Curriculum Visions

First World War & Remembrance Day

Teacher's Resources

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Curriculum Visions

A CVP Teacher's Resources
Interactive PDF

First published in 2010

ISBN 978 1 86214 685 3

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Designed and produced by
Atlantic Europe Publishing

Contents

Section 1: Resources

Welcome to the Teacher's Resources for 'First World War'.

First World War resources we provide are in a number of media:

1 The 48 page Curriculum Visions 'First World War'.

2 The 32 page Explorers title, 'Exploring Remembrance Day'.

3 You can purchase other titles covering the Second World War:

4 You can buy the supersaver pack that contains 1 copy of each book and the Teacher's resources (what you are reading).

5

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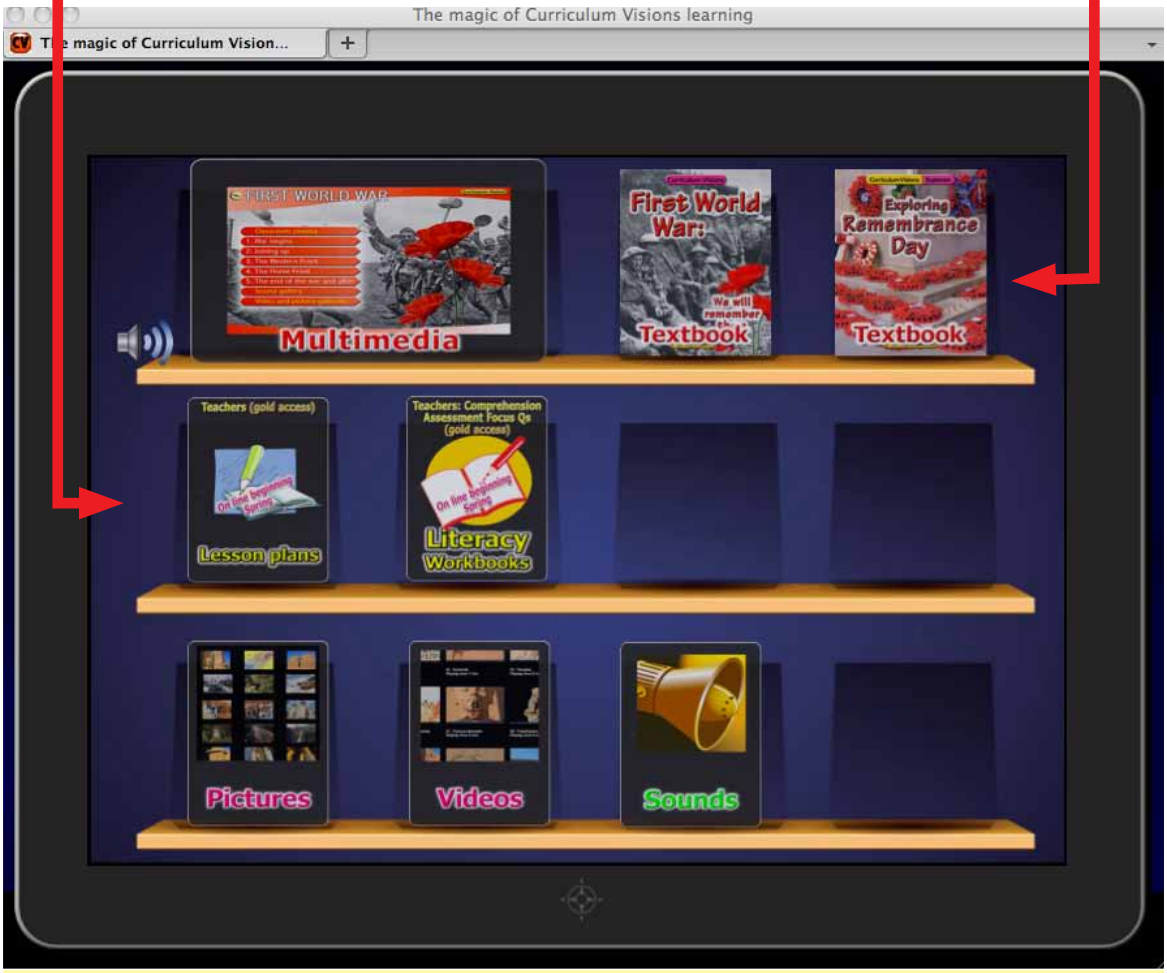

Joining up

Synopsis: An introduction to the war that discusses why people joined up, along with the situation at the beginning of the war.

In 1914 Britain was dragged in to a war in Europe once more. But Britain did not have the troops to fight the war. So where were they going to come from? They would have to be volunteers. How was the government to persuade millions of young men to join up?....."

Britain entered the war on 4 August 1914, three days after Germany, France, Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire had declared war and begun mobilising. At the time, Britain had only a small professional army and no conscription. In order to fight a large-scale war, Britain was going to need more men – and fast.

On August 1, 1914 France mobilised 1,781,000 men; Germany rapidly brought 1,500,000 men to the French and Belgian frontier, and another 200,000 to East Prussia. The Russians began mobilising by moving 600,000 men into East Prussia, although this was only a fraction of their entire army.

In 1914, the British army was called the British Expeditionary Force, or BEF, and was an all-volunteer army. It was small and could only mobilise 150,000 men by the end of August. At the beginning of the war, almost everyone believed it would be over by Christmas, so although they were outmanned, the British did not institute conscription (this would happen in 1916, when it became obvious the war was at a stalemate).

Instead, the British government (as well as all other governments involved in the war) encouraged people to enlist by telling them it was their patriotic duty to do so. They appealed to young men's sense of adventure, pride, patriotism, and their ability to earn a regular wage in the army. The government volunteer campaign also tried to get women to encourage their husbands, boyfriends and family members to enlist. Later, women would be encouraged to join as nurses, and to support the war at home in many other ways, such as by knitting winter clothing for the men at the front.

The British volunteer campaign was run by Lord Kitchener and by January 1916, more than 1 million Britons, and hundreds of thousands of Canadians, Anzacs (Australians and New Zealanders), and other members of the Empire had signed up (for example, more than 160,000 Asians would fight in the war and two all-Sikh battalions fought on the Western Front alone).

The role of propaganda

Almost immediately after war broke out, David Lloyd George was charged with setting up a War Propaganda Bureau. Some of the best writers in Britain (Rudyard Kipling, Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, among others) were asked to write stories and leaflets to persuade the public to join the war effort. The WPB


RALLY ROUND THE FLAG
"WE MUST HAVE MORE MEN"

hired writers and photographers as war journalists, but they also hired painters and poets. These artists were told what they could and could not include in their work.

All these efforts paid off as more than 500,000 men joined up in August 1914. By the end of 1914, more than 54,000,000 posters had been printed, 8,000,000 personal letters sent, 12,000 meetings held and 20,000 speeches were given encouraging people to enlist. By the end of 1914, 1,186,337 recruits had enlisted (a figure that rose to 2,257,521 by September 1915 (out of a population of around 46 million, including Ireland).

In the early days, propaganda and patriotism convinced many people to join up thinking that it would be a quick and easy war – and a quick and easy way to become a hero in the eyes of loved ones.

Even before the war had begun, the press had been given stories by the government of atrocities committed by the Germans and others. Propaganda about German atrocities was used to encourage people to join up:

"A third form of mutilation, the cutting of one or both hands, is frequently said to have taken place. In some cases where this form of mutilation is alleged to have occurred it may be the consequence of a cavalry charge up a village street, hacking and slashing at everything in the way; in others the victim may possibly have held a weapon, in others the motive may have been the theft of rings."

The Bryce Report on Alleged German Outrages, Appointed by His Britannic Majesty's Government, 15 December 1914

Propaganda about bravery and heroism was also used to encourage people to join up:

"War is not all evil. It is a true tragedy, which must have nobleness and triumph in it as well as disaster... We must not begin to praise war without stopping to reflect on the hundreds of thousands of human beings involved in such horrors of pain and indignity that, if here in our ordinary hours we saw one man so treated, the memory would sicken us to the end of our lives...

To have something before you, clearly seen, which you know you must do, and can do, and will spend your utmost strength and perhaps your life in doing, is one form at least of very high happiness, and one that appeals – the facts prove it – not only to saints and heroes but to average men. Doubtless the few who are wise enough and have enough imagination may find opportunity for that same happiness in everyday life, but in war ordinary men find it. This is the inward triumph which lies at the heart of the great tragedy."

'How Can War Ever Be Right?', written for the WPB in 1914 by Gilbert Murray, Professor and translator of Ancient Greek and Classical Literature

And the propaganda worked very well – at first. Those who joined up did so by and large cheerfully convinced they would be at war for only a few months and would soon return home victorious.


London Opinion
"YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS
YOU"
1D LONDON OPINION 1D

C. J. Arthur:
"I was born in November 1898 so that when war was declared I was at school. I joined the School Cadet Battalion in 1914 and was appointed corporal.

At Whitsun, 1915, I told the O.C. cadets I was going to join up. "Good," he said. "How old do you want to be?"

We fixed things between us, and armed with a letter from him, I presented myself to the colonel of an infantry battalion which was just being formed, and on the strength of the letter I was appointed a lance-corporal and told to get my hair cut. I was in the army."

Pals

With the army desperate for men to fight, and no conscription, all sorts of ways were used to try and get people to join up.

The War Office believed men might be more willing to volunteer if they could serve with their friends. The War Office ran recruiting drives which signed up battalions of PALS – men from the same family, town or area who were then sent to fight together in the same company. Lord Derby described this system, 'in which friends from the same office will fight shoulder to shoulder for the honour of Britain and the credit of their hometown'.

Of course, should a company be wiped out, an entire community would lose all of its young men in one swoop. This was to happen with alarming frequency.

This approach was mirrored in local communities up and down the country as hundreds of thousands of men volunteered for military service. The speed with which these men joined up is testament to the naivety with which they viewed the War that would be 'over by Christmas'. It was called 'a measure of patriotic enthusiasm... a romantic innocence about the true nature of war that the reality of battle was cruelly to mock'.

The football battalion

There were more than 5,000 men playing professional football in 1914. Of those, 2,000 joined the military services. Many of these fought together in a special "football" battalion.

On 12th December 1914 the 17th Service (Football) Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment was established. This became known as the Football Battalion. Several top footballers joined this battalion. This included Frank Buckley, Walter Tull, Vivian Woodward, Joe Webster and Evelyn Lintott. By March 1915, 122 professional footballers had joined the battalion.

The Football Association called for all professional footballers who were not married, to join the armed forces. Some newspapers suggested that those who did not join up were "contributing to a German victory."

Some newspapers also attacked players for being effeminate and cowardly for getting paid for playing football while others were fighting on the Western Front. The famous amateur


Your Chums are Fighting
Why aren't YOU?

footballer and cricketer, Charles B. Fry, called for the abolition of football, demanding that all professional contracts be annulled and that no one below forty years of age be allowed to attend matches.

Recruiting committees went to games during half-time to call for volunteers.

On 15th January 1916, the Football Battalion reached the front-line. During a two-week period in the trenches four members of the battalion were killed and 33 were wounded. This included Vivian Woodward who was hit in the leg with a hand grenade.

Two heroic footballers

It is believed that Donald Bell, a defender with Bradford City, had been the first professional footballer to join the British Army after the outbreak of the war.

Second Lieutenant Bell took part in the Somme offensive. On 5th July he stuffed his pockets with grenades and attacked an enemy machine-gun post. When he attempted to repeat this feat five days later he was killed. He was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for his action of 5th July. It is the only one ever awarded to a professional footballer.

Walter Tull was another outstanding footballer who abandoned his career and offered his services to the British Army. Tull, a black man who had played for Tottenham Hotspurs and Northampton Town, joined the 1st Football Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.

