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Question 2: The impacts of World War I have stretched far beyond the battlefronts of 1914-18. Discuss this with reference to the impacts on soldiers, nurses and those who remained on the home front.

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World War One (WW1) began on the 28th of July, 1914, a month after the assassination of Austrian President Franz Ferdinand, and his wife Sophie, the Duchess of Honenberg. Franz and his wife were murdered on the 28th of June, 1914, in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb student who was a member of the Serbian nationalist society Black hand. Austria declared war on Serbia after the murder, and the raging conflict in Europe turned into a world-wide war. After a month of European engagement, Britain declared war on Germany on the 4th of August, 1914. The outbreak of the war was greeted with great enthusiasm in Australia, which at the time was still a young nation and patriotic to it's mother country and the empire. The Prime Minister of Australia, Andrew Fisher pledged his full support to Britain in an election speech at Colac, Victoria on the 31st of July, 1914. He famously declared that *'should the worst happen, after everything has been done that honour will permit, Australians will stand beside the mother country to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling'* (Curtis, 2014). The war had significant impacts on soldiers, nurses and those who remained at home, as will be discussed in this essay.

Australia officially joined the allied forces on the 6th of August 1914. It is unlikely that Fisher or his contemporaries had any idea of the human and financial sacrifices of Australia's commitment. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of whom more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken as prisoners of war (Australian War Memorial, 2016). Most of the men recruited into the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at the outbreak of the First World War were sent to Egypt to meet the threat which the Ottoman Empire posed to British interests in the Middle East and the Suez Canal. After four and a half months of training near Cairo, Australians departed by ship for the Gallipoli peninsula, together with troops from New Zealand, Britain and France. Over eight months, ANZACS advanced little further than the positions they had taken on the 25th of April, 1915, which was the first day of landing. By the 20th of December 1915, every man had been evacuated from the Peninsula under cover of a comprehensive deception operation. The evacuation began on the 15th of December, 1915, and 36,000 troops (nzhistory.govt.nz, 2020) were shipped out over four nights. Support troops and reserves went first, then the fighting units were thinned out until only 10,000 remained on the 19th of December, 1915. The last of the troops moved out that night in a coordinated withdrawal from the front-line trenches. As a result, the Turkish were unable to inflict more than a few casualties on the retreating forces.

The entire Gallipoli operation, however, cost 26,111 Australian casualties, including 8,141 deaths (Australian War Memorial, 2017). Despite the deaths, Gallipoli had no influence on the course or outcome of the war. The deaths were no surprise, considering the horrific conditions the soldiers had to endure. Up to 25,000 men packed into a cramped trench where diseases, lice and over-filled latrines flourished in the unhygienic conditions. With many deaths around them, there was also a horrible odour produced. Unburied corpses littered no man's land, while others were laid to rest in shallow

graves. No man's land was the area that belonged to either opposing side in the battlefield; the boundaries would shift from one side to the other as either side gained or lost ground. In the extreme heat of summer, the rotting corpses provided the perfect breeding ground for flies and the diseases they spread. Swarms of flies complicated life even more for the men, and tasks as simple as preparing food became impossible.

