

Activity 1

Photograph study

Examine the photographs on pages 1 and 2, then answer the questions posed on pages 3 and 4. Roland Henry Simpson appears in four of the photographs, and his grave is the subject of the fifth.





"Well I had my photograph taken but it is not too good. I am sending you one, also one of my mate Frank Bourke and Jim Doyle, who was on leave with me"

HURDCOTT, January 19th, 1918



ENLISTED
 1st September 1915
 Landed at Egypt
 10th May 1916
 Transferred to France
 18th August 1916
 ...

SAILED
 28th March 1916
 Died of influenza
 pneumonia
 14th November 1918
 ...



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Examine the photographs and write down facts you can determine about events in the life of Roland Simpson which occurred during World War 1.

Examine the photographs and write down facts you can determine about the way of life for people of that period. You might comment on beliefs, clothing, fashions and/ or transport.

Examine the photographs and write down facts you can determine about outcomes of the war.

Examine the photographs and write down facts you can determine about the effect of the war on Queensland people.

**All of these photographs were sent home to Roland Simpson' s mother.
What would be the reaction from his mother?**

Which photograph would be of most value to the historian studying World War 1? Give a reason for your answer.

How valuable do you think photographic evidence of that time is for Australian history?

Activity 2

Events in a soldier's life

On pages 1 and 2 is a modern reproduction of handwritten text from a small notebook of Roland's. The pages follow each other. Examine the notebook text carefully and answer the questions posed on pages 3 and 4.

*Sig. R.H Simpson
15th Reinfts 9th Batt
26th 3rd 1916*

Notes 21/6/16

Left Brisbane 28th March 1916.

Landed in Egypt 5 th May 1916.

In Camp 3 days and taken sick 13th inst, go into camp Hospital till the 19th inst.

Sent to No.3 A.G.H. Cairo, with Influenza.

Go to Ras EC Tin Convalescent depot Alexandria on the 24th May.

Leave there on 5th June for Tel El Rebin Camp and join 15th Training Battalion.

Details leave Camp on the 11 th for Alexandria.

Sail for England 13th June.

Strike Gibraltar 19th inst.

Landed at Plymouth on 23rd June off the "Aragon".

Go by train to Amesbury to camp. Get to barracks at 4 am.

Leave 15th IB. on 28th June for 3rd I.B. 3rd of July.

Go to London for four days. Have good time. Come back on sixth. Go into isolation on 7th inst with mumps.

Two days in bed. Come out on 30th of July.

Rejoin 3rd I.B.

Do a little bayonet fighting.

Leave Pirham Downs on 10th

of August for France.

Go to Folkstone by train.

Ship over to Boulonge. Stay in Boulonge one night.

Go by train to Etaplesdo. Two days in bull ring and passed waiting to go to Front.

While in camp meet two cobbers of 14/9 -say Fred Rann is killed. Also a lot of them wounded.

15/9 and 18/9 arrive in England 10th via France.

Join Battalion on 23rd August have two days route march.

Take train at Doullens for

Popperinghe.

Go onto trenches at Hill 60 on the 12 th of September for a week..

Get relieved by 11th Batt and do fatigues in the line, 2 weeks.

Take sick and go to Boulongue

Canadian Hospital.

Go back to Etapoles early in October.

Rejoin battalion in Nov.

Do four days stint in Fleurs.

Come out for about two weeks and go back in again for 9 days.

Have Xmas in Front Line.

Get relieved on 30th Dec.

Go in again end of Feb and have a hop over. 5 days in, come out for good.

Go in again at Lagincourt on 15th

April. Fritz has a hop over and get beaten back.

Get relieved and do a week of fatigue in Bapaume, unloading shells.

Go into Bullicourt on the 6th may.

Have hop over. Get winged and go to

Rouen hospital 9 GH. From there

go to Base details at Rouelles near Le Harve.

Have one night in Harve.

Mark the following places on the map of the world, below.

Brisbane, Cairo, Plymouth, London, Australia, Egypt, England, Gibraltar, France, Belgium.



Write the events in the correct place on the time line to show what R. H. Simpson did in the 18 months from 1916 to June 1917.

1916		1917	
Month	Event	Month	Event
Jan		Jan	
Feb		Feb	
Mar		Mar	
Apr		Apr	
May		May	
Jun		Jun	
Jul			
Aug			
Sep			
Oct			
Nov			
Dec			

Propose an hypothesis to explain why Simpson was sent to Egypt before going to the Western Front.

Examine the following words and phrases in context, and with the aid of a dictionary, write a meaning for each.

convalescent	
influenza	
battalion	
bayonet	
bull ring	
route march	
trenches	
fatigues	
hop over	
winged	
fritz	

The incidents recorded in the notebook were described after the event. What might have been Simpson's motivation in recording these experiences for himself?

Apart from facing the enemy, what other hazards face the ordinary soldier? Give examples to reinforce your choices.

Roland Simpson used very little descriptive or emotional language to describe the events recorded in his notebook. Suggest a reason for this.

How useful might this information in the notebook be to the historian? Give reasons for your answer.

Activity 3

Platoon Roll

Roland Simpson maintained a list of some members of his platoon (platoon roll) in his notebook. Below is a modern reproduction of that platoon roll. Examine the roll and answer the questions below.