Tull impressed his senior officers and was sent to officer training school despite military regulations forbidding "any Negro or person of colour" being an officer.

Tull became the first black combat officer in the British Army and was frequently mentioned in dispatches for his "gallantry and coolness" under fire. On 25th March, 1918, the then 2nd Lieutenant Tull was ordered to lead his men on an attack on the German trenches at Favreuil. Soon after entering No Mans Land, Tull was hit by a German bullet. Tull was such a popular officer that several of his men made valiant efforts under heavy fire from German machine-guns to bring him back to the British trenches. These efforts were in vain and Tull died soon after being hit. His body was never found. Eleven other members of Tottenham Hotspur were killed during the First World War.

Women's role in recruitment

Women played an important role in persuading men to join the army. In August 1914, Admiral Charles Fitzgerald founded the Order of the White Feather. This organisation encouraged women to give out white feathers (which stood for cowardice) to any young men who had not joined the army. This was intended to embarrass and shame them.

The British Army began publishing posters urging men to become soldiers. Some of these posters were aimed at women. One poster said: "Is your Best Boy wearing khaki? If not, don't you think he should be?" Another poster

read: "If you cannot persuade him to answer his country's call and protect you now, discharge him as unfit."

The Mothers' Union also published a poster. It urged its members to tell their sons: "My boy, I don't want you to go, but if I were you I should go." The poster added: "On his return, hearts would beat high with thankfulness and pride."

Baroness Emma Orczy founded the Active Service League, an organisation that urged women to sign the following pledge: "At this hour of England's grave peril and desperate need I do hereby pledge myself most solemnly in the name of my King and Country to persuade every man I know to offer his services to the country, and I also pledge myself never to be seen in public with any man who, being in every way fit and free for service, has refused to respond to his country's call."

Women and the war

Women served many important roles during the war.

The war opened up a wider range of occupations to female workers and hastened the collapse of traditional women's employment, particularly domestic service. From the 19th century to 1911, between 11 and 13 per cent of the female population in England and Wales were domestic servants. By 1931, the percentage had dropped to under eight per cent. The number of women in the Civil Service increased from 33,000 in 1911 to 102,000 by 1921.

During World War One, the range of roles open to women was immense: they 'manned' factories, invested in war bonds, harvested crops, and cared for troops on leave. They also enlisted in the armed forces. In World War One, approximately 80,000 women served in the three British women's forces as non-combatants – primarily as clerical staff and nurses.

The Women's Defence Relief Corps was set up. This corps consisted of two divisions: the Civil Section, which aimed to substitute women for men in employment in order to free men for military service, and the 'Semi-Military or good-citizen section' in which women actively recruited for the armed forces, underwent training in drill, marching, signalling and scouting, and were instructed in the use of arms. There was no intention of sending women to fight, but seeing women drill was thought to be an encouragement to men and a way to keep their spirits up.

However, after the war, most women resumed life at home. In many instances, contracts of employment during World War One decreed that women would only be employed 'for the duration of the war'. Returning soldiers expected to get first choice of jobs and married women were banned from many jobs at the end of the war (in many cases, including the civil service, the ban lasted until 1946).

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Make a propaganda poster

Making a propaganda poster means you have to think of just one simple idea, and then say it clearly.

'Your country needs you' is a simple, short idea. When sentences are short they are often powerful.

Then you often need to match it with a simple picture.

Let us do this in two stages.

Stage 1.

Think of a simple sentence to solve this problem:

During the war, woman were needed in all the jobs that men had done before they were called up. But women were not used to doing these jobs. So what sentence would you write to get them to volunteer for these, often hard, jobs?

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

Stage 2

Take a photo of one of the girls in the class making a hard job look easy. Then using your computer, put the sentence under your picture and print it as an A4 poster.

1 Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Purpose

This kind of project combines a number of skills.

First it needs children to understand the context they are working in. In this case it is World War 1 so they need to understand that troops have to go to war and that jobs have to be shared around among those who are left. Have a look at some contemporary jobs done mainly by men today, for example refuse collectors. Then get a girl to show how moving a wheelie bin can be done by both sexes.

At the same time this is a science project because it shows that you can apply science to make the force needed to move rubbish less (have a bin on wheels, use a machine to lift it).

Writing a short sentence which has a single message is very difficult and children can learn how to change words in a sentence to give them more meaning, so they increase their vocabulary and command of sentence structure.

Taking a photo means they have to work out how the photo can reinforce the message. So they have to relate the message given by each kind of medium. They are effectively working with multimedia.

They learn how to set out both text and picture on a page to give the most impact. They learn which size of font to use.

You don't of course, have to use rubbish bins, but these will be easy to show in terms of science and technology. Women worked in factories which would be harder to show, delivered milk, worked on farms and so on.

Outcomes

Children will learn how a problem in history involves thinking laterally about how to solve a real problem (change the way bins are moved/lifted) and how to get more people to feel they can do a job they may not have felt suited to.

The Western Front

Synopsis: The Western Front was the largest front of the war, and where most British servicemen saw action.

After six weeks of training, most of the new recruits were sent to the Front. Many companies marched first through their home towns, so their friends and family could give them a send off. But once at the Front, they quickly realised this war was not going to be easy, fun, or quick.

World War I was like no other war before in history. It has been called the start of modern warfare. The tactics used were similar to those that had been used for hundreds of years – trenches, frontal attacks, calvary charges. Yet it was also the first war in which aeroplanes, tanks, poison gas, mines, submarines and machine guns were used. The result was that the old tactics were much more deadly than ever before. Huge battles costing tens of thousands of lives would be fought to secure a few hundred metres of ground.

Although the war was fought all over the world – including southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa – the majority of the fighting was on two fronts in Europe – the Eastern Front and the Western Front.

The main theatre of war, the Western Front, was deadlocked from October 1914 until a few months before the war's end in 1918. The Western Front was a 440 mile long line of trenches, dugouts and barbed wire that stretched from the English Channel to the Swiss frontier. Although the Front at first passed through many towns, villages and forests, within a year, the entire Western Front resembled a barren moonscape where nothing lived except soldiers, and rats.

Trench warfare

World War I involved a form of warfare called trench warfare. Both sides would dig long trenches and their men would spend most of their time in the trenches, emerging under the cover of night for raids, sorties and attacks. The trenches provided cover against enemy fire. This meant that 'Going over the top' of the trench to attack the enemy was always very deadly and little progress could be made.

Enemy trenches might be separated by a mile, or by less than 100 feet. The area in between was strung with barbed wire, and laid with land mines, and was called No Man's Land.

It was on the Western Front that most Britons died. Advances were measured in feet and miles, which it might take months to make. Each big push would cost the lives of thousands or even tens of thousands of men.

Once a trench had been abandoned or taken over, the enemy would just relocate to a trench a few hundred metres back – making it necessary to start all over again.

Walking to war. Notice the background.

The Cheshires at the Somme.

Why did the armies get bogged down?

A major problem was that although steam and coal allowed armies to move around much faster, and fully mobilised armies had greatly increased in size and firepower, technology had not yet provided for two other critical needs: battlefield communications and battlefield mobility. Radio and telephones could communicate between cities, ships and higher headquarters, but they were still too bulky to be carried in the field. Armies made some use of lorries and staff cars, but practical cross-country vehicles, good roads and associated infrastructure (such as places for fuel) simply did not exist.

Once the armies left their railheads, they moved largely at the speed of the marching man and communicated at the speed of the galloping horse or the carrier pigeon, exactly like the armies of a century before. This meant that once the army received the order to attack, if things went bad, it could take hours before the order to stop attacking was received.

Artillary sighting was also not very advanced. It was very difficult to sight

Royal Irish Rifles waiting to move forward.

and range artillary weapons accurately enough to fire into an enemy trench with any accuracy. To do this, you needed to fire a few ranging shots first. But these ranging shots would give away the location of the guns and let your enemy blow them up.

In 1914 aeroplanes were also not very advanced – consisting of mostly canvas and wire, and could not be used to provide cover or drop bombs (they were used for reconnaissance though and by the end of the war they would be used to strafe soldiers with machine gun fire).

In 1914 there were also no tanks or other heavy vehicles that could break through a line of fire (tanks would be developed towards the end of the war and would prove a crucial part of the allied victory).

All of these advances – better communications, artillary sighting, aeroplanes and better transport – would come towards 1918 and contribute to the allied victory. But for most of the war, old fashioned tactics were used with modern weapons.

Life in the trenches

So what was life actually like for the men serving tours of duty in the line?

A day in the trenches

The daily routine of life in the trenches began with the morning 'stand-to'. An hour before dawn everyone was roused from slumber by the company orderly officer and sergeant and ordered to climb up on the fire step to guard against a dawn raid by the enemy, bayonets fixed.

This policy of stand-to was adopted by both sides, and despite the knowledge that each side prepared itself for raids or attacks timed at dawn, many were actually carried out at this time.

Accompanying stand-to, as the light grew, was the daily ritual often termed the 'morning hate'. This involved both sides trying to relieve the tension of the early hours with machine gun fire, shelling and small arms fire, directed to their front. Although they were firing blind, random shots killed a few people each day.

With stand-to over, in some areas rum might then be issued to the men. They would then attend to the cleaning of their rifle equipment, which was followed by inspection by officers.

Breakfast would next be served. In essentially every area of the line at some time or other each side would adopt an unofficial truce while breakfast was served and eaten. This truce often extended to the wagons which delivered the food.

Truces such as these seldom lasted long; invariably a senior officer would hear of its existence and quickly stamp it out. Nevertheless it persisted throughout the war, and was more prevalent in quieter sectors of the line.

With breakfast over, the men would be inspected by either the company or platoon commander. Once this had been completed NCOs would assign daily chores to each man. These chores included the refilling of sandbags, the repair of the duckboards on the floor of the trench, draining the trenches, repair of the trench itself or cleaning and digging of latrines.

Given that each side's front line was constantly under watch by snipers and look-outs during daylight, movement was restricted until night fell. Once men had concluded their assigned tasks they were free to write letters home or prepare meals. Sleep was snatched wherever possible.

With the onset of dusk the morning ritual of stand-to was repeated, again to guard against a surprise attack launched as night fell.

This over, the trenches became a hive of activity. Men would be sent to the rear lines to fetch rations and water. Other men would be assigned sentry duty on the fire step. Generally men

would be expected to provide sentry duty for up to two hours. Any longer and there was a risk of falling asleep on duty – for which the penalty was death by firing squad.

Patrols would often be sent out into No Mans Land. Some men would be tasked with repairing or adding barbed wire to the front line. Others would go out to assigned listening posts, hoping to pick up valuable information from the enemy lines.

They could not afford to use their handguns while patrolling in No Man's Land, for fear of the machine gun fire it would inevitably attract, deadly to all members of the patrol.

Sometimes enemy patrols would meet in No Man's Land. They were then faced with the option of ignoring each other and hurrying on their separate ways or else engaging in hand to hand fighting.

Men were relieved of front-line duty at night-time too. Relieving units would wind their weary way through numerous lines of communications trenches, weighed down with equipment and trench stores (such as shovels, picks, corrugated iron, duckboards, etc.). The process of relieving a line could take several frustrating hours.

Life described above might sound calm, but death was a constant companion to those serving in the line, even when no raid or attack was launched or defended against. In some sectors there was almost constant shellfire, which could bring random death. Many people died on their first day in the trench, as their natural curiosity overcame common sense and they peered over the parapet into No Man's Land – to be shot by a sniper.

Disease killed as many as bullets and shrapnel. Rats in their millions infested trenches. Brown rats would eat human remains and could grow to the size of a cat. They spread infection and contaminated food. Typhoid, dysentery, flu, and other diseases were common and at times killed as many men as enemy fire.

Lice were a never-ending problem, breeding in the seams of filthy clothing and causing men to itch unceasingly. Even when clothing was periodically washed and deloused, lice eggs invariably remained hidden in the seams; within a few hours of the clothes being put on, body heat would cause the eggs to hatch.

