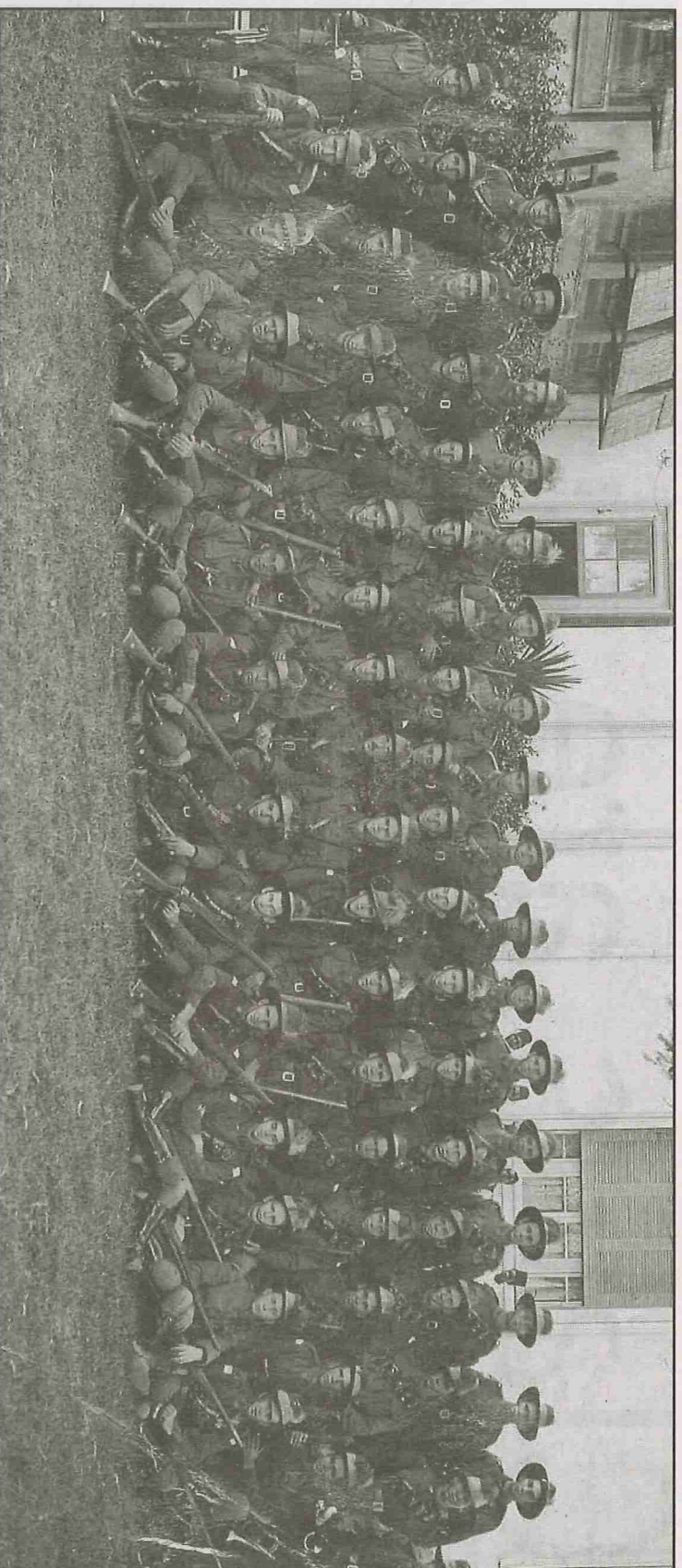


What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email [archive@csu.edu.au](mailto:archive@csu.edu.au) or visit the website at [www.csu.edu.au/research/archives](http://www.csu.edu.au/research/archives) for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



PW2132/32 Australian Light Horse Regiment at Menangle 1918 (Courtesy of Campbell Family Papers).

# Researching War memories

at the archives  
Wayne Doubleday



**W**ith Anzac Day fresh in our minds, and the countless mentions of servicemen and women giving themselves to the war effort, it is quite timely to consider researching actual accounts of war veterans and the battles they have served in.