Trooper Ion Idriess recalled how the flies swarmed into a jam tin he had opened. Despite his best efforts to keep them away, they also swarmed all over his jam-covered biscuit and got into his mouth. Eventually, Idriess gave up the struggle: *'I threw the tin over the parapet. I nearly howled with rage ... Of all the bastards of places this is the greatest bastard in the world'* (Department of Veterans Affairs' 2022). The soldiers' diet consisted of Bully Beef (tinned corned beef), rice, jam, cocoa, biscuits, tea and some bread. The biscuits were so hard that they often had to be soaked in water and then grated into a mush to make them edible. Many men broke a tooth on "hardtack". Fresh water was scarce on the dusty, dry Gallipoli peninsula, particularly at Anzac Cove, and was strictly rationed. Getting water supplies to the troops was an arduous process. It was brought from abroad by sea and kept in tanks on the coast, then taken up to the trenches by troops or animal transport. The water shortage soon took its toll on men already weakened by the harsh climate and living conditions. Many men struggled to cool down in the scorching temperatures, and had to ditch layers to control their body heat. Ormond Burton recalled the horrific summer weather. *'Day by day the sun grew hotter and hotter until it burned down scorchingly hot. There was scarcely any shade. The bivvies themselves were swelteringly hot. The ground was almost red hot. There was little stirring of air beneath the great cliffs. Men soon commenced to shed their clothing. Slacks were ripped off at the knees and the vogue of shorts commenced. Coats were flung off and then shirts. The 'Tommy hats' in which the New Zealanders had landed were soon thrown away and replaced by Australian felts, pith helmets or the New Zealand issue of unfortunate members of the reinforcement drafts ... Within six weeks of landing the fashionable costume had become boots, shorts, identity disk, hat and when circumstances permitted a cheerful smile. The whole was topped off by a most glorious coat of sunburn'* (New Zealand History, 2013).

For those wounded on Gallipoli, the delay for treatment and evacuation was often long and agonising. During the April landings and the August offensive, the advanced dressing stations in the gullies and the casualty clearing stations on the beach could not cope with the large numbers of wounded. The stations often came under fire due to their exposed positions. Other problems occurred when soldiers became very ill. By August, doctors were reporting that most of the ANZACS were suffering from some form of dysentery or diarrhoea. Hundreds of men were being evacuated sick. In late August 1915, a newly arrived medical officer of the 15th Battalion summed up the effects of battle and daily life at Gallipoli on his unit: *'The condition of the men of the battalion was awful. Thin, haggard, as weak as kittens and covered with suppurating sores. The total strength of the battalion was two officers and 170 men. If we had been in France, every man would have been sent to hospital'* (Department of Veterans, 2022). As well as the horrific conditions, the soldiers struggled mentally, with the trauma of seeing many killed. Numerous soldiers returned home with severe post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The harrowing experiences of war often stuck with soldiers who were unable to overcome the impact it had on their lives. By the end of the First War, there were 80,000 cases (Bourke, 2011) of shell-shock, caused by the traumatic stresses of combat. The effects of soldiers

fighting not only at Gallipoli but at other battle grounds had long lasting effects on Australian people and the economy.

Nurses who served in WW1 were exposed to the physical and mental strain of dealing with the overwhelming number of casualties from the battles. Once a nurse enlisted, they had no choice but to serve for the duration of the war, unless they got badly injured or married, as only unmarried women were authorised. More than 3000 Australian Civilian nurses volunteered for active service during the First World War (Australian War Memorial, 2021). Women worked overseas in hospitals, ships and trains, or in casualty clearing stations closer to the front line. Nurses not only worked in Australian hospitals, but in British hospitals or army nursing units. Despite being prone to certain countries hospital bases, it was not practical for Australian nurses to only care for other Australians, therefore they treated many wounded soldiers of different nations. During the war, the women served in 192 overseas locations with a significant presence in Egypt, Lemnos, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Salonika, Palestine, Mesopotamia and India (Centenary of World War 1 in Orange, 2017).

Nurses proved to be energetic, hardworking and resilient in very difficult circumstances. They faced challenges including inadequate facilities, staff shortages, diseases, harsh climates and large numbers of wounded and traumatised people. Lieutenant Harold Williams was wounded at Peronne, France in September 1918. After his experience in a casualty clearing station at Daours, Williams recalled admiration for the nurses' work: *'In large marquees, nurses, pale and weary beyond words, hurried about. That these women worked their long hours among such surroundings without collapsing spoke volumes for their will-power and sense of duty. The place reeked with the odours of blood, antiseptic dressings, and unwashed bodies ... They saw soldiers in their most pitiful state — wounded, blood-stained, dirty, reeking of blood and filth'* (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2021). This primary source highlights the trauma that nurses had experienced constantly, whilst saving many lives in dreadful working conditions. The women had no choice but to overwork themselves to save lives.

