Before the war military nurses were a volunteer reserve organization, not a part of the professional and full-time military organization. At the start of the war volunteers were called for to be part of the new Australian Army Nursing



Some nurses and women doctors paid their own way to be involved in medical service during the war. There were also masseuses (physical therapists), blood transfusionists, and other support medical occupations.

Other women also performed valuable services. Vera Deakin set up the Red Cross Missing and Wounded Enquiry Bureau, which was instrumental in ascertaining information for families of the circumstances of those who were missing — through death, wounding or capture. Red Cross nurses, known as ‘Bluebirds’, served in French front line hospitals. Women such as Verania McPhillamy and Alice Chisholm set up canteens in Egypt, providing facilities for soldiers on leave.



## » NEW ZEALAND NURSES

The New Zealand Nursing Service was set up in early 1915, with the first group of 50 sailing to Egypt in April 1915. In all 662 nurses and masseuses served with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and many others enlisted in Britain. Some were posted to the Australian Army Nursing Service, and in effect became members of both the Australian and New Zealand services.

### NURSING RANK

1. <b>STAFF NURSE:</b> Second Lieutenant	2. <b>MATRON:</b> Captain
2. <b>SISTER:</b> Lieutenant	4. <b>MATRON-IN-CHIEF:</b> Major

Service. They were originally not to have any military rank, but this policy was later changed. Nurses were expected to be fully qualified, aged between 21 and 40, and single or widowed. The policy was that women who married during their service were immediately to resign. Some married ones got through the recruiting checks, and some married during their period of service.

Of those who served overseas for whom there are detailed statistics, seven were under 21, 1184 aged 21 – 30, 947 aged 31 – 40, and 91 were 41+.

In all, 2139 women served overseas with the Australian Army Nursing Service in Egypt, Salonika, France, Belgium, Lemnos, India, Palestine, the Persian Gulf, Italy, Burma, Vladivostok and Abyssinia, and in hospital transport ships, including off Gallipoli. 130 worked with the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service. A further 423 nurses served in hospitals in Australia. Twenty-three of these women died in service during the war. Seven women received the Military Medal for bravery under fire, and several died of injuries or disease.

## » ABBREVIATIONS

- **AANS:** Australian Army Nursing Service
- **QAIMNS:** Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service (the official British military nursing service)
- **CCS:** Casualty Clearing Station
- **AGH:** Australian General Hospital
- **ANZAC:** Australian and New Zealand Army Corps — the name given to the combined forces of the Australians and New Zealanders at Gallipoli
- **AIF:** Australian Imperial Force — the volunteer army formed in 1914 to participate in the war
- **NZEF:** New Zealand Expeditionary Force — the force of volunteers (and later conscripts) formed in 1914 to participate in the war

