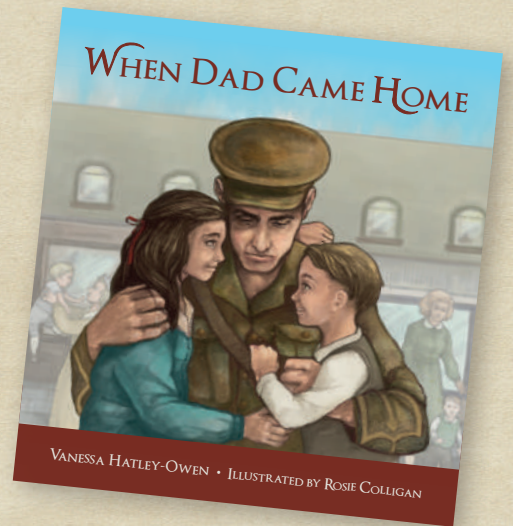


# WHEN DAD CAME HOME

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## TEACHER RESOURCE



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*When Dad Came Home* tells the story of Rita and Thomas' dad who returns home from the First World War suffering from what was then called 'shell shock'. Soldiers who returned from the war often faced difficulty re-entering society after the horrors they had faced on the battlefield. Most never spoke about their experiences and managed to continue on as before, however many men faced ongoing psychological trauma.

Not only affecting the soldiers, but their families too, the story shows that not all soldiers return unharmed from war and not all wounds are physical.

### Using this book in New Zealand classrooms

*When Dad Came Home* can be used to support learning within the Health and PE Learning Areas of the New Zealand Curriculum as it promotes empathy and understanding of mental health and Hauora (in particular taha hinengaro), and Attitudes and Values. In the Social Sciences Learning Area, *When Dad Came Home* provides context for historical investigation into the war and the societal changes it caused.

## QUESTIONS

- What clues does the story give you about what Dad is feeling?
- What does the family do to help Dad?
- What does the family think about how Dad is feeling?
- Have you ever been scared/sad/lonely/unsure? What did you or someone else do to help you?
- What is something you can do to help someone who is scared/sad/lonely/unsure?
- What does the family do to help support their friends?
- How does your favourite song make you feel? Happy/brave/energetic?
- What other things help you feel good? For example, running/playing outside/drawing or arts and crafts/laughing (telling jokes or being silly)/snuggling in a blanket?
- What do you think Dad is feeling when he comes home?
- What do you think Dad is feeling at the end of the story?

## DISCUSSION POINTS

Thousands of soldiers did not survive the war to return home. There are many graveyards in Europe where soldiers from Australia and New Zealand are buried. These countries make sure the graves are looked after and treated with honour and respect. What impact do you think this had on the families of the soldiers?

Many soldiers returned home physically wounded. There were also many soldiers who came home but never really left the battlefield. Their wounds were not physical, but psychological. In what ways would this affect their lives and those of their families?

When the war ended, the world was a very different place. How did the loss of a generation of young men, and the movement of women into traditionally male roles, change society?

Visit a local war memorial and look closely at the names of those who were lost. Consider how the community would have felt about losing their men. How might they have helped each other? Some families lost more than one soldier; how do you think this would this have affected them?

## ACTIVITIES

1. Create a class poster of ways to help others when they are feeling sad/scared/lonely/unsure.
2. Create a class playlist of everyone's favourite songs.
3. Make a poppy. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe0uqc6lmgQ> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5rsaljUjQ> for instructions.
4. Create a care package, either for yourself (what would you like to be sent from home?) or for a soldier overseas.
5. Have a go at baking for soldiers, for example, Mrs Barnard's Gingernuts; find an interview with Mrs Barnard and her recipe here: <http://anzacsightsound.org/audios/mrs-barnard-s-gingernuts>

Ingredients	Mrs Barnard's original recipe	Halved* (metric)	Halved* (by volume)
Plain flour	2¼ lb	510 g	3½ cups
Butter	½ lb	110 g	½ cup
Light brown sugar	1 lb	225 g	1½ cups
Ground ginger	1 oz	15 g	2½ tablespoons
Golden syrup	2 lb	454 g	2 cups

\* the halved recipe above makes between 60–100 biscuits!

Link for more information about Mrs Barnard : <https://ngataonga.org.nz/blog/nz-history/was-the-real-anzac-biscuit-a-gingernut/>

- Mrs Barnard had six sons that fought in the First World War, and two lost their lives. She baked these biscuits to send to her boys and other soldiers. Her sons shared them with their troopmates, and they in turn wrote to Mrs Barnard asking her to send the recipe to their mothers.
- She baked an estimated 4000 kg of biscuits over both world wars and was awarded a British Empire Medal for her efforts. She also knitted and helped raise funds for the war effort.
- Trench Cakes were baked by British women and sent to the soldiers on the frontlines in Europe. Link for recipe: [www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/10905975/How-to-bake-a-First-World-War-trench-cake.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/10905975/How-to-bake-a-First-World-War-trench-cake.html)

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It took a long time for all the soldiers to return home. After the Armistice, over 50,000 New Zealand soldiers were still in Europe. The Government hoped to have all the sick and wounded home by the end of March 1919. Priority was given to sick and wounded, married and those 'specially required in the Dominion', for example, coal miners, apprentices, public works employees, medical and dental students, railwaymen and school teachers. Despite various delays due to events such as strikes and public holidays, most soldiers returned home in 1919. The very last men — some wounded and some from New Zealand Expeditionary Force Headquarters in London — returned to New Zealand in 1921.



## SHELL SHOCK

Symptoms of shell shock were wide ranging and included fatigue, hysteria, anxiety, nightmares and insomnia, dizziness and disorientation, confusion, loss of appetite, uncontrolled shaking, limping, muscle spasms, deafness, depression and paralysis. Sufferers often couldn't tolerate loud noises and many suffered flashbacks.

While most soldiers sympathised and tried to help their comrades, a lot of shell shock victims were thought to be simply faking or lacking courage. They were often accused of 'not being a man'. Some were arrested and court martialled for desertion. In February 1918 a Kiwi soldier was executed by the British for leaving his duty, even though he had previously been treated for shell shock. At

his court martial the trooper said, 'While in the trenches at Armentières I was blown up by a Minenwerfer [mortar] and was in hospital for about a month, suffering from shellshock. Up to this time I had no crimes against me. Since then my health has not been good and my nerve has been completely destroyed. I attribute my present position to this fact and to drink.' In 2000 he was posthumously pardoned.

Initially, doctors thought shell shock was a physical problem caused by the shockwaves from exploding shells. However, they quickly realised it was a psychological condition brought on by the constant stress of being on the battlefield. Today it would be diagnosed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In 1916, Queen Mary Hospital was opened in Hanmer Springs, in the South Island, to treat returned New Zealand soldiers suffering from shell shock. The peaceful surroundings were a helpful part of the counselling treatment.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/insideout/extra/series-1/shell\\_shocked.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/insideout/extra/series-1/shell_shocked.shtml)