The climate where hospitals were based presented an enormous complication during the war. Sister Anne Donnell boarded the *Mooltan* in South Australia on the 20th of May 1915. She recalled that their heavy uniforms were unsuitable for warm weather on the voyage: *'We had another full dress parade this a.m. and sweltered in our heavy serge dresses, and wrung the perspiration out of them afterwards. Words fail me while this heat lasts — honestly we haven't ceased sweating since the third day out from Australia. A Sergeant-Major died suddenly in the small hours this morning — owing to the heat'* (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020). The climate constantly changed as they relocated around the world. The heat complicated things, as the tents that were used as hospitals were often

overcrowded, smelly and stuffy. The extreme heat caused soldiers to faint, which made it strenuous for the nurses, resulting in more patients to look after. In other places, it was the complete opposite, with unbearable temperatures drops. The nurses and wounded had no protection from the cold, due to being in tents that often fell over from wind. The best they could do was find extra blankets or clothes to wrap up in to maintain warmth. Sister Anne Donnel, who struggled with the unsuitable clothes for hot temperatures also experienced the coldest temperatures. In a letter sent back to Australia, she recalled the miserable Autumn conditions in Lemnos. *'The weather is terrible, bitterly cold, with a high wind and rain. We are nearly frozen, even in our balaclavas, mufflers, mittens, cardigans, raincoats and Wellingtons. It's a mercy we have ample warm clothing else we should perish. Last night five tents blew down, one ward tent and four Sisters' tents'* (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020). Unfortunately, the nurses also faced many other appalling personal challenges because they routinely had little or no sleep, and their diet consisted of no fruit or vegetables and only butter and eggs once a month. The nurses' sacrifices was a key aspect to winning the war. Without the nurses, a higher number of soldiers would have perished.

The Australian and British economy, workplaces and society all dramatically changed during the four-year war which offered some opportunities for women to expand their skill set and roles, but only in a limited way. While men fought overseas, women were left in charge to carry out their family and workplace daily routine. Although most women's work involvement was focused on their homes, women's contributions in the workforce increased from 24% to 37% in 1914 (UK essays, 2018) and the following four years. This rise was only seen in the traditional manufacturing areas where women worked, such as clothing, footwear, food and printing, but there was also a slight increase in office occupations and shop assistants. Many women attempted to make an impact on the war as much as they could, and often took on voluntary comfort and fundraising roles to support the troops overseas. Organisations created by women were the Red Cross Missing and Wounded Enquiry Bureau, Australian Women's National League and Country Women's Association. Families experienced the heartbreak of seeing relatives and friends go off to war to fight. Significant numbers of soldiers volunteered to enlist, as they saw it as an opportunity to go on an 'adventure' beyond Australia and to support the British empire. Sadly, 61,514 (Australian War Memorial, 2013) Australian soldiers were killed during WWI. This impacted Australia's small emerging population as communities divided due to differing views on conscription and people were impacted by loss. Families at home endured shortages of types of food because of a government appeal to eat less meat. This was because soldiers overseas could not readily access this luxury, therefore making families feel guilty eating it. This caused families to send canned meat overseas, which caused a shortage on the home front. Food prices dramatically escalated during the war, therefore many Australian residents could not afford this source of protein either.

World War One not only had drastic impacts on soldiers, but also on those who remained at home and served in the medical field. Australia's economy and social structure changed at home, as women's limited roles expanded ironically, this conflict was a turning point for women in the workplace and in broader society. People experienced loss and heartbreak within communities and close relationships failed due to differing opinions on the war. Nurses lived like many soldiers did, and had extreme pressure and hardship on them for the duration of their service. They saved countless lives and remained resilient. Men sacrificed themselves for their country and empire and lived in the worst extreme conditions known to man. As they were often in trenches for long periods of time under almost constant bombardment, witnessing friends and strangers die, it greatly affected soldiers, causing them to suffer long-term mental and physical trauma including the impacts of shell shock and PTSD. Survivors of World War One returned to a different Australia than they had left behind, carrying the enduring consequences of wartime and uncertainty about the society they were re-entering.

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