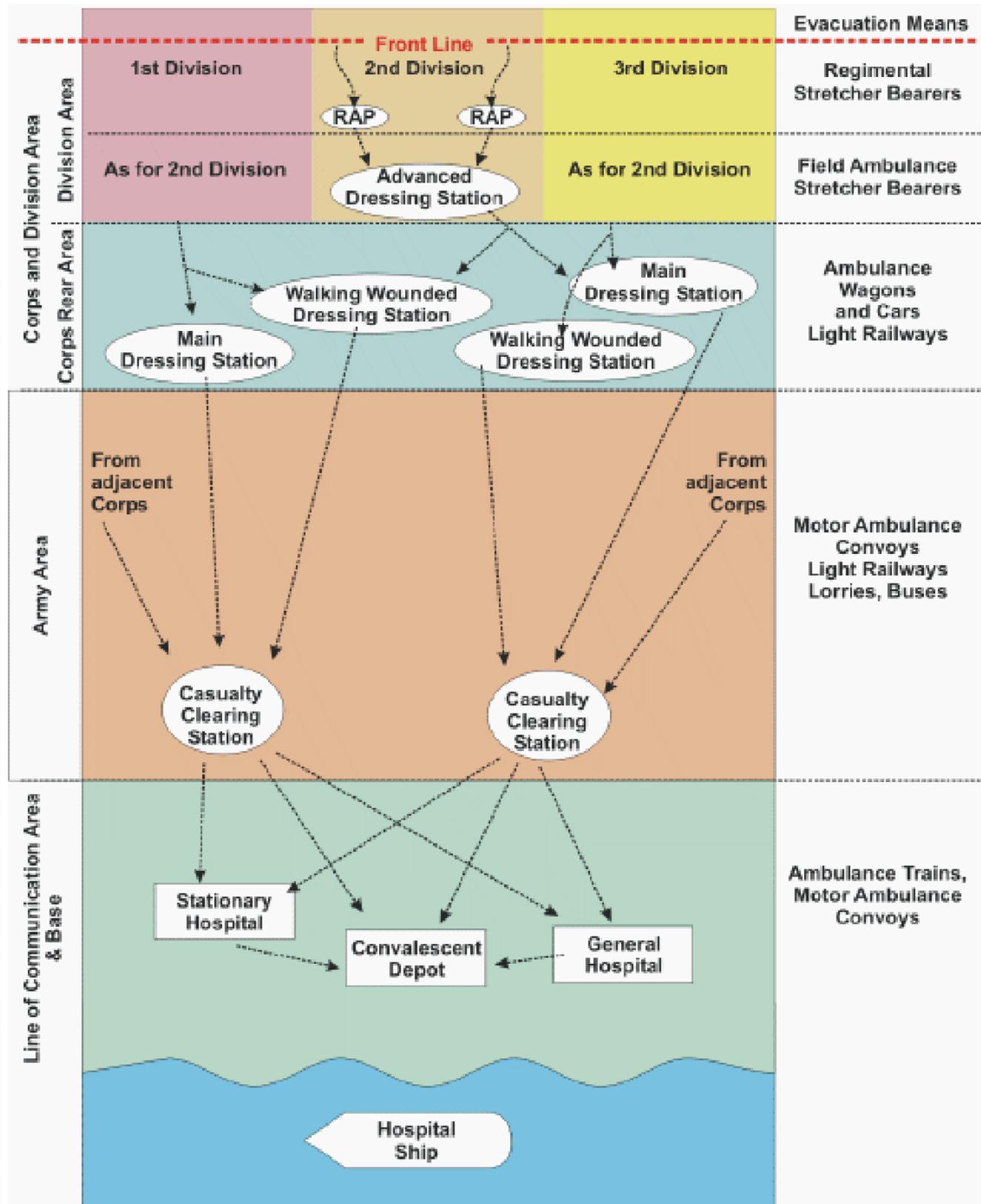


FIG 17 (QUEENSLAND ANZAC DAY COMMITTEE)



## TYPES OF HOSPITALS AND THE SEQUENCE OF MEDICAL CARE

**Regimental Aid Posts (RAP):** A casualty is likely to have received first medical attention at aid posts situated in or close behind the front line position. Units in the trenches provided such posts and generally had a Medical Officer, orderlies and men trained as stretcher bearers who would provide this support. The Field Ambulance would provide relays of stretcher bearers and men skilled in first aid, at a series of “bearer posts” along the route of evacuation from the trenches. All involved were well within the zone where they could be under fire.

**Field Ambulance:** This was a mobile medical unit, not a vehicle. The Field Ambulances provided the bearer posts but also established Main and Advanced (that is, forward) Dressing Stations where a casualty could receive further treatment to be able to be evacuated to a Casualty Clearing Station. Men who were ill or injured would also be sent to the Dressing Stations and in many cases returned to their unit after first aid or some primary care.

**Dressing Station:** Dressing Stations were usually set up in existing buildings and underground dug-outs and bunkers because they afforded some protection from enemy shell fire and aerial attack. The Dressing Stations were generally manned by the Field Ambulances.

**Casualty Clearing Stations:** Once treated at a Dressing Station, casualties would be moved rearward several kilometres to the Casualty Clearing Station. This might be by foot; or by a horse drawn wagon or motor ambulance or lorry; or in some cases by light railway. Casualty Clearing Stations were small hospitals, generally located at a railhead or similar transportation hub in forward areas. Their job was to provide emergency treatment and to move casualties back to the stationary and general hospitals.

**Stationary Hospitals:** These were small hospitals, generally based in forward areas.

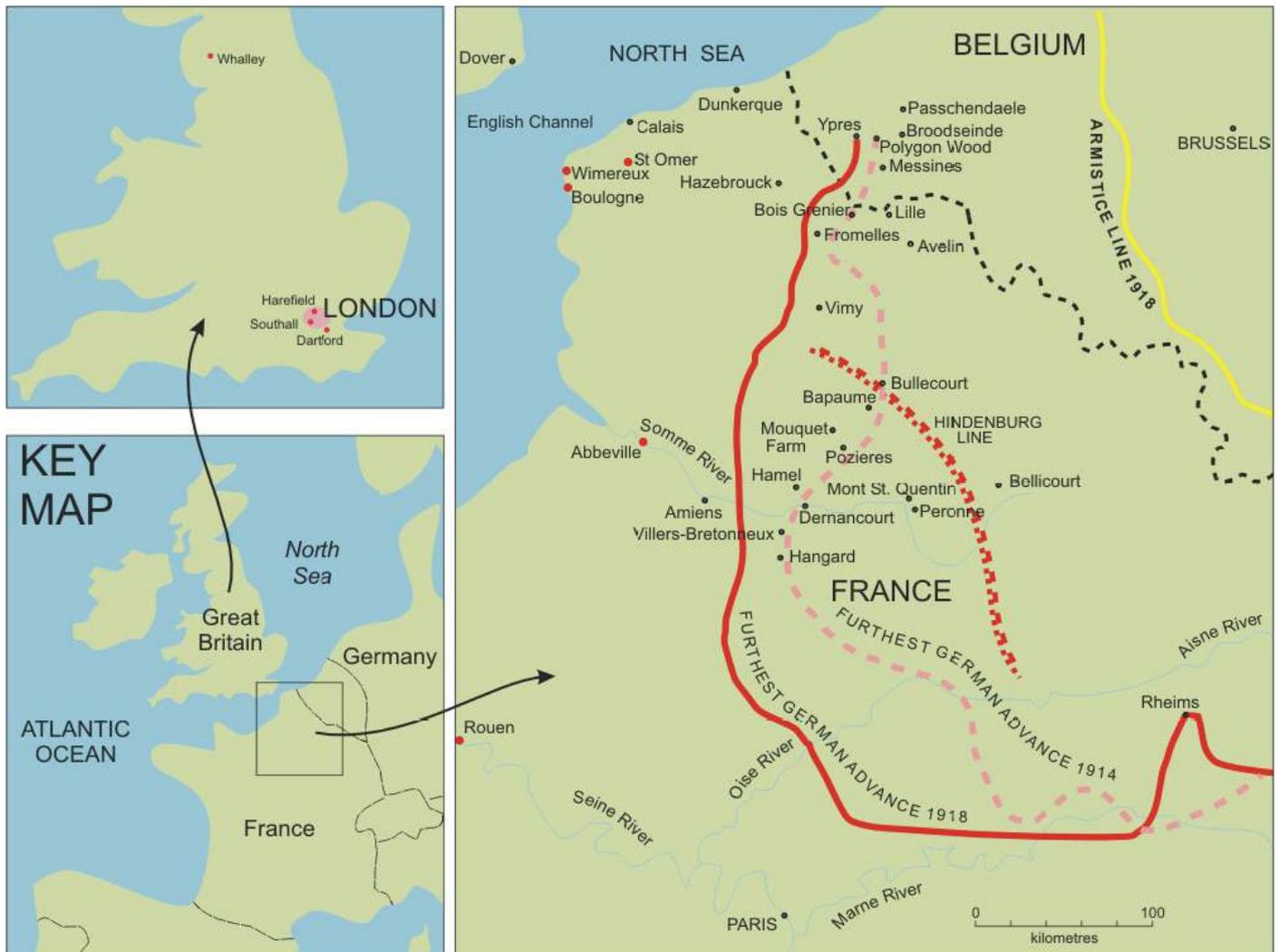
**Auxiliary Hospitals:** These were also small hospitals, located in rear areas.