Lice caused Trench Fever, a particularly painful disease that began suddenly with severe pain followed by high fever. Recovery took up to twelve weeks.

Frogs by the score were found in shell holes covered in water; they were also found in the base of trenches. Slugs and horned beetles crowded the sides of the trench.

Many men chose to shave their heads entirely to avoid nits.

Trench Foot was another medical condition peculiar to trench life. It was a fungal infection of the feet caused by cold, wet and unsanitary trench conditions. It could turn gangrenous and result in amputation. Trench Foot

was more of a problem at the start of trench warfare; as trench conditions improved in 1915 it rapidly faded, although a trickle of cases continued throughout the war.

In winter, snow covered the ground and there was little protection from the cold and wind aside from clothing. Many men suffered frostbite and some had toes or feet amputated. When it rained, everything got wet, and in the summer there was no way to cool off.

And then there was, of course, the appalling reek of the trenches.

Rotting carcasses lay around in their thousands. For example, approximately 200,000 men were killed on the Somme battlefields, many of which lay in shallow graves.

Overflowing latrines were common, and the soldiers in the trenches did not have any way to bathe properly or clean their clothes.

Trenches also stank of creosol or chloride of lime, used as insecticides and fungicides.

Add to this the smell of cordite, the lingering odour of poison gas, rotting sandbags, stagnant mud, cigarette smoke and cooking food.

Tales from the trenches

"During training I was aware only of the glamour of war. I prepared myself for it with enthusiasm, and in training I bayoneted and clubbed the stuffed sacks representing the enemy with a sort of exalted ferocity. I was as jealous of my regiment as I used to be of my school.

The journey from Southampton to Havre in an ancient paddle-boat and on from there by train in a cattle-truck to the mysterious destination called the Front seemed a fitting prelude to the adventure. It was tedious and uncomfortable, but we told each other this was war. We became better acquainted with tedium and discomfort later.

When I made my debut in the line I had a cheerful conviction that nothing would hit me. And I remember standing on the fire-step for the first time and saying to myself exultantly: "You're in it at last! You're in it! The greatest thing that's ever happened!"

Lice and death came into my life about the same time. At stand-to one morning a flight of whizz-bangs skimmed the top of the trench. The man next to me went down with a scream and half his face gone. The sand-bag in front of me was ripped open and I was blinded and half-choked with its contents.

This was in the summer of 1916. In the plain on our right the flash and rumble of guns was unceasing. It was the beginning of the Somme offensive we learnt afterwards, but even if we had known one of the big battles of the war was in progress at our elbows I doubt if we should have been deeply stirred. To every private in the line the war was confined to whatever was directly in front of him.

My first spell in the line lasted three weeks. Water was scarce, and even

German trench.

the tea ration was so short there was none left over for shaving. I had a nine days' growth of beard when we went down to rest. Some of us looked like Crimean veterans and we all began to feel like it. My socks were embedded in my feet with caked mud and filth and had to be removed with a knife.

Lack of rest became a torment. Undisturbed sleep seemed more desirable than heaven and much more remote. I have slept on the march like a somnambulist and I have slept standing up like a horse."

Mud, Somme.

One night on the line

"Jerry had been restless all the evening, and not long after we had taken over he opened out with every gun he possessed. One of the fellows from the other sap-head came by with a bloody rag round his face. The racket of crumps and crashes and shrieking shells was too great to hear what he said, but I guessed he was going down to the first-aid post.

A little later I saw a flickering light approaching me from the depths of the sap. My hair literally stood on end, notwithstanding the tin hat. In my panic I thought Jerry must have countermined or found some other way into the sap and had chosen this way of attacking.

My first impulse was to fire and get a few shots in, anyway. Luckily, however, I was inspired to shout a challenge. It was answered by the corporal. He and another man, both wounded, were helping each other down to the dressing station.

I envied them their luck and promised to go round occasionally to see how G., the only other survivor, was faring.

G. and I had joined the same day and had been friends ever since. I felt anxious about him and I wanted company, so went as soon as the others had gone.

At the end of the short trench I stumbled over something. A bank of cloud cleared for a moment from the moon, and I saw it was a headless body.

I went back to my post, frightened beyond anything that should be humanly possible. Twice I was blown off my feet by the concussion of bursting shells. The whine of falling shrapnel filled the air. I seemed to be all alone in a world tottering into ruin. If only the noise would stop I felt I might keep my reason. I think

Moving the wounded from the battlefield.

I prayed for a direct hit to end it all. By a miracle, however, I was not even touched.

I don't know how long after it was when my platoon officer crawled round the remains of a traverse. He had come to withdraw the guard. Back in the line I was told to take an hour's rest.

In the dug-out, stretcher bearers, unable to get down to the dressing station, were doing what they could for a man who had been buried. The candles constantly went out with the concussion of explosions outside, and every time this happened the man screamed. Exhausted, I sank into sleep."

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Censorship

You are an ordinary rifleman.

You have been told that you are about to start an offensive which means going over the top into the face of enemy fire. You start to write a letter home. It may be your last letter. You write some personal things and also explain where you are and what the battle is all about.

You then put your letter in your envelope and pass it to your officer for posting home.

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Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Censorship

You are an officer.

It is your job to open all the letters of your men and cover up anything they might have said that could be useful to an enemy. Go through the letters from your comrades and cover up in thick felt-tip pen what you think needs to be censored.

Then you pass the letters for posting.

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Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Censorship

You are a wife with two small children.

The letter arrives. However, it is covered with black ink which makes it almost impossible to read. Still, you do your best. You decide you will write down what you can read and fill in the gaps. Do that now.

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Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Teachers

Get a third of the class to be soldiers writing home.

Get a third to be mothers receiving the letters.

Get a third to be censors.

The need to keep locations and battle plans, or even hints of battle plans secret from interception by the enemy meant that many things about daily life could not be said. As a result letters extended the personal side of things. Show children how to write emotional letters.

Outcomes

Children learn that what you want to say may not be appropriate in certain circumstances. They learn that there is sometimes a conflict between personal need and national need.

Over the top

Send the class over the top by making them climb over the desks and move forwards.

You can make craters and other protective defences by using desks and chairs on their sides.

You nominate one person to be an officer.

You are the machine gunner of the opposite side. As soon as you see an arm, leg or head exposed you shout "ratatatat, [child's name] you are dead or ratatatat, [child's name] you are wounded. The idea is to show children how hard (and stupid) it is to advance against a machine gun emplacement.

Ask children what they might do if it were a modern war (call in pathfinder aircraft with missiles, use a grenade launcher, use mortars... the list goes on), but it shows that you have to develop weapons to match those aimed against you and because this was not the case in WW1 many people were senselessly killed.

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

The Boys Brigade

You are about to join up.

Lord Kitchener is a national hero and he has told you to. Think of a name for your brigade, then find a song you like from that time and all the boys sing it as they march around the classroom. The girls wave little flags you have made in class.

The name of my brigade is:

✎ .....

The song for my brigade is:

✎ .....

Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Outcomes

Children will understand that, to begin with, it all seemed good fun. People were proud to have their local name to walk under and they sang music hall songs.

If you sing 'It's a long way to Tiperary', think about that. Tiperary to Paris is now an hour's flight. Why was it long? Children will appreciate that modes of travel were very different from today.

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Keeping clean

Keeping clean and healthy was a problem. Keeping out of water in winter was another problem. In summer water was hard to come by. In winter the water swilling around the trenches was filthy.

So imagine you have to wash in a cup of water. How would you have used the water to keep clean?

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

What would be the best shape of container to use? Your cup or your mess tin?

✎ .....

✎ .....

Would a flannel have been of any help or would it be best to just use your hands?

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Teachers

Here is a practical wartime problem that could also be a summer camping problem today (or a developing world problem for many millions of people). The task is to use resources efficiently.

The mess tin is a better shape than a cup because it is easier to get your hand into. A flannel and soap will spread a film of water around more of your body than using hands alone.

Here is a very good opportunity to talk about health and washing with soap. Why was soap important? Would you use any of the water for washing your teeth? Do you need to? Would you wash your hair first or wash your body? How often would you do this (not how often would you LIKE to do it)!

So you can get to grips with microbes on the skin, the role of soap as opposed to water and many other personal hygiene issues. This project involves mainly science, but also technology (what does a flannel do? What would it be made from to be best? How thick and how big should it be? What should it be made from?).

Outcomes

Children will understand better the importance of personal hygiene and what the minimum requirements for hygiene are. They will understand the role of bacteria and they will understand how to adapt materials to circumstances.

The Western Front

One of the defining features of WWI was poison gas. Although it claimed few lives, the gas did create fear and left millions crippled for life.

Another unique feature of the First World War is that this was the first war in which poison gas was used as a weapon in large quantities; it was a major military innovation. The gases ranged from disabling chemicals, such as tear gas and mustard gas, to deadly chemical agents like phosgene and chlorine. While only around 4% of combat deaths were due to gas, the proportion of non-fatal casualties was high, and gas remained one of the soldiers' greatest fears.

In 1899, all major European powers signed the Hague Treaty, which prohibited the launching of projectiles containing asphyxiating or poisonous gas. However, once the war reached a stalemate, all sides quickly convinced themselves that the convention could be breached.

In January 1915, during the Battle of Bolimov, the Germans fired liquid xylyl bromide tear gas on Russian positions on the Rawka River, west of Warsaw. However, instead of vaporising, the chemical froze, completely failing to have the desired effect.

In April 1915, the German Army used a much stronger gas, chlorine, north of Ypres. At 17:00, in a slight easterly breeze, the gas was released, forming a gray-green cloud that drifted across positions held by French Colonial troops. The troops broke ranks, abandoning their trenches and creating a 4.5 km gap in the Allied line that the Germans poured through.

(The Entente governments quickly claimed the attack was a flagrant violation of international law, but Germany argued that the Hague treaty had only banned chemical shells, rather than the use of gas projectors.)

A week later, a German gas attack at Ypres led to the deaths of 90 men.

However, counter measures were quickly developed to chlorine. For one thing, the cloud of dark gas was easily spotted in time to don masks.

The French then developed phosgene, a much deadlier and invisible gas. The most widely reported and, perhaps, most effective gas of the First World War was mustard gas, which was introduced by Germany in July 1917 prior to the Third Battle of Ypres. (It was known to the British as HS (Hun Stuff), while the French called it Yperite.)

Mustard gas was not intended as a killing agent (though in high enough doses it could be fatal fairly quickly) but instead was used to harass and disable the enemy and pollute the battlefield. Delivered in artillery shells, mustard gas was heavier than air, and settled to the ground as an oily, sherry-coloured liquid. Once in the soil, mustard gas

Advancing with poison gas flares.

Machine gun crew with gas masks.

remained active for several days, weeks or even months, depending on the weather conditions. This meant that trenches in the area would have to be abandoned for a long period of time.

The skin of victims of mustard gas blistered, their eyes became very sore and they began to vomit. Mustard gas caused internal and external bleeding and attacked the bronchial tubes, stripping off the mucous membrane. This was extremely painful and most soldiers had to be strapped to their beds. It usually took a person four or five weeks to die of mustard gas exposure.

Gas never reproduced the dramatic military success of April 1915; however, it became a standard weapon which, combined with conventional artillery, was used to support most attacks in the later stages of the war. Gas was employed primarily on the Western Front – the static, confined trench system was ideal for achieving an effective concentration – however, Germany made use of gas against Russia on the Eastern Front, where the lack of effective countermeasures would result in deaths of thousands of Russian infantry, while Britain experimented with gas in Palestine during the Second Battle of Gaza.

Anonymous British eyewitness account of the German gas attack at Ypres on 22 April 1915:

"Utterly unprepared for what was to come, the French divisions gazed for a short while spellbound at the strange phenomenon they saw coming slowly toward them.