Whether it is for family history, general interest, or for a school assignment, there is a great amount of information readily available to provide accurate descriptions of individual soldiers, service units or a particular conflict. The Australian War Memorial website is the best place to start, at [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au).

For information on an individual, personal service records typically contain details on soldier enlistment, assignment to units, embarkation details, promotions, medical treatment, official correspondence, and medal entitlements.

Copies of service records can be obtained from the National Archives of Australia - many service records have already been digitised and are available to view online. Individuals who have died during or as a result of their service in the Australian Military may be found on a nominal roll, such as the Roll of Honour.

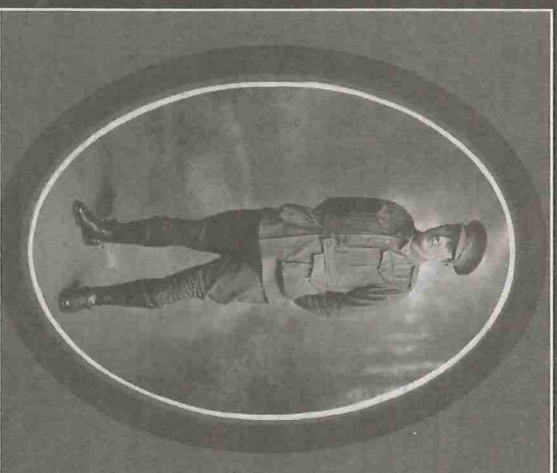
Additionally, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has registered all British Commonwealth soldiers who died in World War I and World War II, and provided details of their burial or commemoration sites.

To provide a context for an individual's war experience, information on a particular unit, such as battalion, regiment or squadron, can outline where they served, give details of casualties, commanding officers, battle honours and specify the equipment used.

The Australian War Memorial Collection has unit profiles for various conflicts that the Australian Military has served in.



RW2132/32 Troops in Egypt during World War 1 (Courtesy of Campbell Family Papers).



RW5/107 J.T. Thim - Died of wounds at Villiers Brittenoux 30th March 1918, aged 21 years. (Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society).

These provide a short history of the unit and show where the unit fits into the overall war effort.

The memorial's collection also contains photographs, art works, memorabilia, and film and sound recordings relating to particular units.

Another source of information for unit history is the Australian Army War Diaries,

which are also available from the Australian War Memorial.

There are also published unit histories and official war histories readily available.

The following is an example of using service records and unit profiles to construct a picture of a soldier's experience serving in World War I.

**Corporal Oliver Septimus Baker, First World War**

Corporal Oliver Septimus Baker was aged 21 years when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on October 20, 1915.

Son of John Thomas and Mary Baker of Lake Albert, Wagga, Oliver worked on the family farm before embarking for service on board the HMAT A14 Eurypides on November 2, 1915.

Arriving in Egypt, Oliver joined the 2nd Battalion, 11th Reinforcement at Tel-el-Kebir on January 21, 1916.

A month later, he was transferred to the 54th Battalion and in June, embarked the HT Caledonian at Alexandria to join the British Expeditionary Force headed for France.

On June 29, 1916 he disembarked at Marseilles and on August 2, Oliver was promoted to Corporal.

Shortly after his promotion, Corporal Baker was wounded in action on September 13, 1916, suffering bullet wounds to the left thigh and foot.

He was transferred and admitted to hospital in England, where he underwent surgery to remove the shrapnel from his foot and leg.

After several months of convalescing and training in England, Corporal Baker rejoined his unit in France almost a year after he was initially wounded.

On October 17, 1917, Baker was wounded for a second time - on this occasion, he had been gassed.

Among the hospitals Corporal Baker was admitted to were Whimeroux 14th General Hospital in France, and Colchester General Hospital in England.

Considered medically unfit from the gas poisoning and earlier wounds to the leg, Corporal Oliver Septimus Baker embarked for return to Australia on December 21, 1917.

He arrived in Melbourne in February, and transhipped to Sydney, where he was discharged from the AIF on March 22, 1918.