**General Hospitals:** These were large base hospitals with 250, 500 or 1000 beds.

**Convalescent and Command Depots:** Convalescent or Command Depots were half way houses for casualties returning to the front — men who no longer required hospitalisation but were not yet fit to rejoin their units.



## MAP HEADING



MAP – HOSPITAL AREAS WESTERN FRONT AND BRITAIN.

<http://www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww1/anecdotes/medicalfacility.html>

## THE STORY OF ANZAC GIRLS SO FAR

### » EPISODE 1 'ADVENTURE'

The Anzac girls arrive in Egypt just after the outbreak of World War 1 and soon realise that war is not quite the “splendid adventure” they initially thought.

In early 1915, Australian nurses **Alice Ross King**, **Elsie Cook**, **Olive Haynes**, **Matron Grace Wilson** and New Zealander **Hilda Steele** arrive in Cairo for duty in World War 1.

After a brief romance with Aussie **Lieutenant Frank Smith**, Alice and her fellow Sisters endure a baptism of fire at a Clearing Station in Port Said – their first rush of war

wounds. It is during this trial that Alice catches the attention of a British Surgeon, **Major Xavier Leopold**. Believing that Elsie too has her sights on Frank and Xavier, Alice and Elsie’s friendship gets off to a rocky start. As it turns out, Elsie is in fact married, which disqualifies her from serving in the Australian Army Nursing Service. When this is exposed, it looks like Elsie’s tour of duty is over. However, pragmatic, persuasive Elsie convinces **Principal Matron Nellie Gould** to let her stay on regardless.

While Alice, Elsie, Olive and Hilda have become firm friends and adjusted to rather exacting military rules and regulations, their biggest challenge begins on April 25, 1915 with the botched Gallipoli landing. Hilda cops the first

wave of wounded on the Hospital Ship *Sicilia*, anchored mere kilometres from Anzac Cove. Back in Egypt, Alice, Elsie and Olive work tirelessly through convoy after convoy, during which Elsie faces her worst nightmare – her husband **Syd Cook** arrives injured.

Amongst the carnage, Alice meets tall and thoughtful Aussie **Lieutenant Harry Moffitt**. They bond over poetry and philosophy and Alice finds that her coquettishness has evaporated. Frank, injured at Gallipoli, proposes to Alice; but despite Alice and Harry's tension over politics, Alice realises that she is no longer interested in other men. Soon after, Harry sails for Gallipoli.

From heady days exploring the ancient pyramids to nursing wounds they have never before encountered in civilian work, in one way or another, the nurses of the AANS are in for a tremendous adventure.

## » EPISODE 2 'DUTY'

Overcoming intense hardship and trauma on the Greek Island of Lemnos, Olive and Grace care for the injured troops from the August Offensive. In Egypt, Elsie has to fight to stay at the British Hospital in Alexandria in order to save the life of her seriously wounded husband Syd.

On the barren, windswept Greek Island of Lemnos – close enough to Gallipoli to hear the boom of the artillery – **Matron Grace Wilson** and her nurses arrive to no supplies and no hospital. To make matters worse, the conditions on Lemnos are barely fit for living, let alone nursing. Their Commanding Officer, **Colonel Thomas Fiaschi**, is unaccustomed to working with nurses. If he had his way, there would be no women in a forward zone at all.

Dispirited by the state of the hospital and overwhelmed by the suffering, one by one the staff of No 3 AGH take any opportunity to get off the island. But Grace encourages her nurses to improvise wherever possible, and tasks **Olive** with keeping everyone's spirits up. Olive is determined to keep her promise, despite the toll Lemnos takes on her health and spirit. Water shortages and insanitary conditions lead to a wave of dangerous dysentery, to which she succumbs.

A bright point amongst the hardship is the visit from Kiwi nurses, including **Edith "Poppy" Popplewell** and **Lorna Rattray**, who spend a couple of nights on Lemnos bunked in with the Aussie Sisters. Grace is devastated to learn that her beloved brother Graeme has been killed at Gallipoli, but with a steady rush of wounded coming in she – and Olive – have no choice but to soldier on.

In Egypt, with **Harry** away at the Peninsula, **Xavier** continues his 'slow and steady' approach in wooing **Alice**, while **Elsie** receives the shocking news that **Syd** has been wounded at Lone Pine. With Alice's help, Elsie gets leave to go to him at the British Hospital in Alexandria,

where she has to deal with the fact that his head wound is life threatening whilst managing the obstacles of British red tape. When Syd regains consciousness, he is unable to speak and Elsie realises that, if he is to fully recover, she needs to be transferred there to "special" him. In negotiating her transfer, she antagonises the British staff, and Elsie finds she must draw on every ounce of courage, tenacity and skill she possesses if she is to save Syd's life.