Like some liquid the heavy-coloured vapour poured relentlessly into the trenches, filled them, and passed on.

For a few seconds nothing happened; the sweet-smelling stuff merely tickled their nostrils; they failed to realise the danger. Then, with inconceivable rapidity, the gas worked, and blind panic spread.

Hundreds, after a dreadful fight for air, became unconscious and died where they lay – a death of hideous torture, with the frothing bubbles gurgling in their throats and the foul liquid welling up in their lungs. With blackened faces and twisted limbs one by one they drowned – only that which drowned them came from inside and not from out.

Others, staggering, falling, lurching on, and of their ignorance keeping pace with the gas, went back.

A hail of rifle fire and shrapnel mowed them down, and the line was broken. There was nothing on the British left – their flank was up in the air. The northeast corner of the salient around Ypres had been pierced. From in front of St. Julien away up north toward Boesinghe there was no one in front of the Germans."

First person account: Arthur Empey

American Arthur Empey was so enraged by the German sinking of the Lusitania that when America did not immediately declare war, he enlisted in the British Army. This is his account of a German gas attack.

"We had a new man at the periscope, on this afternoon in question; I was sitting on the fire step, cleaning my rifle, when he called out to me: 'There's a sort of greenish, yellow cloud rolling along the ground out in front, it's coming…'

But I waited for no more, grabbing my bayonet, which was detached from the rifle, I gave the alarm by banging an empty shell case, which was hanging near the periscope. At the same instant, gongs started ringing down the trench, the signal for Tommy to don his respirator, or smoke helmet, as we call it.

Gas travels quietly, so you must not lose any time; you generally have about eighteen or twenty seconds in which to adjust your gas helmet.

A gas helmet is made of cloth, treated with chemicals. There are two windows, or glass eyes, in it, through which you can see. Inside there is a rubber-covered tube, which goes in the mouth. You breathe through your nose; the gas, passing through the cloth helmet, is neutralised by the action of the chemicals. The foul air is exhaled through the tube in the mouth, this tube being so constructed that it prevents the inhaling of the outside air or gas. One helmet is good for five hours of the strongest gas. Each Tommy carries two of them slung around his shoulder in a waterproof canvas bag. He must wear this bag at all times, even while sleeping. To change a defective helmet, you take out the new one, hold your breath, pull the old one off, placing the new one over your head, tucking in the loose ends under the collar of your tunic.

For a minute, pandemonium reigned in our trench – Tommies adjusting their helmets, bombers running here and there, and men turning out of the dugouts with fixed bayonets, to man the fire step.

We had to work quickly, as Fritz generally follows the gas with an infantry attack. A company man on our right was too slow in getting on his helmet; he sank to the ground, clutching at his throat, and after a few spasmodic twistings, went West (died). It was horrible to see him die, but we were powerless to help him.

A gas, or smoke helmet, as it is called, at the best is a vile-smelling thing, and it is not long before one gets a violent headache from wearing it.

Our eighteen-pounders were bursting in No Man's Land, in an effort, by the artillery, to disperse the gas clouds. The fire step was lined with crouching men, bayonets fixed, and bombs near at hand to repel the expected attack.

I trained my machine gun on their trench and its bullets were raking the parapet. Then over they came, bayonets glistening. In their respirators, which have a large snout in front, they looked like some horrible nightmare.

All along our trench, rifles and machine guns spoke, our shrapnel was bursting over their heads. They went down in heaps, but new ones took the place of the fallen. Nothing could stop that mad rush. The Germans reached our barbed wire, which had previously been demolished by their shells, then it was bomb against bomb, and the devil for all.

Suddenly, my head seemed to burst from a loud 'crack' in my ear. Then my head began to swim, throat got dry, and a heavy pressure on the lungs warned

me that my helmet was leaking. Turning my gun over to No. 2, I changed helmets.

The trench started to wind like a snake, and sandbags appeared to be floating in the air. The noise was horrible; I sank onto the fire step, needles seemed to be pricking my flesh, then blackness.

I was awakened by one of my mates removing my smoke helmet. How delicious that cool, fresh air felt in my lungs. A strong wind had arisen and dispersed the gas.

They told me that I had been 'out' for three hours; they thought I was dead.

The attack had been repulsed after a hard fight. Twice the Germans had gained a foothold in our trench, but had been driven out by counter- attacks. The trench was filled with their dead and ours. Through a periscope, I counted eighteen dead Germans in our wire; they were a ghastly sight in their horrible-looking respirators.

I examined my first smoke helmet, a bullet had gone through it on the left side, just grazing my ear, the gas had penetrated through the hole made in the cloth."

Empey, Arthur Guy, Over The Top (1917)

Poison gas casualties.

The Christmas truce

Synopsis: The Christmas Truce 1914 – 24 hours of normal life and back to war. This is a poignant story that shows the attitudes of soldiers in the early months of the war and is another opportunity to see battlefield conditions.

By Christmas 1914, those on the front lines had already long realised what those back home were just learning – this war was not going to be over any time soon. While most men had joined up believing they would be home by Christmas, the horror of war had convinced many they would never see home again.

But on Christmas day 1914 something extraordinary happened. For one brief day, on many parts of the Western Front, enemies would become friends.

The winter of 1914 was especially harsh. The soldiers – unequipped to face the rigours of the cold and rain – found themselves wallowing in a freezing mire of mud and the decaying bodies of the fallen.

The men at the Front could not help but have a degree of sympathy for their opponents who were having just as miserable a time as they were. Then there was the desire, on all sides, to see the enemy up close – was he really as bad as the politicians, papers and priests were saying?

At Christmas 1914, the British Army (still a relatively small presence on the Western Front) was manning a stretch of the line running 27 miles south from the Ypres salient to the La Bassee Canal. Facing them were German forces.

Along the Front, the enemy was sometimes no more than 30 or 50 yards away. They could quite easily hurl greetings and insults to one another.

As Christmas approached the festive mood and the desire for a lull in the fighting increased as parcels packed with goodies from home started to arrive. On top of this came plum puddings and 'Princess Mary boxes'; a metal case engraved with an outline of King George V's daughter and filled with chocolates and butterscotch, cigarettes and tobacco, a picture card of Princess Mary and a facsimile of George V's greeting to the troops. 'May God protect you and bring you safe home,' it said.

Germans received Kaiserliche, a large meerschaum pipe for the troops and a box of cigars for NCOs and officers. Towns, villages and cities, and numerous support associations on both sides also flooded the front with gifts of food, warm clothes and letters of thanks.

With so much Christmas booty to hand, the season of goodwill entered the trenches. A Daily Telegraph correspondent wrote that on Christmas Eve on one part of the line the Germans had managed to slip a chocolate cake into British trenches.

Even more amazingly, the cake was accompanied with a message asking for a ceasefire later that evening so they could celebrate the festive season and their Captain's birthday. They proposed a concert at 7.30pm when candles would be placed on the parapets of their trenches.

The British accepted the invitation and offered some tobacco as a return present. That evening, at 7:30 exactly, German heads suddenly popped up and started to sing. Each number ended with a round of applause from both sides.

Along many parts of the line the truce was spurred on with the arrival in the German trenches of miniature Christmas trees. The sight of these small pines, decorated with candles and strung along the German parapets, captured the imagination of the British.

Christmas day began quietly but once the sun was up the fraternisation began. Again songs were sung and rations thrown to one another. It was not long before troops and officers ventured out into no-man's land.

Men exchanged gifts. One German, a juggler and a showman, gave an impromptu performance of his routine in the centre of no-man's land.

Captain Sir Edward Hulse of the Scots Guards, in his famous account, remembered the approach of four unarmed Germans at 8.30am. He went out to meet them with one of his ensigns.

"Their spokesmen," Hulse wrote, "started off by saying that he thought it only right to come over and wish us a happy Christmas, and trusted us implicitly to keep the truce. He came from Suffolk where he had left his best girl and a 3 1/2 h.p. motor-bike!"

"Scots and Huns were fraternizing in the most genuine possible manner. Every sort of souvenir was exchanged, addresses given and received, photos of families shown, etc. One of our fellows offered a German a cigarette; the German said, "Virginian?" Our fellow said, "Aye, straight-cut", the German said "No thanks, I only smoke Turkish!"... It gave us all a good laugh."

(Hulse's account was in a letter to his mother, who in turn sent it on to the newspapers for publication, as was the custom at the time.)

The truce lasted all day.

Captain J C Dunn, the Medical Officer in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, whose unit had received two barrels of beer from the Saxon troops opposite, recorded how hostilities re-started on his section of the front.

Dunn wrote:

"At 8.30 I fired three shots in the air and put up a flag with "Merry Christmas" on it, and I climbed on the parapet. He [the Germans] put up a sheet with "Thank you" on it, and the German Captain appeared on the parapet. We both bowed and saluted and got down into our respective trenches, and he fired two shots in the air, and the War was on again."

By the following Christimas, troops were more hardened and jaded by war and officers too disciplined to allow any fraternization. The Christimas truce would not happen again on this scale.

First person account of the truce by Frank Richards, a British soldier:

"On Christmas morning we stuck up a board with 'A Merry Christmas' on it. The enemy had stuck up a similar one. Two of our men then threw their equipment off and jumped on the parapet with their hands above their heads. Two of the Germans done the same and commenced to walk up the river bank, our two men going to meet them. They met and shook hands and then we all got out of the trench.

The Company Commander rushed into the trench and endeavoured to prevent it, but he was too late: the whole of the Company were now out, and so were the Germans. He had to accept the situation, so soon he and the other company officers climbed out too. We and the Germans met in the middle of no-man's-land.

We mucked in all day with one another. Some of them could speak English. By the look of them their trenches were in as bad a state as our own. One of their men, speaking in English, mentioned that he had worked in Brighton for some years and that he was fed up to the neck with this damned war and would be glad when it was all over. We told him that he wasn't the only one that was fed up with it.

The German Company-Commander asked our Company Commander if he would accept a couple of barrels of beer and assured him that they would not make his men drunk. He accepted the offer with thanks and a couple of their men rolled the barrels over and we took them into our trench. The German officer sent one of his men back to the trench, who appeared shortly after carrying a tray with bottles and glasses on it. Officers of both sides clinked glasses and drunk one another's health. Our commander presented them with a plum pudding. The officers came to an understanding that the unofficial truce would end at midnight. At dusk we went back to our respective trenches.

Just before midnight we all made it up not to commence firing before they did.

During the whole of Boxing Day [the day after Christmas] we never fired a shot, and they the same, each side seemed to be waiting for the other to set the ball a-rolling. One of their men shouted across in English and inquired how we had enjoyed the beer. We shouted back and told him it was very weak but that we were very grateful for it. We were conversing off and on during the whole of the day.

We were relieved that evening at dusk by a battalion of another brigade. We were mighty surprised as we had heard no whisper of any relief during the day. We told the men who relieved us how we had spent the last couple of days with the enemy, and they told us that by what they had been told the whole of the British troops in the line, with one or two exceptions, had mucked in with the enemy."

This account appears in Richards, Frank, Old Soldiers Never Die (1933).

