

First World War Home Front

Welcome to IWM North

Use this activity sheet as you walk around the Main Exhibition Space to help you discover more information about the home front during the First World War.

1. Joining up



Go to *Silo 1: Experience of War*. Find the ‘Recruits’ cabinet and look at the posters on the wall above.

The government used these posters to encourage men across Britain to join up.

In what ways do the posters encourage men from across Britain to join up? (You should give at least three examples)

Which poster would most make YOU feel that you should join up and why?

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The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 led to a major campaign for volunteers. By the end of 1915 nearly 2.5 million men had come forward but even this was not enough.

For the first time, Britain had to make military service compulsory. Conscription was introduced in 1916 and lasted until the end of the war.

Poster campaigns were introduced in order to encourage and put pressure on men to join the armed forces. Campaigns also targeted women, asking them to encourage men to go

to war. These posters were designed to provoke an emotional response, such as guilt, pride in your country and a sense of duty.

The wording of the posters includes direct appeals eg. 'your empire needs you' and suggests that 'everyone' should do their bit. There are also appeals to specific groups of people such as the Welsh. Images such as the lion reference Britain as well as Britain's strength and power whilst the appeal to 'young lions' to join the 'old' adds an element of competition. One of the posters adds a moral responsibility as it appeals to a sense of 'justice', whilst another uses emotional blackmail by suggesting that after the war men will not want to tell their children they did nothing during the Great War.

Look in the cabinet below. Find item 2.

In addition to posters, what else was used to encourage recruitment?

Item 2 features sheet music for a song called 'There's Someone Wants You' featuring Lord Kitchener on the front. Music themed around recruitment was performed across Britain during the war. For example, Vesta Tilley was a famous performer of this period who was known for dressing up as a soldier to perform her songs.



Kitty Mortar talks about visiting the Palace Theatre in Manchester in 1914:

Vesta Tilley was there, and all the band on the stage, recruiting officers with sashes and what have you, and she came out in the audience and walked all down either side. The men was getting up out of their seats following her. She also had a big Union Jack wrapped around her and she introduced that song, 'We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go'.

Why were places of entertainment, like theatres and football matches, good places to recruit?

These places were very busy and the men would be amongst a large crowd or with their friends, some of whom might join and encourage the rest of the group to join up too. They may also have been taken by surprise and found it difficult to explain their reasoning for not joining up and avoid recruitment in places like this.

2. Prisoners of War in Britain



Find these in the 'Prisoners of War' cabinet. Object 12.

Why do you think the prisoner made these objects and gave them to Mrs Cartman?

The prisoners may have made items like this as a way to occupy themselves and to pass the time. The fact that the objects were given to Mrs Cartman suggests that the soldier respected her and had a good relationship with her as the

owner of the farm where he worked.

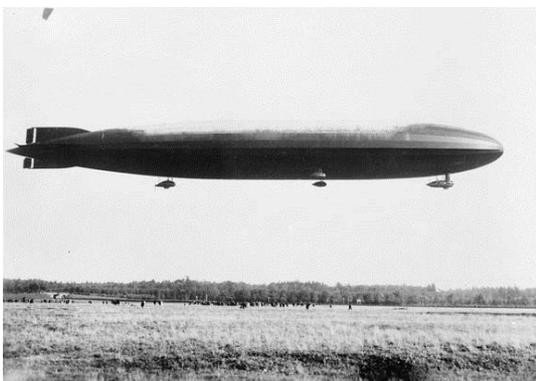
How many German Prisoners of War were working on the land in Britain by 1917?

30,000



Did you know? By 1918, there were over 500 POW camps in Britain.

3. Air Raids



Head out of the doorway to your right and find the 'Home Fronts 1914-1918' cabinet on the First World War section of the Timeline.

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For the first time, aeroplanes and airships were used to drop bombs over towns and cities in Britain.