## » EPISODE 3 'ENDURANCE'

In Egypt, Alice and Elsie are confronted by the heart-wrenching reality of love during wartime, which reaches a breaking point for Elsie when she is forced to choose between her husband, Syd and her role abroad in the AANS. Whilst enduring the horrific conditions on Lemnos, Olive faces her greatest test of faith and resolve.

As the Gallipoli campaign drags on into autumn, nursing on the hospital ship for **Hilda** becomes more about illness than injury. One of the men invalided back to Cairo suffering severe typhoid is **Harry**. It's a huge relief for **Alice** to see him away from danger but crushing to see him so ill. While Alice desperately wants Harry to articulate his feelings, he seems strangely reticent, leading Alice to become jealous of his nurse, **Sister Martin**. **Xavier** senses that Alice is frustrated and swoops, calmly putting his case to her: marry me and there will be no more uncertainty; I will take care of you. Alice reserves her decision - she has to confront Harry to square things between them. With all uncertainty at last put aside, Harry declares that he *is* in love with her and at Christmas they kiss under mistletoe.

On Lemnos, **Olive** is doing it tougher than ever. En route to Salonika, the troop ship the New Zealand hospital is travelling on, (including her Kiwi friends, **Poppy** and **Lorna**) is struck by a torpedo from a German submarine. Ten nurses die in the tragedy, Lorna included. Then winter hits, and with it from Gallipoli come heart-breaking cases of trench foot. The waste and pointlessness of the campaign - and her own misery – are almost more than even chirpy Olive can bear. But **Matron Grace** helps her realise she's allowed to admit that it's hard. And Grace herself finally gets some acknowledgement for making order out of chaos, albeit from the unlikeliest place.

With the withdrawal from Gallipoli, Olive and Grace return to Cairo from Lemnos, as does Hilda from the hospital ship – our Anzac girls are re-united. Whilst **Syd** has improved markedly, **Elsie** realises that his best chance of full recovery is to be transferred to a convalescent hospital in England. She succeeds in wangling a transfer for him and from there he is promptly sent home to Australia to recuperate. But this is where Elsie's run of good luck ends. She immediately volunteers for transport duty to Australia to be with her husband, but is informed that when she arrives home she will be dismissed from the Australian Army Nursing Service because she is married. It seems Elsie's war is over.

# RESPONDING TO *ANZAC GIRLS*

As you watch each episode of *ANZAC Girls* and answer questions about it summarise your ideas about the characters of the nurses on this page.

CHARACTER NOTES PAGE	EPISODE 4	EPISODE 5	EPISODE 6
 ALICE ROSS KING			
 ELSIE COOK			
 OLIVE HAYNES			
 HILDA STEELE			
 GRACE WILSON			



## EPISODE 4 'LOVE'

After being seconded to a British hospital in France, the girls come face-to-face with the snobbery of the British nursing staff, inciting them to reflect on their own national identity. Meanwhile, Alice is forced to face the emotional brutality of war as Harry is believed to have been killed at Fromelles.

After spending days on a crowded troop train, **Alice, Olive, Hilda** and **Grace** arrive in Rouen, France. The Army are yet to set up an Australian Hospital for them so the nurses are sent to work at No 11 British Stationary Hospital. Immediately Alice tries to find out if anyone knows where **Harry's** 21st Battalion is stationed. She traipses back and forth to the field post office every chance she can, but no letters.

Hilda is delighted to be so close to the "Mother Country" and at the thought of working with English nurses. But the British **Ward Sister Bullus** is scathing and strict; lots of Imperial rules and regulations that the Australian and Kiwi nurses chafe against. The beds must be made thus. The blankets folded thus. But at long last the Anzac nurses return to No 1 Australian General Hospital. There, Alice

meets **Major John Prior**, a friend of Harry's. Olive also finds a familiar face – **Orderly Pat Dooley** whom she met on Lemnos and who clearly fancies her, to which Olive is oblivious.

One year after the commencement of the campaign at Gallipoli, Olive, Alice and Hilda make up little parcels and carefully inscribe each with "Anzac Day 1916" which they give to all the Australian and Kiwi men serving. A sense of national identity is being forged for both former colonies.

Meanwhile, Grace's superlative skills and smarts are finally recognised – but at a cost – she is sent to London to be Matron in Chief at AIF HQ. It is a huge feather in her cap and all the girls are very proud, but it is bittersweet; they will miss her and she them and it takes a wonderful nurse away from where she is needed most, especially as the battle of the Western Front begins. Hilda and Olive, seeing Alice's spiralling tension, encourage her to join them for a picnic in the countryside. On their return they are met by Major Prior, ashen-faced. He tells her that Harry has been killed, in a battle near a place called Fromelles. The next day, Alice receives Harry's very last letter.





EPISODE 4 – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

THEME	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
<b>The nature of the war and the nurses' experience of it</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The war now shifts to the Western Front.</li> <li>» What are conditions like on the Western Front for nurses?</li> <li>» How do the nurses respond to them?</li> </ul>
<b>The impact of the war on nurses' lives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» There are both positive and negative impacts, especially for Grace, Hilda and Alice. Comment on these.</li> </ul>
<b>Character – The nurses as real people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» How do the nurses respond to the challenges and difficulties they are starting to face?</li> <li>» The military system is increasingly presented as a problem for the nurses. How do they respond to these difficulties?</li> <li>» Add comments to your Character notes page for them.</li> </ul>
<b>The nurses as heroic figures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are the nurses presented as heroic and also believable?</li> </ul>
<b>The nurses as part of the Anzac Tradition and Spirit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» How do we see national identity (for both Australians and New Zealanders) developing?</li> </ul>
<b>Filming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» This episode is largely set in hospital wards. How do the filmmakers create the world of 1916?</li> <li>» Is it effective?</li> <li>» Discuss the ANZAC commemorative ceremony. What messages does it present about developing Australian and New Zealand identity?</li> <li>» We see some historical photos at the end of this episode. Does it intrude on the drama, or contribute to it?</li> </ul>
<b>Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The title of this episode is 'Love'. Is it a good title?</li> <li>» Can you suggest an alternative?</li> </ul>



## EPISODE 5 'MATESHIP'

Alice struggles to accept that Harry may have been killed; Hilda discovers an aptitude for anaesthetics; Olive is proposed to by Pat; and Elsie returns to the war as a 'Bluebird', part of the French Red Cross (*Croix Rouge*).

