

Grade 5/6/7 HASS
Australian History

War Heroes

WWI

Nurses

5 fun activities!

Mini-Unit Title Page,

Comprehension Foldable

The Rose of No Man's Land

Lyrics Analysis

Recognition of Service and

Sacrifice



Australia's War Heroes



1974 - Shady Meadows Nursing Home

Merle, Joan and Edith sat in the parlour and sipped their cups of tea as they enjoyed the peace and sunshine. The classical music piped over the stereo system ended and a new song came on. All three women hushed as Ivor Novello's 'Keep The Home Fires Burning' started up.

Merle looked over the rim of her teacup and caught Joan's eye. The other woman smiled sadly. Edith rummaged through her knitting bag and found a handkerchief. She dabbed the corners of her eyes and said, "I always think back to the War when I hear this song."

Merle nodded. "The Great War. Do you remember the politicians called it, 'The War to End All Wars?'"

Joan snorted. "Ha! Shows what they know. Men."

Edith smiled and said, "Of course, they say it was them who won the war."

Merle nodded and added, "They did the fighting and the dying, but who was it that stitched them up? Who was it that ran the campaigns back home and filled the roles they left in factories, shipyards and on farms to keep the country running? Who served in the Land Army here at home? Who fed and clothed them? Who kept the home fires burning indeed?"

"Yet who receives the statues and the honours?" Joan asked.

"Men," Edith and Merle said together with a chuckle.

"How old were you when you served?" Edith asked.

Joan paused for a moment and said, "I was only twenty. My brothers had enlisted and I felt compelled to do my part by following them."

"Merle?"

"Twenty-three. Still living in Britain at the time. When the war was over my family came out here."

Edith nodded and said, "I was the baby then. Seventeen when I enlisted, with dreams of single-handedly saving our menfolk. I thought war would be glorious and we nurses would flutter around in crisp, white nurse's gowns and hold the men's hands as they stoically sat with their wounds."

"How long did it take until your eyes were opened?" Joan asked.

Edith shook her head sadly and said, "Straight away. I was on one of the ships that landed at Oboe Tops. The menfolk rushed into those trenches and we women back on the ship heard the awful thunder of war that followed. The men soon came flooding back to what they thought was salvation. But they came in droves and there were far too many

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of them - and for too few of us. Sister Ella Tucker rallied us as much as possible, but soon, as I faced the hundredth soldier scrambling into the boat with his legs torn off at the knees, when my white gown was stained pink with blood - I realised war was no glorious place."

"But where would those men have been without us?" Joan asked. "I had no training as a nurse and worked with the Voluntary Aid Detachment. There were too few doctors to keep up and the nurses had to improvise just to keep men alive. And I can tell you this girls, when a man is dying in a pool of his own blood, and the only person stopping his death is a nurse, she soon becomes as equal in his eyes as the only doctor in the tent."

Merle and Edith nodded in agreement. Merle looked at her wrinkled hands and said, "I think of all the men I saved with these hands, and I don't feel proud. Instead I think of all the men who died, unable to be saved. Those who were ripped to pieces by shrapnel. Those who died from infection or other diseases. I wonder how many of them might have made it if we'd had the right training or even the right conditions to work in!"

"Instead of tents with dirt floors," Joan mumbled in agreement.

Edith shook her head. "Even the likes of Matron Grace Wilson lost soldiers, Merle. Some men were beyond saving by the time they got to the field tents."

Joan nodded. "And don't forget it was women who died too! Nurses caught in the crossfire, nurses who succumbed to infection, women who died of the same diseases as menfolk. Sister Alice Kitchin accounts for some in her war diaries."

"True," Merle agreed. "We fought every bit as much and bled for our Nation's freedom as the soldiers who died in the trenches. Yet what commendation came our way? Few awards. Limited financial compensation. We just went back to our lives."

"We were not asked to march in memorial celebrations," Edith commented.

Joan shook her head and said, "No. We were not recognised by most, but don't forget that to the ones who really mattered - the dying and wounded soldiers - we meant everything. 'Neath the War's dark course, Stands a Red Cross nurse, She's the rose of no-man's-land."

"The Rose of No Man's Land," Merle said with a smile. "My favourite wartime song."