Find items 1 and 17 in the cabinet

Would the people of Manchester be worried about these air raids? Use information from the two newspaper articles to explain your answer

The headlines read 'First Air Raid on English Town' and 'Over 100 Killed in Air Raid'. The people of Britain would be alarmed and frightened to read headlines like these. Although air raids over Britain were on a much smaller scale than during the Second World War, it is likely that the population of the country would have been alarmed that the dangers of the conflict were affecting them so close to home.

Encourage the group to think about the differences between media coverage and circulation now and then. People would be less informed and therefore there might be more room for speculation and curiosity about how dangerous these bombings could become. Dramatic headlines like this might add to this feeling of worry and concern.

After their initial reaction to the headlines however, the people of Manchester might consider attacks on Dover (item 1) and Chatham/Sheerness (item 17) as less of a concern. The lack of damage in the Dover attack – 'no damage done' - and the low number of casualties in the other reported attack – 1 civilian killed and 6 wounded – might further ease their anxiety. The reference to 100 killed whilst headline grabbing, upon closer investigation referred to the deaths of naval ratings and attacks on mainland Europe.

It is also worth encouraging the group to consider the newness of the aeroplane as a weapon of war, how bombs were dropped by hand and the limited range of aeroplanes that would make Manchester an unlikely target for any air raid during the First World War.



Explore items 1 to 25 in the cabinet, showing the dangers in Britain.

Choose one item that you find interesting. What is it?

Write down one fact about this item to explain why you chose it.

4. Rationing



Find item 40 in the cabinet

In what year was rationing introduced in Britain during the First World War?

1918

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What is significant about this date?

Although shortages were experienced earlier in the First World War and people were encouraged to waste less bread and grow more food themselves, eg. on allotments, rationing was only introduced in 1918 in the final year of the First World War. This was in sharp contrast to the Second World War when rationing was introduced in January 1940, right at the start of the war.



Explore items 33 to 41 in the cabinet.

List four things that were in short supply in Britain during the war.

Growing demands and the German U-boat campaign which threatened the ships bringing supplies to Britain were causing shortages. Bread, sugar, potatoes, margarine, coal, meat and bread were particularly affected. Petrol and butter are also mentioned.

As well as rationing, what else were the people of Britain being encouraged to do to ensure food did not run out?

Suggestions included growing their own food and keeping animals such as goats or chickens. They were also encouraged not to waste food.

5. Women and War



**Go into Silo 2:
Women and War**

**Look up to find this
painting.**

A Land Girl Ploughing by Cecil Aldin © IWM (ART 2618)

The Land Army was founded in 1917. What sort of work did it do?

How many women were working in the Land Army by 1918?

Women in the Land Army worked on farms as labourers doing jobs such as milking, ploughing, looking after animals and thatching.

16,000 women were working in the Land Army by 1918.

During both World Wars women took on a variety of different roles to support the war effort and to ensure that the country continued to run smoothly.

Look at the large case containing uniforms from the First and Second World War and read the information about Military Women.

List three roles taken on by women during the First World War.

The First World War roles shown in the case are nurse, land girl, munitions worker, ambulance driver and doctor. The information panel also describes the work of women in the WAAC (administration, cooking, driving, clerical work), the Forage Corps (supplying animal feed) and in the Forestry Corps producing timber.

Look to your right and find nine boxes containing objects belonging to different women. Look at the three boxes on the bottom row. Find a personal story from the First World War that interests you.

Which story did you choose and what did this woman do during the First World War?

*There are three First World War stories to select from. These are **Flora Sandes**, the only British woman known to have fought in the First World War, **Sarah Bryson**, who came from Northern Ireland to work in a Morecombe munitions factory, and **Elsie Inglis**, a surgeon who set up the Scottish Women's Hospitals, which treated Allied soldiers in Serbia, France and Russia.*

A question for you to consider back at school

'The impact of the First World War on the British home front was slight.'

How far do you agree with this interpretation? Explain your answer.

It is also worth encouraging the students to make notes based on what they have seen in the museum before returning to this question back at school where text books and prior learning can be used to support structured written work.

The question has been written in the style of AQA Syllabus B (9145) Paper 2 Section B

Specimen mark schemes that can be adapted for this question are available to download from the AQA website.