Harry's name has not appeared on any death lists, and **Alice** cannot help holding out hope that he is somehow alive, perhaps captured by the Germans or injured and unable to say his name.

As Alice swings between hope and despair, fury and misery, increasingly reliant on prescription heroin to sleep, **Hilda** is growing worried for her grieving friend. But Hilda has her own challenges – a shortage of doctors means that a select few nurses are being trained as anaesthetists. Hilda has found something at which she excels, so when a chauvinistic army order comes down banning Australian nurses from the work, Hilda is devastated.

As the bitter winter encroaches, and Harry's death is finally confirmed, Alice and Hilda face their darkest moments, but their friendship and loyalty sees them through – and when Hilda has the bright idea to call on her New Zealand citizenship, she is able to side-step the rules and go back to anaesthesia where she is needed.

Meanwhile at the Casualty Clearing Station at Trois Arbres, in between dealing with gas attacks and a stream of desperately wounded men, **Olive** accepts **Pat's** proposal of marriage, but then has to contend with dour opposition from her parents at home. Pat wants her to defy them, but Olive cannot marry without their blessing. When Pat is critically injured and her chance of happiness looks to be

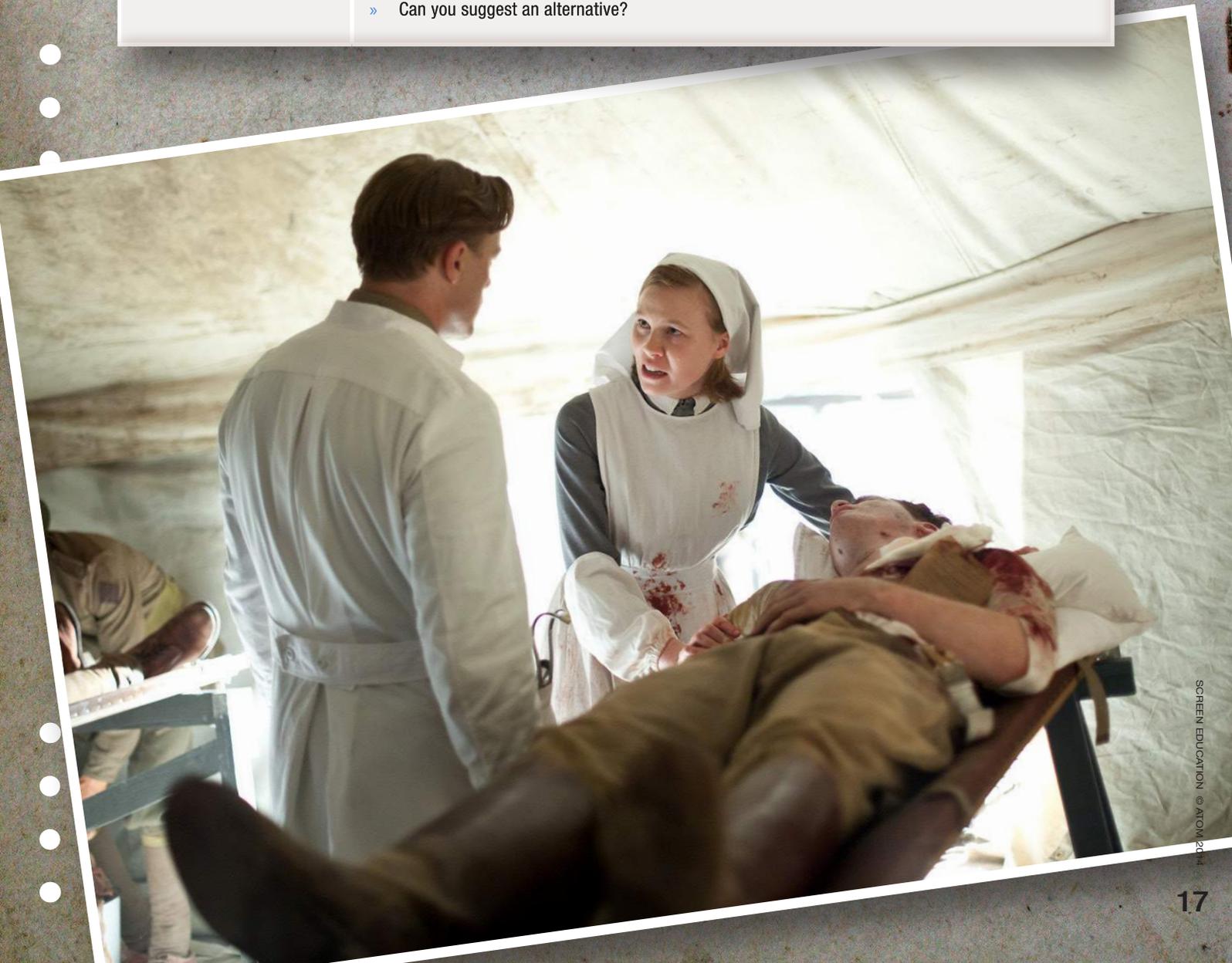
slipping away, Olive at last takes control of her life – she will marry him whatever her parents think!