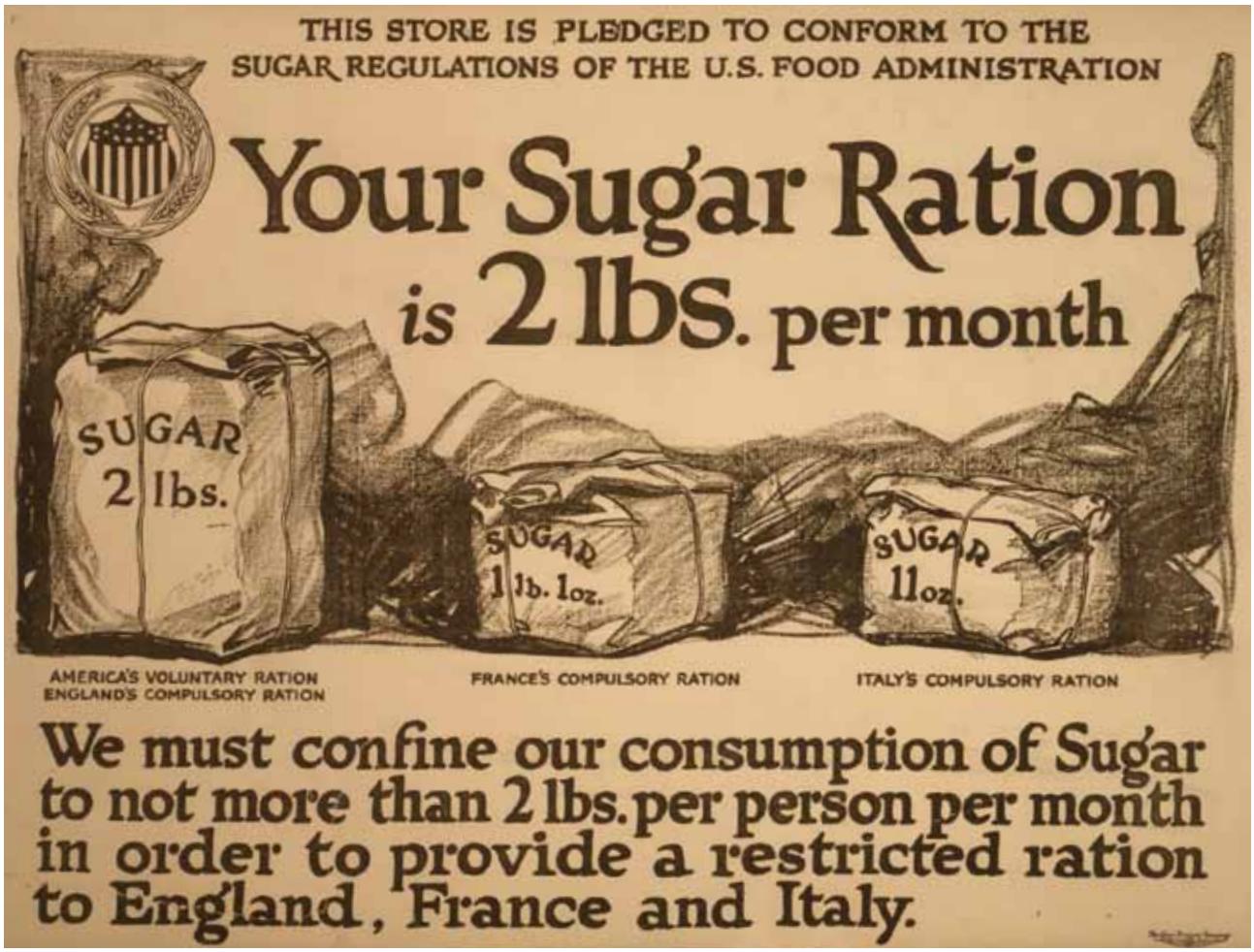
The Home Front

While Britains at home experienced much less hardship in this war than in WWII, none-the-less, the war was everywhere and changed the lives of everyone in Britain.

Back home, with so many men off fighting, and supplies in increasingly short supply, life grew harder. At the peak of the war, most of the able bodied young men were fighting and some small towns and villages found themselves populated almost entirely by women, children and the elderly. Some professions, such as farmers, veterinary surgeons, some doctors, some skilled factory workers and engineers were encouraged to stay at home, however, and help the war effort in other ways.

Women and the elderly were encouraged to work to support the war effort, taking the place of the young men.

And as the war dragged on, more and more people lost loved ones and friends, and more and more men returned home crippled from shells or gas, until there was hardly anyone in the country who did not know several people who had died or been wounded. This situation was repeated all across Europe, and this generation of young



men were called the Lost Generation, because so many of them never returned (or returned crippled).

Less alcohol

The British government became concerned about the consumption of alcohol during the First World War. They feared that war production was being hampered by drunkenness. In January 1915, Lloyd George claimed that Britain was "fighting Germans, Austrians and drink, and as far as I can see the greatest of these foes is drink."

Lloyd George started a campaign to persuade national figures to make a pledge that they would not drink alcohol during the war. In April 1915 King George V supported the campaign when he promised that no alcohol would be consumed in the Royal household until the war was over.

In October 1915 the British government announced several measures they believed would reduce alcohol consumption. A No Treating Order laid down that people could not buy alcoholic drinks for other people. Public House opening times were also reduced to 12.00 noon to 2.30pm and 6.30 to 9.30pm (from 5am in the morning to 12.30pm at night before the war).

The government also increased the level of tax on alcohol. In 1918 a bottle of whisky cost £1, five times what it had cost before the outbreak of war. This helped to reduce alcoholic consumption. Whereas Britain consumed 89 million gallons of alcohol in 1914, this had fallen to 37 million in 1918.

Food rationing

Soon after the outbreak of the First World War the the German Navy attempted to halt the flow of imports to Britain by introducing a policy they called unrestricted submarine warfare (this was a policy whereby the Germans announced their intention to attack any ship – civilian or military – that did not belong to an ally).

By the end of 1916, German U-boats were on average destroying about 300,000 tons of shipping a month. In February 1917, the German Navy sank 230 ships bringing food and other supplies to Britain. The following month a record 507,001 tons of shipping was lost as a result of the U-boat campaign. Although Britain was successful at increasing food production and the wheat harvest of 1917 was the best in history, by the time the US entered the war in 1917, Britain had only a six week supply of food remaining.

Even before this, many foods were in short supply. Fresh fruit was difficult to come by, as were eggs and milk. Potatoes, a staple of the poor, were also in short-supply and sugar was very difficult to get. What supplies were available of these luxuries were diverted to the war effort.

The consumption of fresh meat also dropped from an average of 2.36 to 1.53 lb a week during this period. At the end of 1917 people began to fear that the country was running out of food. Panic buying led to shortages and so in January 1918, the Ministry of Food decided to introduce rationing. Sugar was the first to be rationed and this was later followed by fresh meat. However, official figures show that for the most part the intake of calories almost kept up to the pre-war level. This may be in part due to the large number of people who still lived in rural areas, where fresh food was grown locally.

Rationing – what would you ration and why?

Rationing is not something that any of us might like, but in times of war it may be necessary.

How would you decide what foods should be rationed?

1. Find out what foods make up a healthy diet (Science@School, Books 3A or 5A may be able to help you).

✎ .....

✎ .....

2. For each food group, list the foods and separate them out into foods that can be grown at home and those that have to be imported. Foods that have to be imported may need to be rationed first or substituted with those that can be grown at home.

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

3. Write down all the foods that can be grown/produced at home. Find out some meals that can be produced from them. Would this be as interesting a range of foods to eat as you would get normally?

✎ .....

✎ .....

4. You now need to send foods to the Western Front. This is more challenging as you must not include foods that are easily perishable. What choices would you make?

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Objectives

This provides an opportunity to talk about the number of calories people need (depending on age, sex and the kind of work they do), the requirements for a balanced diet and thus develop a strategy for what foods should be provided and in which quantity.

Method

Here you can involve science and look at the food pyramid. You can discuss what makes up a food pyramid and thus which foods can be used as alternatives. Children should find out what foods are easy to grow and are plentiful, and which foods have to come from overseas and so may be less secure. They should also find out which foods are not needed in the diet even though they may be nice in normal times (for example sugar).

You then go over the whole process again for troops in the trenches. The questions specify that food must not be perishable. Children should be reminded that conditions were very harsh in winter and how would they help alleviate this with food (through hot soups, for example). Children should also be told that, as lines were fixed, food was brought to the front at a fixed time of the day and that firing ceased while both sides got their food. (And much food came from the part of France not under war, rather than from the UK). The book explains this as part of the daily routine.

Outcomes

Children will understand that in times of shortage, a fair distribution of resources is needed. This distribution is most effective if it is based on (i) science of what foods are required for healthy living and (ii) knowledge of the availability of various foodstuffs which occupy the same position in the food pyramid and thus can be regarded as interchangeable.

The war at sea

The British Navy played an important part in the war. Because Britain is an island, the Germans hoped to prevent supplies from reaching Britain by dominating the seas and destroying shipping. Germany also relied heavily on its fleet to bring supplies into Germany from its Empire.

For the Royal Navy, the First World War was a bittersweet experience. Although it ended with the defeat of the German High Seas Fleet, Britain's Grand Fleet never claimed a decisive victory over its German counterpart. There was no repeat of the Battle of Trafalgar. The war at sea was decided by other, less glorious, aspects of naval strategy.

In the early stages of the war, the two fleets fought a number of small-scale battles. At first, Britain was worried the Germans might try to invade the mainland. But chances of a German invasion of Britain receded after the Grand Fleet's victory at the Battle of Heligoland Bight on 28 August 1914. Five months later, with the help of a German codebook captured by the Russians, it again inflicted substantial damage on the German fleet in the North Sea at the Battle of Dogger Bank. However, neither of these victories, nor more distant triumphs such as the Battle of the Falklands (8 December 1914), proved decisive.

In the North Sea, the British fleet soon managed to establish a ring of steel off the German coast that left most of the German fleet bottled up in its ports.

In May 1916 the German fleet was ordered to leave its safe harbour and attack the British Grand Fleet. Unfortunately for the Germans, British Naval intelligence had broken the new German code and was aware of its enemy's intentions. On the afternoon of May 31, a combined force of 250 ships collided in an epic duel, the Battle of Jutland, that lasted into the night and ended when, under cover of darkness, the German fleet fled back to its home port.

Tactically, the battle was a draw. The final scorecard revealed that the British had lost 14 ships and 6,094 men while the Germans lost 11 ships and 2,551 men. Strategically, however, the British came out the winner as the Germans never again jeopardized their High Seas Fleet by allowing it to battle the British. German surface naval power was thus neutralised. Germany thereafter relied on its submarine fleet, the U-boats, to bring the naval war to its enemy.

Britain ultimately won the war at sea through two strategies that had little in common with full-scale battles such as Jutland: the trade blockade and the convoy system.

Britain used its naval dominance to shut off German access to the North Sea. From November 1914, ships from neutral countries entered this British 'military area' at their own peril. Many were captured and their supplies confiscated. Germany was thus prevented from receiving vital war supplies and foodstuffs throughout the conflict.

This trade blockade did manage to block supplies from reaching Germany and helped cause mass starvation in Germany which killed just over 88,000 Germans in 1915, and more than 293,000 in 1918. However, the Germans had another plan – submarines.

Submarine warfare

The First World War marked the first use of submarines as a major element in warfare. Prior to World War I, prevailing naval opinion considered the submarine an ineffective weapon for blockading an enemy country. Submarines, filled with exposed piping and crammed with machinery, had no space to take prisoners aboard. Additionally, the submarine could never carry enough sailors to provide crews to man captured ships. Therefore, the submarine was considered a useless weapon against civilian shipping.

In February 1915 the German government announced its solution to the problem – unrestricted submarine warfare. The Germans realised they didn't have to capture a merchant ship, just sink it – crew and all. They declared a war zone around the British Isles within which they would sink any allied or neutral merchant vessel on sight. Fifty ships were hit between February and September including the passenger liner Lusitania.

Among the 1,198 lives lost in the Lusitania sinking were 138 Americans. Public opinion in America was outraged, many clamouring for war. President Wilson protested to the Germans. Afraid that America might join the war, and mindful that they didn't have enough subs to do the job right, the Germans suspended their campaign – but only temporarily.