6 PLATOON Roll	
BOMBERS	
2593	Cprl Black W.E. Raid
1985	Pte Martin A.E. Reserve
4732	" Blec A.C.
2940	" Simcoe E.J.
Lewis Gun	
4885	Lcprl Simpson R.H.
2229	Pte Forbes P.H.
7274	" Jacobsen F
6492	" Howe W.J.
A18	" Bellingham J.E.
459	" Bonner P.E.
6498	Jones A Reserve
6604	Walter T.A.
7261	Huish P.H.
1134	Cprl Dixon W.J.
1013	Pte Chadwick H Reserve
1020	" Daley B.W.
6043	" Jeffreys E.R.
7276	" Johnson E.W.
771 ^B	" Richter F.R. Raid
718 ^B	" Mitchell J.G.
Riflemen	
991	Pte Grace A
6442	" O'Keefe E Dent
710 ^B	Frazer J
2700	Hayes W.H.

What do the surnames in the platoon roll tell you about the Australian population of the time?

What do the following abbreviations stand for?

Cprl	
Pte	
Lcprl	

What were the numbers in front of the names? What might they be used for?

What rank was Roland Simpson?

Activity 4

Communication with home

Communication between soldiers and their families is an important factor in maintaining morale during war. In World War 1, most such communication was by letter and telegram. Reproduced below is the text of several letters and one telegram, from both Roland and the Army, to his parents. Read them and answer the questions posed on page 4.

Dear Mother,

On Monday afternoon we went and had a look at the zoo. I saw a lot of animals I never saw before. They have every bird and animal imaginable there, though they have a very poor class of a dingo, it is only about a quarter bred. Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens are lovely. We used to go to the gardens and get a boat and row about on the pond for an hour or so, when we got tired of walking about the town . . .

With Love from Roland.

BRIMSTONE BOTTOM, SALISBURY, JULY 9th 1916.

Dear Mother,

Well Mother, I suppose you have begun to think I am pretty long winded about writing but I have been in the hospital for a week in [REDACTED] but I am feeling well enough to go up the line again now, though I suppose it will be a week or a fortnight before I get with the battalion again. I had the same disease that I had in Egypt but not nearly so bad this time. I think I have been nearly all over Belgium and a good part of France this last two months. There are some very pretty places in Belgium but it is nearly always raining and it is beginning to get fairly cold now, so we don't go too much on it. I was down on [REDACTED] but did not do any fighting there yet. Clocky Claydon got back from Blythie on Monday and is going up the line in the next draft. He was wounded about the stomach. Nearly all the reinforcement that I came over with are up the line somewhere. There are a few here and a few in England yet. Well, Mother, this is all the news this time so I will say goodbye for the present.

From Roland.

P .S. Will be sending a parcel next week.

FRANCE, 12/10/16.

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines in answer to your letter which I received a week ago while we were in the Front Line. We spent Easter Sunday there so we are pretty stiff striking Easter and Xmas in the trenches. Hope to be home for the next lot of holidays, if we have any luck. We had Easter eggs and cake all the same. Our Lance Corporal got a parcel from England, so we don't do too bad for good things. . .

With Love, From Roland."

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE, 21/4/17.

TELEGRAM

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT, QUEENSLAND. 23 MAY 1917

Melbourne, 5pm 23rd

J Simpson, Kin Kin Cooran Q.

Private Roland Simpson wounded and will advise anything further received.

Base Records

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still alive and kicking. My leg is not too strong yet but I am marked for the overseas base for Friday, on my way back to France again, but I don't think it is strong enough for me to carry a pack. If it is not, I will perhaps get a job here for a while. ..

So with best wishes and Love to all, Roland."

HURDCOTT, 6/2/18.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE
BASE RECORDS OFFICE
VICTORIA BARRACKS
MELBOURNE

1st August, 1918

Dear Sir,

I now beg to advise you that Private R.H. Simpson, has been reported wounded 3rd occasion. His postal address will be: No.4885, Private R.H. Simpson, 9th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Abroad.

Don't fail to send change of your address to Base Records, Melbourne.

In the absence of further reports it is to be assumed that satisfactory progress is being maintained, but anything later received will be promptly transmitted, **it being clearly understood that if no further advice is forwarded this department has no more information to supply.**

Yours faithfully,

(signed) Major,

Officer in Charge, Base Records.

My Dear Mother,

... Well there was great excitement here last night. Someone brought the news home that Germany had accepted Wilson's peace terms but there is not much in the papers this morning. They are only asking for an armistice but I don't think it will be very long now before we get peace. Young Hans is getting rather a rough handling now and not before he needs it . . .

From Roland.

WARMINSTER, 14.10.18.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES
1ST MILITARY DISTRICT HEAD-QUARTERS BRISBANE

28th November, 1918.

Dear Sir,

It is with much regret that I have to confirm the notification recently conveyed to you through the Anglican Clergyman with regard to casualty to No.4885 Private Roland Henry Simpson, 9th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, and to forward the subjoined extract of the official notification from Head-Quarters.

'Died 14th November influenza and pneumonia Sutton Veny Military Hospital 9th Battalion 4884 (late 4596) Roland Henry Simpson.'

I would ask you to accept the deep sympathy of the King, Queen and Commonwealth Government in the sad loss that you and the Army have sustained.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,

(signed) Major

A.A.G., 1st Military District.

TO: Mr John Simpson,
Kinkin,
via Cooran.

In some letters the censors blanked out place names. Who is a “censor” and why might he/she do this?

What do the following terms mean?

Blythie	
up the line	

What was so important about the parcel sent to “our Lance Corporal”?

Simpson tells of “good” things and writes factually. Why might this be?

Did R.H. Simpson survive the war? Give evidence for your answer.