With Pat convalescing in England, after a brief visit to her nursing pals at No 1 AGH (at which **Elsie Cook** now nursing with the *Croix Rouge*, also appears), Olive resigns from the AANS and leaves the war for a future with Pat back in Australia.



EPISODE 5 – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

THEME	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
The nature of the war and the nurses' experience of it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What new conditions do the nurses face at the front line?</li> <li>» There is conflict between the nurses' view of the wounded and the Army's. Is the Army view justified?</li> </ul>
The impact of the war on nurses' lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» How do we see skills and professionalism developing among the nurses?</li> <li>» Olive makes the decision to put her marriage ahead of her role as a nurse. Is this justified?</li> </ul>
Character – The nurses as real people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Add comments to your Character notes page for them.</li> </ul>
The nurses as heroic figures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are the nurses presented as heroic and also believable?</li> </ul>
The nurses as part of the Anzac Tradition and Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» How are the developing Australian and New Zealand identities presented?</li> </ul>
Filming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are the soldiers and nurses all presented as perfect?</li> </ul>
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The title of this episode is 'Mateship'. Is it a good title?</li> <li>» Can you suggest an alternative?</li> </ul>



## EPISODE 6 'COURAGE'

Alice, Hilda and Elsie all find themselves mere kilometres from the front, the possibility of death edging ever closer, while the war seems like it will never end.

Following **Olive's** departure, **Alice** and **Hilda** begin work at No 2 Australian Casualty Clearing Station, Trois Arbres. One terrible night German planes drop bomb after bomb, almost killing Alice, who carries on through the raid to protect her patients and move them to safety. For her outstanding courage that night she is awarded the Military Medal, and who should turn up to the award ceremony but **Major Xavier Leopold** still as in love with Alice as ever. He again proposes, but Alice quietly declines – her heart still belongs to **Harry**.

Meanwhile, **Elsie** is working at the Red Cross Hospital in Amiens, also suffering air raids, and bending rules to travel across the devastated countryside to see her beloved **Syd** at the frontline. Tension between this hitherto happy couple arises as Syd wants her to leave her work and come with him to London. But as the tide of the war surges, Elsie is finding her sense of purpose and duty expanding and she remains in Amiens.



Hilda and, particularly, Alice are both showing signs of post-traumatic stress. Alice's faith in God and Empire has been eroded, replaced instead by faith in her work and her friends. They are finally transferred back to No 1 AGH and reunited with **Grace**. And then Armistice and the staff of No 1 rejoice in the streets of Rouen.

We then follow postscripts over photographs of the real Anzac girls, outlining the rest of their lives – including Alice's marriage to the genial **Dr Sydney Appleford**. But we end with the image of Alice as an old woman, gazing at the photograph of her and Harry in Egypt – a poignant reminder of the irreplaceable losses of war.





**EPISODE 6 – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

THEME	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
<p><b>The nature of the war and the nurses' experience of it</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A key event is the bombing attack on the Casualty Clearing Station. How do we see various people responding to that?</li> <li>» The war ends. What is the different attitude or response of the nurses to it?</li> </ul>
<p><b>The impact of the war on nurses' lives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What does the tension between Syd and Elsie tell us about the impacts of the war on Elsie?</li> <li>» How do we see the strain on Hilda and Alice?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Character – The nurses as real people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Add comments to your Character notes page for them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The nurses as heroic figures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are the nurses presented as heroic and also believable?</li> </ul>
<p><b>The nurses as part of the Anzac Tradition and Spirit</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» There is a variety of behaviour shown. The women (and the men) are not all presented as perfect. Does this fact that not all the ANZACs (men and women) were perfect dilute the Anzac Spirit?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Filming</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The attack on the CCS is the first time we have seen combat. Is it filmed and presented realistically and effectively?</li> <li>» Is the use of photographs to outline the story of the women after the war effective?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Title</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The title of this episode is 'Courage'. Is it a good title?</li> <li>» Can you suggest an alternative?</li> </ul>

# IS ANZAC GIRLS GOOD HISTORY?

*ANZAC Girls* claims to be about 'real events' and 'real people'. Look at the following quotations taken from Australian nurses' letters and diaries during the war, and discuss how this reality is or is not presented in *ANZAC Girls*.

## SOURCE 1

### Sister Aileen Lucas writing from 1 Australian General Hospital tent hospital in France, 1917

*The river was frozen . . . The water pipes burst, and we could not get any water for some time, not even to wash the patients. . . . Here we received the casualties straight from the field, some very severely wounded, and feeling the cold very greatly. A great number of them had trench feet and frost-bite. Several patients were frozen to death in the ambulances coming down to us.*

In Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992, p56

## SOURCE 2

### Sister Alice Ross King, writing about experiencing an artillery barrage at a Casualty Clearing Station at Messines in 1917. During this attack four sisters received Military Medals for their bravery during the night.