In February 1917, with U-boats available in greater quantity, the Germans again declared their policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. It was a big gamble. The Germans knew the policy would help bring America into the war. But they reasoned they could starve the British out first. It was a gamble they almost won. By the spring of 1917, Germany's reintroduced policy of unrestricted submarine warfare was sinking one in every four merchant ships coming to Britain. By April, when America declared war, over 1,030 merchant ships had been sunk and Britain was only six weeks away from starvation.

Submarine warfare killed an estimated 15,000 seamen of the merchant navy. The merchant fleet undertook a number of tasks vital to British success: carrying essential supplies to Britain from the empire and Dominions, transporting troops and supporting naval ships. The seamen

– particularly 'Lascars', Asians taken on as cheap labour in colonial ports – frequently had to endure harsh conditions. These men made up more than a fifth of the total killed.

The introduction of the escorted convoy helped save the day. Ship losses dropped dramatically and the supply route from America to Britain began to flow.

In the convoy system, several merchant ships would travel together in a large group, protected by two or more British or American battle ships. The new strategy worked immediately. By 1918, shipping losses at the hands of enemy torpedoes were declining rapidly.

First person

Petty Officer Ernest Francis was a gunner's mate aboard the battle cruiser Queen Mary. He and his gun crew sat in the turret of one of his ship's big guns. His ship was one of the casualties of the battle of Jutland. It was blown out of the water with the loss of almost its entire crew of 1,000.

"The guns were loaded and brought to the half cock and reported, and then came the order to bring the right gun to the ready...Shortly after this, the first salvo was fired, and we started on the great game.

Up till now I had not noticed any noise, such as being struck by a shell, but afterwards there was a heavy blow, struck, I should imagine, in the after 4 inch battery, and a lot of dust and pieces flying around on the top of 'X' turret.

Another shock was felt shortly after this, but it did not affect the turret, so no notice was taken. Then the T.S. reported to Lt Ewert that the third ship of the line was dropping out. First blood to Queen Mary.

...A few more rounds were fired when I took another look through my telescope and there was quite a fair distance between the second ship and what I believed was the fourth ship, due I think to third ship going under. Flames were belching from what I took to be the fourth ship of the line, then came the big explosion which shook us a bit, and on looking at the pressure gauge I saw the pressure had failed. Immediately after that came, what I term, the big smash, and I was dangling in the air on a bowline, which saved me from being thrown down on the floor of the turret.

Everything in the ship went as quiet as a church, the floor of the turret was bulged up and the guns were absolutely useless.

...I put my head through the hole in the roof of the turret and nearly fell through again. The after 4 inch battery was smashed out of all recognition, and then I noticed that the ship had got an awful list to port. I dropped back again into the turret and told Lt Ewert the state of affairs. He said, 'Francis, we can do no more than give them a chance, clear the turret.'

'Clear the turret,' I said, and out they went...

I went through the cabinet and out on top and Lt Ewert was following me; suddenly he stopped and went back into the turret. I believe he went back because he thought someone was inside. I cannot say enough for Lt Ewert, nothing I can say would do him justice. He came out of the turret cabinet twice and yelled something to encourage the guns crew, and yelled out to me 'All right, Francis'. It makes me feel sore hearted when I think of Lt Ewert and that fine crowd who were with me in the turret.

...I was half way down the ladder at the back of the turret when Lt Ewert went back. The ship had an awful list to port by this time, so much so that men getting off the ladder, went sliding down to port. I got to the bottom rung of the ladder and could not, by my own efforts, reach the stanchions lying on the deck from the ship's side, starboard side. I knew if I let go I should go sliding down to port like some of the others must have done, and probably got smashed up sliding down. Two of my turret's crew, seeing my difficulty, came to my assistance. They were AB Long, Turret Trainer, and AB Lane, left gun No 4. Lane held Long at full length from the ship's side and I dropped from the ladder, caught Long's legs and so gained the starboard side. These two men had no thought for their own safety; they knew I wanted assistance and that was good enough for them. They were both worth a VC twice over.

When I got to the ship's side, there seemed to be quite a fair crowd, and they didn't appear to be very anxious to take to the water. I called out to them 'Come on you chaps, who's coming for a swim?' Someone answered 'She will float for a long time yet', but something, I don't pretend to know what it was, seemed to be urging me to get away, so I clambered over the slimy bilge keel and fell off into the water, followed I should think by about five more men.

I struck away from the ship as hard as I could and must have covered nearly fifty yards when there was a big smash, and stopping and looking round, the air seemed to be full of fragments and flying pieces.

A large piece seemed to be right above my head, and acting on impulse, I dipped under to avoid being struck, and stayed under as long as I could, and then came to the top again, and coming behind me I heard a rush of water, which looked very like surf breaking on a beach and I realised it was the suction or backwash from the ship which had just gone. I hardly had time to fill my lungs with air when it was on me. I felt it was no use struggling against it, so I let myself go for a moment or two, then I struck out, but I felt it was a losing game and remarked to myself "What's the use of you struggling, you're done", and I actually ceased my efforts to reach the top, when a small voice seemed to say 'Dig out'.

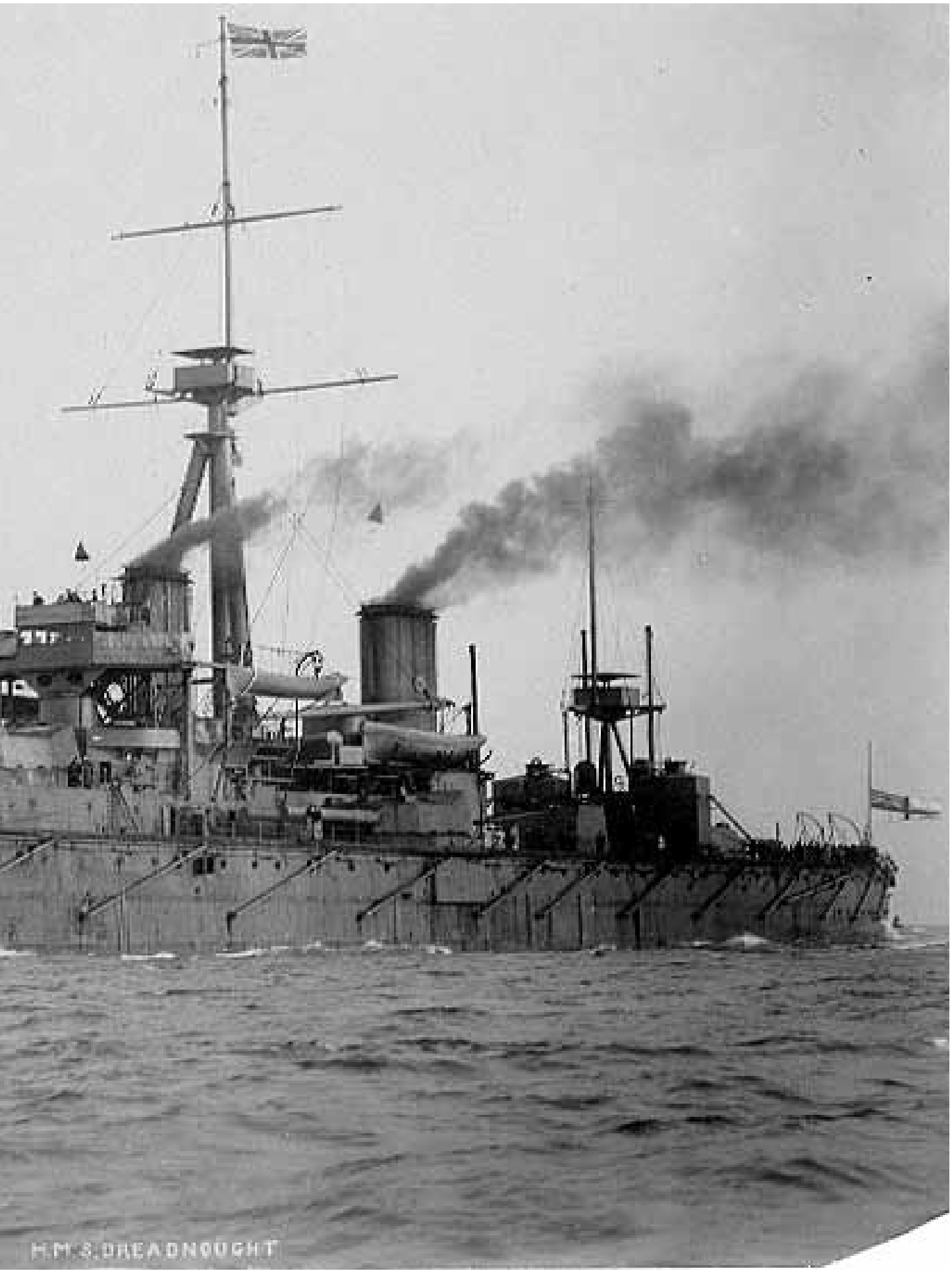
I started afresh, and something bumped against me. I grasped it and afterwards found it was a large hammock, but I felt I was getting very weak and roused myself sufficiently to look around for something more substantial to support me. Floating right in front of me was what I believe to be the centre bulk of our Pattern 4 target. I managed to push myself on the hammock close to the timber and grasped a piece of rope hanging over the side. My next difficulty was to get on top and with a small amount of exertion I kept on. I managed to reeve my arms through a strop and I must have become unconscious.

When I came to my senses again I was half way off the spar but I managed to get back again. I was very sick and seemed to be full of oil fuel. My eyes were blocked up completely with it and I could not see. I suppose the oil had got a bit crusted and dry. I managed by turning back the sleeve of my jersey,

which was thick with oil, to expose a part of the sleeve of my flannel, and thus managed to get the thick oil off my face and eyes, which were aching awfully. I was miserably cold, but not without hope of being picked up, as it seemed to me that I had only to keep quiet and a ship would come for me.

After what seemed ages to me, some destroyers came racing along, and I got up on the spar, steadied myself the moment, and waved my arms. The Petard, one of our big destroyers saw me and came over, but when I got on the spar to wave to them, the swell rolled the spar over and I rolled off. I was nearly exhausted again getting back. The destroyer came up and a line was thrown to me, which, needless to say, I grabbed hold of for all I was worth, and was quickly hauled up on to the deck of the destroyer. The first words I heard spoken were 'Are you English or German?'"

Ernest Francis's account appears in Buchan, John, The Battle of Jutland (1916)


H.M.S. DREADNOUGHT

The war in the skies

Synopsis: The First World War also marked the first time the aeroplane was used in combat. The WWI ace is often seen in a heroic light, but the majority of men who went up in the war, did not come down alive.

The Wright Brothers flew their first aeroplane in 1903. It stayed aloft for 12 seconds and flew 120 feet. In 1909 Bleriot made the first flight across the English Channel. In 1913 Roland Garros made the first cross-Mediterranean flight, from the south of France to Tunisia.

After Bleriot's flight H. G. Wells was to write, prophetically, that "...this is no longer, from a military point of view, an inaccessible island." In 1911 the Italians, at war with Turkey in Libya, became the first to make military use of the aeroplane, dropping grenades from a German-built monoplane. In 1912 they also dropped bombs from an airship.

At first, the military did not see any way for the planes to be useful in war. One British officer remarked that the aeroplane would be useless to the army as it flew too fast for anything to be seen from it. By the end of the war, however, the aeroplane had become a vital tool of warfare.

When war broke out the number of aircraft on all sides and all fronts was very small. France, for example, had less than 140 aircraft at the start of the war. By the end of the war France had 4,500 aircraft, more than any other protagonist. While this may seem an impressive increase, it does not give a true indication of the amount of aircraft involved. During the war France produced no fewer than 68,000 aircraft; 52,000 of them were lost in battle, a loss rate of 77%. Although pilots had parachutes, many of them did not survive bailing out.

The birth of the RAF

For most of the war, there was no separate British military branch for air warfare. The Royal Flying Corps (RFC), formed in May 1912, was an army corps whose primary purpose was to make available British air power for the land war. The Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) performed a similar function for the Grand Fleet.

