

NATIONAL  
SPORTS  
MUSEUM

Sport and War  
LEVEL 4 / 5 – YEAR 5/6 & 7/8

# SPORT AND WAR



**Key concept**

The Australian War Memorial says this: What it means to be Australian is no easy thing to define. But clearly two strong factors in our national identity are sport and war.

**Focusing questions**

1. How is Australia's involvement in war remembered and celebrated through sport?
2. What role does sport play for servicemen and women?
3. What common values or qualities do we associate with in sport and in war?
4. The way Australians see themselves and the way in which the world sees Australians can be determined through our activities in war and sport. Is this true?

**National Sports Museum exhibition focus**

Backyard to Baggy Green, The People's Ground, Melbourne Cricket Club Museum, Faster, Higher, Stronger, Australia's Game and Spirit of Sport.

**VELS dimensions addressed**

*Physical, Personal and Social Learning:* Interpersonal Development; Health and Physical Education

*Discipline-based Learning:* The Arts; The Humanities – History; English

*Interdisciplinary Learning:* Thinking Processes

**Overview**

This document is aimed at making the most of your visit to the National Sports Museum as you focus on the topic of Sport and War. You can use this resource in any way.

Sport has a great reputation for celebrating success on and off the field. Returned servicemen and women do the same and in many ways there are similarities. Many sporting clubs celebrate the feats in war of their members, as do returned services clubs celebrate the on-field prowess of their members.

During times of war, servicemen and women have turned to sport to strengthen their links with their home, to enjoy moments of peace during rest and recreation or to find solace in times of over-bearing upheaval.

## Pathway questions for your visit in the National Sports Museum

Print the following questions and pass to students, or select specific questions and create your own pathway. Some questions are designed to be open and so answers from students may vary.

### The People's Ground

1. On what date did the Australian fighting forces track championships take place at the Melbourne Cricket Ground?
2. Which famous Australian has a singlet displayed?
3. Why were events such as the track championships held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground?
4. When did the Commonwealth Government take over the Melbourne Cricket Ground for military purposes?
5. Explain why you believe the government chose the Melbourne Cricket Ground to accommodate Australian and United States of America servicemen?
6. What advantages did the Melbourne Cricket Ground provide for the military?
7. What did USA and Australian troops rename the Melbourne Cricket Ground?
8. Why did the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) troops leave the Melbourne Cricket Ground?

**Faster, Higher, Stronger**

1. Why were the Olympic Games cancelled during World War I and World War II?
2. What do you think the Olympic message means? It is shown on the scoreboard at the opening of every Olympics: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered, but to have fought well."
3. Which American athlete overcame Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's notions of racial superiority at the 1936 Berlin Olympics?
4. What events did he win? (See film in the Faster, Higher, Stronger Olympics theatre.)
5. How do you believe racism goes against the ideals of sport? How do you believe war goes against the ideals of sport?

**Spirit of Sport, Australian Sport Hall of Fame**

1. Australian Sporting legend Sir Hubert Opperman served in the military in World War II. What similar attributes do you think are necessary to succeed in sport and to survive the terror of war?

**Backyard to Baggy Green**

Before you come to the National Sports Museum try to find out as much as you can about Keith Miller as a member of the RAAF during the Second World War. When you are at the museum use your time to discover more about Keith Miller in the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, the Sport Australia Hall of Fame and even as a statue on the external concourse of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

**Melbourne Cricket Club Museum**

1. Which two wars are commemorated with honour roles in the Melbourne Cricket Club Museum?
2. What does the phrase 'lest we forget' mean to you?
3. How many Melbourne Cricket Club members enlisted in the first WW?
4. How many Melbourne Cricket Club members died in the two World Wars combined?

**Australia's Game**

1. During the two world wars not all clubs participated in the Victorian Football League (VFL). Why do you think this was the case?
2. The VFL continued during the world wars; what benefit does sport serve the general public during a time of war?
3. Which clubs won premierships during the world wars?
4. On display is memorabilia from games of footy played in Europe and Middle East during the First World War. Who do you think played in these games? Why do you think they were staged?
5. What benefits do you think there were for Australian servicemen to play sport while serving overseas?
6. How many VFL footballers died during World War II?
7. Where were VFL grand finals played while the Melbourne Cricket Ground was being used for military purposes?

## Post-Visit Activities

Students should report on their findings from the National Sports Museum. They can do a TV report in the style of current affairs. They could present a magazine article for a sports magazine. They could put together a radio montage of ideas and voices.

Students might choose to write a song or poem responding to the following question: What might be the life lessons learned from playing sport that helps us in our everyday lives?

Students might have a class debate or discussion and focus on this topic: Sport teaches us qualities like discipline, teamwork and leadership. Can you think of other qualities? Can you think of areas other than sport where you can experience these qualities?

## Tour of the MCG

During your visit to the National Sports Museum at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, we also suggest that you take an MCG Tour. Our bookings staff will help schedule this. It is an excellent opportunity to make special use of the reduced price combination package