*. . . I could hear nothing for the roar of the planes and the artillery. I seemed to be the only living thing about . . . I kept calling for the orderly to help me and thought he was funkung, but the poor boy had been blown to bits . . . I had my right arm under a leg which I thought was [a patient's she was trying to help] but when I lifted I found to my horror that it was a loose leg with a boot . . . on it. One of the orderly's legs which had been blown off and had landed on the patient's bed. Next day they found the trunk up a tree about twenty yards away . . . [Later she heard some wounded German prisoners that had*



*been forgotten] I shall never forget the cries that greeted me. They had gone without food or water . . . everyone on our staff was dead beat but I got the doctor to come and fix them up. We did forty patients in 45 minutes (the other 13 had died). No waiting for chloroform . . . amputations and all, and onto the train an hour and a half after I had found them.*

In Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992 p63-64

## SOURCE 3

### Nursing in 1AAH in Britain

*All my boys are either winged or legs off, shoulders blown away, big head wounds, but nearly all healed up and just little pieces of dead bone keeping them from healing up altogether. They are such fine fellows. Some have only had 12 operations.*

*We are getting more stumps every day and now have about 300 without legs and arms.*

*I have about 30 leg stumps to dress every morning and about 40 beds to make. The orderly helps me but it is an awful rush.*

*One of the nurses is to be married in the morning from here and Matron is giving her a morning tea. All the boys are standing with an archway of crutches on their one leg!*

*I am sorry for Australia for it will be nothing but broken down men after the war.*

Sister Queenie Avenell, in Rupert Goodman, *Queensland Nurses – Boer War to Vietnam*, Brisbane, Boolarong Publications, 1985 p91

## SOURCE 4

### In a ward for the blinded

*We had to describe the pictures to them, they enjoyed the music and their tea . . . the boys will remember the many musicians who came to cheer them up . . . the Red Cross supplied comforts and how the boys enjoyed the hot soup and dainties but even that did not compensate for loss of limbs, health and careers.*

Sister Alice Cocking in Rupert Goodman, *Queensland Nurses – Boer War to Vietnam*, Brisbane, 1985 p92



## SOURCE 5

### In a ward for the shell-shocked

One realises what the horrors of war must be like to reduce such fine men to this state. One aged 26 is just like a child, learning to talk again. He's very bright, you can't exactly call him mental but his condition never improves. It's pathetic to see the toys and picture books on his locker . . . I never did like working with mentals, for it takes so much out of me. I feel like a piece of chewed string after duty . . . Shell shock is fearful, worse than death.

Sister Evelyn Davies in Marianne Baker, *Nightingales in the Mud*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1989 p160

## SOURCE 6

### In a Casualty Clearing Station

. . . all the big cases came pouring in, and we had 1800 men and only twenty-four sisters . . . The men were sent down with only their field dressings . . . We were bombed every night on and off and that made our work doubly hard, as some of the patients were very difficult to control in their weak state.

In Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992 p58

## SOURCE 7

### In a French surgical hospital

The Captain in my ward is awfully decent to us and such a

clever surgeon – he does wonders... They have a special Jaw Ward here, where they have all the smashed-up faces, and really they do wonders. They have a special French sculptor – most frightfully clever – who makes new jaws and noses and faces and the men will hardly be disfigured at all. This is a special Surgical Hospital and we get all the worst wounds – so you can imagine the work there is...

... you can't get anything but beastly pastry and cream things here. I am sick of the sight of French cooking.

Olive Haynes <http://throughtheselines.com.au/2010/research/olive-haynes.html>

## SOURCE 8

### At the end of the war

We were all glad to be taking part in the great adventure. They were grim and tragic, but somehow inspiring days.

Nellie Pike, in Marianne Baker, *Nightingales in the Mud*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1989 p.42]

## SOURCE 9

### Gertrude Moberley, reaction at the end of the war

Blood! Blood! I am very tired. Oh dear God, how dreadfully tired, and broken-hearted too.

In Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992 p63]

## THE SCRIPTWRITERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE CHARACTERS

**A SISTER ALICE ROSS KING** Alice is a beautiful, passionate, impetuous, insecure girl, initially wary of her fellow nurses whom she sees as rivals. Her widowed mother did not approve of her becoming a nurse and certainly did not approve of her going to war, but Alice went anyway – for duty yes, but also for the freedom it afforded her. A supremely professional and talented nurse, Alice goes to war searching for love and security, but most of all she is searching for herself...

**B SISTER HILDA STEELE** Painfully shy, Hilda has spent her life being a good girl – and a very self-effacing one at that. From her upper middle class background in Auckland, singing in the Presbyterian choir, to her charity work for the Children's Mission, she has never

put a foot wrong, nor has she ever put her foot down. The chaos of war is the crucible in which this meek and mild girl from Remuera is forged into a strong and confident woman.

**C SISTER ELSIE COOK** It is Sydney's society wedding of the year when Elsie Sheppard marries former Australian Prime Minister Sir Joseph Cook's son Syd, just days before both sail for Egypt and war. So hiding her rule-breaking marriage from the chauvinist army authorities is the first of many challenges Elsie faces. But when the secret comes out and she is staring down dismissal, this kind, conventional, polite, middle-class girl unexpectedly stands her ground, and becomes the only openly married nurse in the AANS.

**D SISTER OLIVE HAYNES** For lively, confident Adelaide girl Olive, going to war is both an adventure and a welcome duty. Truth be told, it is also

a way of defying her loving but rather straight-laced clergyman father – as was becoming a nurse in the first place. Olive is a self-appointed "tonic" to the other nurses, always ready with a cheeky comment and an ironic take on whatever situation of hardship and bureaucratic idiocy she and her fellows face. But will the harshness of war wear even this nurse down?

**E MATRON GRACE WILSON** A career nurse before the term was ever coined, modest, unassuming Grace serves as Matron first in Cairo, then at No 3 Australian Stationary Hospital on Lemnos Island. An exceptional leader, compassionate to her nurses as well as to the wounded, Grace is attractive, kind-hearted and popular, inspiring loyalty from all who work with her - even when she has to make and carry out some very tough decisions.

## SUMMARISING THE THEMES

**1** The nurses shown in the series are real people. You have seen their character development over the series. Create a short pen portrait of each of the five nurses. Then look at the summaries of the characters as seen by the script writers of the series (*See previous page*). Compare your assessment of each character with theirs. Discuss the similarities and differences.