It was not until 1 April 1918 that the RFC and the RNAS were merged into a separate military organisation called the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Airships

Although aeroplanes were just being developed as the war started, airships had been around for a little while. Larger than aeroplanes, they could carry and drop bombs, where aeroplanes could not.

The German Zeppelins were the ultimate terror weapon of their day. Silent behemoths, they prowled the

night skies seemingly impervious to attack by plane or antiaircraft fire.

The dirigible's name came from one of its German designers – Ferdinand von Zeppelin – who introduced his first giant airship at the turn of the 20th century as a way to carry passengers. With the outbreak of war, they were quickly pressed into service as bombers and reconnaissance aircraft. The first bombing raid on London was made during the night of May 31, 1915 by a single ship. Other raids followed, with as many as 16 Zeppelins attacking in a single night.

Initially, defenders were powerless as the Zeppelins flew at altitudes too high for defending aircraft or artillery to reach. Mother Nature was the Zeppelin's primary enemy as the unwieldy craft were easily thrown off course by high winds. However, because they attacked at night, it was difficult for crews to find their targets and the bombs usually fell randomly.

Although the actual damage inflicted by the Zeppelins was minimal, their psychological impact on the British population was significant. Precious air and ground units were diverted from the war front to the home front to counter this threat from the sky.

As the war progressed, technological advances that allowed defending aircraft to reach or exceed the Zeppelin's altitude and the introduction of incendiary bullets, which could set the flammable airships on fire, turned the advantage to the defenders. By the end of the war, the Zeppelin had been withdrawn from combat.

The war in the skies

Both sides quickly began developing the aeroplane for use in combat. Throughout WWI, the planes were too light to carry bombs, but they did carry the new machine guns, which could strafe enemy positions and provide cover for attacks. The war in the skies was on.

The war in the skies created a new breed of combat hero: the 'air ace'. Most famous of all was the aristocratic German flying legend, Manfred von Richthofen, known as the 'Red Baron'. Between September 1916 and his death in April 1918, Richthofen shot down a total of 80 Allied planes over the Western Front.

Not all fighter pilots were so loudly celebrated. In November 1917, for example, Allied soldiers in France sent a note to The Times praising the actions of the 'Unknown Airman' who had been killed while defending them from German machine-gun fire near Bourlon Wood.

The First World War was not decided in the skies. Nonetheless, air warfare played a steadily increasing role in the conflict between the Allies and the Central Powers. The practice of dropping leaflets on enemy troops, begun in September 1914 by German planes over the French town of Nancy, was an important part of the propaganda war.

Aircraft were deployed for reconnaissance purposes and featured regularly in trench warfare on the

Western Front, strafing enemy lines during confrontations such as the Battle of the Somme in 1916. On both the Western and Palestine fronts, air power was an important factor in the Allied advances of 1918.

The period between 1914 and 1918 saw not only tremendous production, but also tremendous development in aircraft technology.

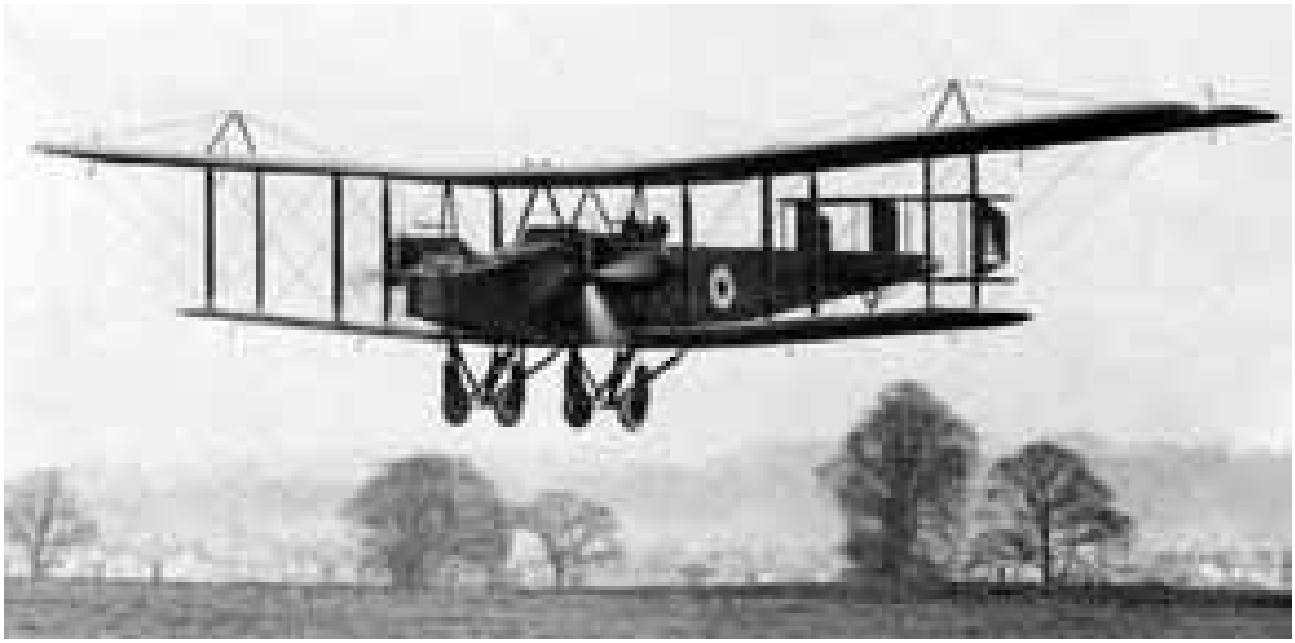
A typical British aircraft at the outbreak of the war was the general purpose BE2c, with a top speed of 116 km/h (72 mph). Powered by a 90 hp engine, it could remain aloft for over three hours. By the end of the war aircraft were designed for specific tasks. Built for speed and manoeuvrability, the SE5a fighter of 1917 was powered by a 200 hp engine and had a top speed of 222 km/h (138 mph).

Britain's most famous bomber, the Handley-Page O/400, could carry a bomb load of 900kg (2000 lb) at a top speed of 156 km/h (97mph) for flights lasting eight hours. It was powered by two 360 hp engines.

In 1914 it was important that aircraft should be easy to fly, as the amount of training that pilots received was minimal, to say the least. Louis Strange, a pilot from the opening stages of the war, was an early graduate of the RFC (Royal Flying Corps) flight school. He began flying combat missions having completed only three and a half hours of actual flying time. For this reason aircraft were designed for stability. By the end of the war stability had given way to manoeuvrability.

First person account – Zeppelin attack

Michael MacDonagh was a reporter for a London newspaper. He witnessed the destruction of a German Zeppelin as it took part in a raid on the city during the night of October 1, 1916:



Hanley-Page 0/400 (Source: Wikipedia)

"I saw last night what is probably the most appalling spectacle associated with the war which London is likely to provide – the bringing down in flames of a raiding Zeppelin.

I was late at the office, and leaving it just before midnight was crossing to Blackfriars Bridge to get a tramcar home, when my attention was attracted by frenzied cries of 'Oh! Oh! She's hit!' from some wayfarers who were standing in the middle of the road gazing at the sky in a northern direction. Looking up the clear run of New Bridge Street and Farringdon Road I saw high in the sky a concentrated blaze of searchlights, and in its centre a ruddy glow which rapidly spread into the outline of a blazing airship. Then the searchlights were turned off and the Zeppelin drifted perpendicularly in the darkened sky, a gigantic pyramid of flames, red and orange, like a ruined star falling slowly to earth. Its glare lit up the streets and gave a ruddy tint even to the waters of the Thames.

The spectacle lasted two or three minutes. It was so horribly fascinating that I felt spellbound. When at last the doomed airship vanished from sight there arose a shout the like of which I never heard in London before; a swelling shout that appeared to be rising from all parts of the metropolis, ever increasing in force and intensity. Four Zeppelins destroyed in a month!

I got from a member of the Potter's Bar anti-aircraft battery an account of the bringing down of the Zeppelin. He said the airship was caught in the beams of three searchlights from stations miles apart, and was being fired at by three batteries also from distances widely separated. None of the shells reached her. Then an aeroplane appeared and dropped three flares – the signal to the ground batteries to cease firing as he was about to attack. The airman, flying about the Zeppelin, let go rounds of machine-gun fire at her without effect, until one round fired into her from beneath set her on fire, and down she came a blazing mass, roaring like a furnace, breaking as she fell into two parts which were held together by internal cables until they reached the ground.

The crew numbered nineteen. With another journalist I went to the barn where the bodies lay. As we approached we heard a woman say to the sergeant of the party of soldiers in charge, 'May I go in? I would like to see a dead German.' 'No, madam, we cannot admit ladies,' was the reply.

Explaining to the sergeant that I particularly wanted to see the body of the Commander, I was allowed to go in. The sergeant removed the covering from one of the bodies which lay apart from the others.

The dead man was Heinrich Mathy, the most renowned of the German airship commanders, and the perished airship was his redoubtable L31.

Yes, there he lay in death at my feet, the bugaboo of the Zeppelin raids, the first and most ruthless of these Pirates of the Air bent on our destruction."

Michael MacDonagh's account appears in: MacDonagh, Michael, In London during the Great War; the diary of a journalist (1935)

First person – dogfight over France

On the morning of May 19, 1918, a German reconnaissance plane flew a low level photographic mission over the airfield of the 94th Aero Squadron, stationed in France. An American flyer immediately took to the air to challenge the intruder. His attacks, however, were ineffective and he soon exhausted his ammunition as the German pilot made a run back to his own lines. Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, who would finish the war as America's top ace, described what happened next:

"In the meantime, Major Lufbery, who had been watching the whole show from his barracks, jumped on a motorcycle that was standing in the road and rushed to the hangars. His own plane was out of commission. Another Nieuport Scout was standing on the field, apparently ready for use. The mechanics admitted everything was ready and without another word Lufbery jumped into the machine and immediately took off.