"And we were like the rose; beautiful, strong, flourishing amidst terrible conditions, undaunted, proud and fierce. That is our legacy."

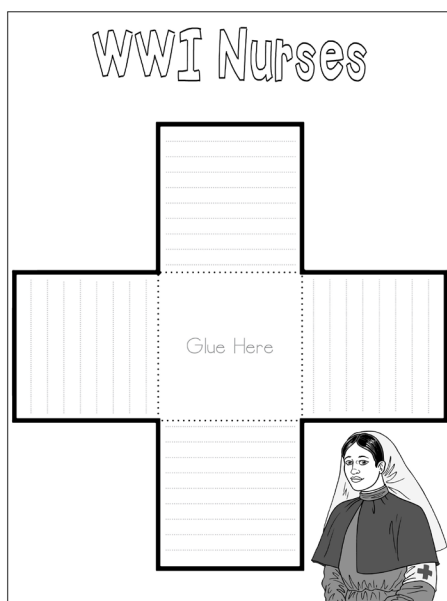
The ladies clinked their teacups together in a toast and continued to enjoy the peace and tranquillity bought at the cost of so many Australian lives.

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Trim neatly around the border of the page above and glue it in to your workbook.
Cut around the cross below and fold along the dotted lines.
Glue it on top of the cross above in the centre square where indicated.



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The Rose of No Man's Land

by Jack Coddigan and James Alexander Brennan

I've seen some beautiful flowers
Grow in life's garden fair
I've spent some wonderful hours
Lost in their fragrance rare
But I have found another
Wonderous beyond compare....

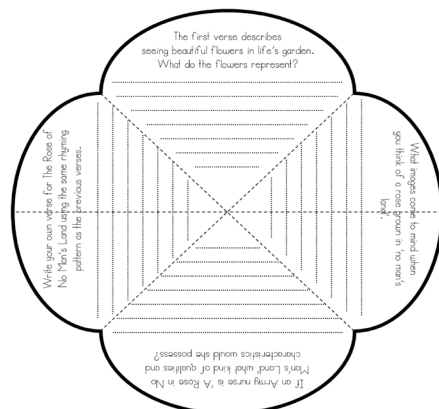
There's a rose that grows in no-man's land
And it's wonderful to see
Though it's sprayed with tears, it will live for years
In my garden of memory

It's the one red rose the soldier knows
It's the work of the Master's hand
'Neath the War's great curse stands a Red Cross nurse
She's the rose of no-man's land

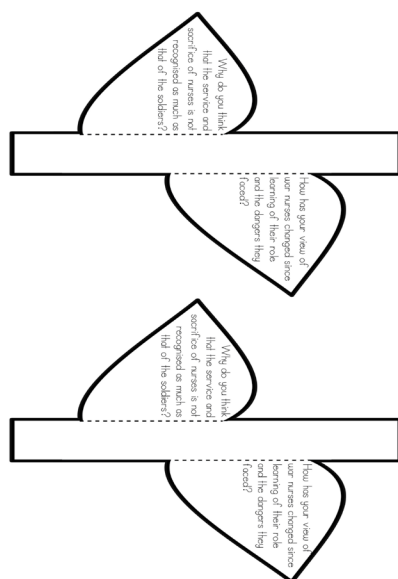
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THE ROSE OF NO MAN'S LAND

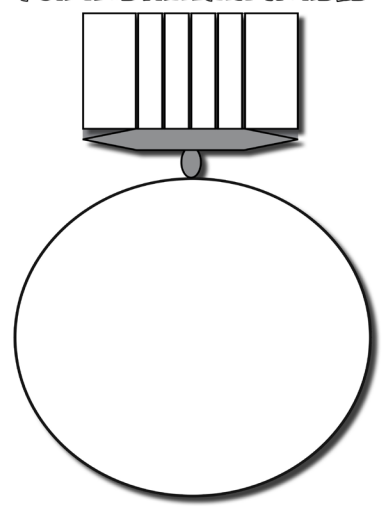


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DESIGN YOUR OWN MEDAL FOR AUSTRALIAN NURSES



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ANSWERS AND ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS ARE INCLUDED