**2** Here are photographs of the real nurses (*See photos this page*). Compare these with the actors who play them. Do you think that the choice of actors for these women adds to or detracts from the depiction of reality of the nurses? Explain your views.

**3** How effectively do you think the series has depicted the nature of the war? Is it only one feature emphasised? Do you think the war experience of the soldiers has been successfully presented in this series? Is the experience of the men relevant to this series? Discuss your views.

**4** Are the nurses a part of the Anzac Spirit? Do you think

they are sufficiently recognised?

**5** What do you think were the main impacts of the war on the nurses?

### » RETURNING TO YOUR ORIGINAL IDEAS

Look back at your original answers to and ideas about the Australian nurses of World War 1. Have your knowledge and attitudes changed?

### » IS ANZAC GIRLS A GOOD SERIES?

The makers of the series want to create a series that informs, entertains, engages, educates, creates empathy and gets certain messages across. Consider the way the following elements are used in *ANZAC Girls* to achieve those ends (*See Table next page*).

Do you think the filmmakers have achieved their goals? Explain your view.



A (QUEENSLAND ANZAC DAY COMMITTEE)



B ([HTTP://WWW.AANS.GRAVESECRETS.NET](http://www.aans.gravesecrets.net))



C (AWM B68419)



E (AWM A05332)



D ([HTTP://WWW.AANS.GRAVESECRETS.NET](http://www.aans.gravesecrets.net))

A: Sister Alice  
Ross King

B: Sister Elsie  
Cook

C: Sister Olive  
Haynes

D: Sister Hilda  
Steele

E: Matron Grace  
Wilson



ASPECT	COMMENTS
Structure of the episodes	
Script and story lines	
Music	
Editing	
Lighting	
Sound	
Cinematography	
Special effects	
The recreation of the historical settings	
Development of the characters	
Costumes	
Use of historical photographs	
Any other features that you notice	

# WHAT BECAME OF THESE ANZAC GIRLS AFTER THE WAR TO END ALL WARS?

**ELSIE COOK** – Elsie Cook and her husband Syd moved back to Australia, where Syd became Commonwealth Works Director, first in Perth, and then in Sydney. It is here that Elsie raised their son and then opened and ran a successful antique business. She was involved in charity work with the Wesleyan Church, particularly in support of women fallen on hard times.

**OLIVE HAYNES** – Olive Haynes married Pat Dooley before the end of the war. Pat became a successful lawyer and together they had seven children, one of whom had Down's Syndrome. Refusing to shut her child away "out of sight, out of mind," Olive helped establish a special school for children with Down's Syndrome. When World War II broke out, Pat re-enlisted and Olive worked for the Red Cross.

**HILDA STEELE** – Hilda Steele continued her studies, training in London as a masseuse. She returned to New Zealand, married and had a daughter – but the marriage broke down after only a year. She was Sister-in-Charge and Matron at hospitals in Auckland and Nelson, then worked in TB clinics that became the forerunner of the *New Zealand District Nursing Service*.

**GRACE WILSON** – Grace became Matron-in-Chief of the Australian Army Nursing Reserve, and served in the Middle East in World War II. She was President of the *Royal Victorian College of Nursing*, three times president of the *Returned Nurses' Club*, a trustee of the *Shrine of Remembrance*, and in 1953 was made a life member of the *Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia*. At the age of 74, Grace Wilson finally did something entirely for herself. She fell in love and married.

**ALICE ROSS KING** – Alice Ross King and Dr Sydney Appleford married in August 1919. They ran a busy medical practice in rural Victoria and had four children. During World War II, Alice was commissioned a Major serving at home with responsibilities for over 2000 servicewomen. An award in her name is presented annually to a serving member of the *Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps*. For the rest of her life, she spent every July 19<sup>th</sup> alone, remembering the other life the Great War took away.

## FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT NURSES

### » BOOKS

- Patsy Adam-Smith, *Australian Women At War*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1984
- Rupert Goodman, *Our War Nurses*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1988
- Marianne Barker, *Nightingales in the Mud*, Allen&Unwin, Sydney, 1989
- Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, Oxford, Melbourne, 1992
- Joan Beaumont (ed), *Australia's War 1914-18*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995
- Janet Butler, *Kitty's War, The remarkable wartime experiences of Kit McNaughton*, UQP, 2013.
- Carol Fallows, *Love and War*, Bantam Books, Sydney, 2002
- Melanie Oppenheimer, *Oceans of Love. Narrelle - An Australian Nurse in World War I*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2006
- Melanie Oppenheimer, *Australian Women in War*, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, 2008
- Peter Rees, *The Other Anzacs*, Allen&Unwin, Sydney, 2008
- Richard Reid, *Just Wanted To Be There*, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, 1999

### » NOVEL

- Thomas Keneally, *The Daughters of Mars*, Vintage Australia, 2013.

### » WEBSITES

- Australian War Memorial <<https://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/nurses/ww1/>>
- Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Queensland <<http://www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww1/overview/nurses.html>>
- World War 1 Australian Army Nursing Service <<http://www.aans.gravesecrets.net>>
- Gallipoli and the Anzacs <<http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/nurses.html>>
- New Zealand Military Nursing <<http://www.nzans.org/Nurses%20Who%20Served/Full%20NZANS%20WW1%20Roll.html>>
- The war effort of New Zealand – Army Nurses <<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH1-Effo-t1-body-d5.html>>

### » PERSONAL RECORDS

- National Archives of Australia Personal files [www.naa.gov.au/](http://www.naa.gov.au/) and go to Record Search Transcript of diaries of Alice Ross King 1915-1919 <<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0000976/>>



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