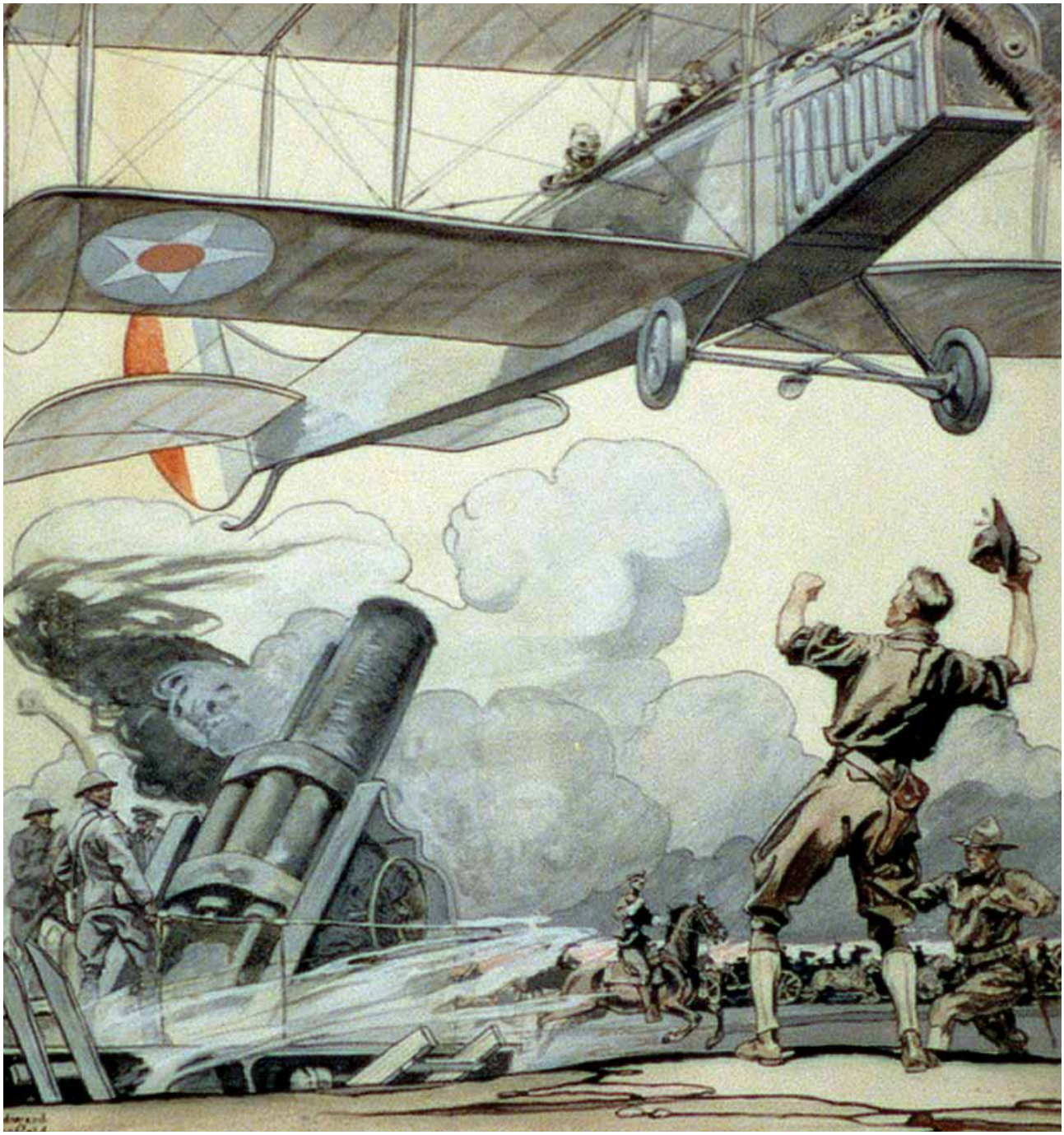
Knowing nothing of the condition of his guns nor the small peculiarities of his present mount, Lufbery flew in to the attack.

With far greater speed than his heavier antagonist, Major Lufbery climbed in pursuit. In approximately five minutes after leaving the ground he had reached two thousand feet and had arrived within range of the Albatros six miles away. The first attack was witnessed by all the watchers.

Luf fired several short bursts as he dived in to the attack. Then he swerved away and appeared to busy himself with his gun, which evidently had jammed. Another circle over their heads and he had cleared the jam. Again he rushed the enemy from their rear, when suddenly old Luf's machine was seen to burst into flames. He passed the Albatros and proceeded for three or four seconds on a straight course. Then to the horrified watchers below there appeared the figure of their hero in a headlong leap from the cockpit of the burning aircraft! Lufbery had preferred a leap to certain death rather than endure the slow torture of burning to a crisp. His body fell in the garden of a peasant woman's house in a little town just north of Nancy. A small stream ran nearby and it was thought later that poor Lufbery seeing this small chance for life had jumped with the intention of striking this water. He had leaped from a height of two hundred feet and his machine was carrying him at a speed of 120 miles per hour! A hopeless but a heroic attempt to preserve his life for his country!"

Rickenbacker, E., Fighting the Flying Circus (1919)

An artist's drawing of the aircraft crews as heroes.



The war around the world

The Western Front was not the only theatre of war. The British fought on many other fronts as well.

The major countries involved in the First World War all had allies, interests and colonies spread around the world. From these came men and material that they used to fight the war. Although the main fronts of the war were in eastern and western Europe, the war soon spread all around the world – to places such as German colonies in China, Italian colonies in Africa and to the Middle East.

In Europe, the battles on the Eastern Front claimed the lives of more than 2 million men. Outside Europe, two of the major campaigns were the Gallipoli campaign and the battle for Palestine.

Eastern Front

The Eastern Front was a vast theatre of war that took place between Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. Few Britons fought here.

General Alexander Samsonov was given command of the Russian Second Army for the invasion of East Prussia in August, 1914. He advanced slowly into the south western corner of the province with the intention of linking up with General Paul von Rennenkampf advancing from the north east.

General Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff were sent forward to meet Samsonov's advancing troops. They made contact on 22nd August and for six days the Russians, with their superior numbers, had a few successes. However, by 29th August, Samsanov's Second Army was surrounded. General Alexander Samsonov attempted to retreat but now in a German cordon, most of his troops were slaughtered or captured. Only 10,000 of the 150,000 Russian soldiers managed to escape. Shocked by the disastrous outcome of the Battle of Tanneberg Samsonov committed suicide.

The slow Russian invasions of Galicia were more successful against the poorly organised Austro-Hungarian Army. Eventually Austria-Hungary ordered a counter-attack at Komarow. After initial progress, the Austro-Hungarian troops were forced to retreat to the Carpathian Mountains. The German attack, led by General Erich Ludendorff, on the Russian Army at Lodz, inflicted heavy casualties.

In September, 1915, Russian forces were driven from Galicia. By this stage it was estimated that the Russian Army had lost over 2 million men in six months. General Erich Falkenhayn, Chief of Staff of the German Army, considered the Russians had been badly damaged but decided they could not be beaten and brought a halt to the offensive. Instead, German forces were concentrated on the Western Front at Verdun.

Attacks by the Central Powers on Russia were resumed in the autumn of 1916. By the end of the war it was estimated that the Russian Army had lost another million men. The failed Russian Kerenski Offensive in July, 1917, broke both the army and the will of the government. The October Revolution brought Lenin to power in Russia. The Bolshevik government immediately entered into ceasefire negotiations and fighting on the Eastern Front officially ended on 16th December, 1917.

Gallipoli

By the spring of 1915, combat on the Western Front had sunk into stalemate. Enemy troops stared at each other from a line of opposing trenches that stretched from the English Channel to the Swiss border. Neither opponent could outflank its enemy, resulting in costly and unproductive direct attacks on well-fortified defences.

Allied leaders, including Winston Churchill and Lord Kitchener, scoured their maps to find a way around the impasse. The Dardenelles Strait leading from the Mediterranean to Istanbul (Constantinople) caught their eye. A successful attack in this area could open a sea lane for the Russians through the Black Sea, provide a base for attacking the Central Powers through what Churchill described as the "soft underbelly of Europe", and divert enemy attention from the Western Front.

The Campaign was a fiasco, poorly planned and badly executed. It began in February 1915 with an unsuccessful naval attempt to force a passage up the Dardenelles. The flotilla retreated after sustaining heavy damage from Turkish guns lining both shores and from mines strewn across the channel.

In April, a landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula attempted to secure the shores and silence the Turkish guns. Trouble brewed from the beginning. Amphibious operations were a new and unperfected form of warfare leading to poor communications, troop deployment and supply. The Turks entrenched themselves on the high ground pouring artillery and machine gun fire down upon the hapless Australian, New Zealand, Irish, French and British troops on the beaches below. The battleground soon resembled that of the Western Front – both sides peering at each other from fortified trenches, forced to make costly and futile frontal attacks on well defended positions. The stalemate continued through the fall of 1915 until British forces withdrew at the end of the year.

Casualties were high. Some 480,000 Allied troops had been dedicated to the failed campaign and casualties stood at approximately 252,000, or 52% for the British/French while the Ottoman Turks suffered about 300,000 casualties, or a rate of 60%. The failed campaign gained little and badly tarnished both Churchill's and Kitchener's reputations (both men resigned their positions).

First person – Gallipoli

Henry Hanna was a young Irishman living in Dublin when war broke out in the summer of 1914. He along with a number of friends joined one of the "Pals" regiments made up of young men from the same football clubs, factories, businesses, neighbourhoods or other organisations. After training, he and his "pals" were shipped to Egypt and from there to the battleground at Gallipoli. He wrote of his experiences in 1917 and we join his story after he has landed at Suvla Bay on the Peninsula and moved a few miles inland from the landing zone:

"We were in reserve to the 6th Dublins and 6th and 7th Munsters. They took the hill called 'The Pimple' – nothing but big stones and short scrub. It was taken about six in the evening. We took it over from them about 8:30 o'clock.

During the day we had been under cover about a mile back, from about eleven o'clock that morning. Then the fun started. We could see the Turks quite easily.

Jack Boyd and I were lying together keeping watch, and about 11 p.m. I said: 'What about something to eat,' as we had had only a bit of 'B.B.' and a few biscuits since morning, and our bare quart of water, which was half gone by this time. We divided a tin of bully beef, and had a good supper and nearly finished our water. The last meal poor Jack ever had.

By morning our water bottles were empty, and no prospect of getting any more. At 3:30 a.m. their counter-attack started.

Brown from Clontarf was opposite me, as well as J. B. He got a graze on the left temple. The bullets knocked dirt into my face. By Jove! It was a hot time then! Their bombs started. Such a row! It was just like a living Hell, and I have no clear remembrance of anything. Next item was our bayonet charge, headed by Hickman. He was killed, Jack Boyd and Willie Boyd

Hanna, Henry, The Pals at Suvla Bay (1917)

and young Kener also, and some others. Lax was wounded and Drummond. I was one of the last out, and when about twelve yards out could not see any of our fellows except one, who, as I thought, lay down, so I lay down as well. I looked around, but could not see any one to support, so I said: 'Here's a how-d'you-do. If I stay I will either get killed or wounded. If I get wounded I will lie here all day, and I have no water in my bottle, so I had better make a dash for our lines, and if I get shot-well, it cannot be helped, but I have the chance of getting in.'

While debating this over in my mind I was lying quite close to a chum called Cecil Murray (from the Bank of Ireland); he was badly hit. I asked him where he was hit. He showed me his left hand, which was in pulp, and, while speaking to him, he was hit three times in the body. The groans were heartrending.

Then a young chap called Elliott, who played 'footer,' was shot in front of me when running out; he jumped about three feet when hit; he started trying to crawl back to our lines, and just got above me when he was hit again. He died in a few minutes.

Then came my dash for safety. I made two rushes of it, and had to shout to our fellows to stop firing to allow me to get in. I got a splinter of a bullet in the side. It just pricked the skin and stuck in my belt. There is a hole in my belt where it stuck. When I got behind the line, the first thing I saw was Lex, bandaged all over the head and shoulder, but could see no one else there. There were no stretcher-bearers of any sort, so I got permission from Lieutenant Hamilton to help him down the ridge. I then discovered my knee was cut and swollen. Either another splinter of a bullet or cut by the rocks. I could hardly walk. The sights I saw going along that place I shall never forget. Some of our fellows throwing back the bombs which the Turks threw over and which had not exploded. One fellow caught them like catching a cricket ball. Wounded and dead lying everywhere. The sun streaming down and not a drop of water to be had. Neither had we bombs to reply to the Turks and drive them out.

We were relieved about 8 o'clock and then went back to our dug-outs about one mile back. Just as we were getting our dinner, two shells came along, and one fellow from A Company got his head blown off, and Sergeant Kenny of A Company, an 'Old Tough' of the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, lost a leg. Our only officer left was Hamilton, badly wounded in the foot. Our platoon numbered about sixteen, and three of us were left of No. 8 Section – Hanna, Egan, and myself."

Palestine and Mesopotamia

1915 also saw the war spread to Egypt and Palestine. Sited in the region was the all-important Suez Canal, controlled by the British.

Completed in 1869 and running north-south across the Suez Isthmus in Egypt to the Mediterranean in the Red Sea, its importance lay in its status as the quickest naval route between Europe and the countries around the Indian and western Pacific oceans – between Britain and her colonies.

The Turkish Minister of Marine, Djemal Pasha, together with his German Chief of Staff Kress von Kressenstein, led an expedition on 14 January 1915 across the Sinai Peninsula from Beersheba – aimed at surprising the British and seizing control of the canal. (Access to the canal was only possible via a 300km march across the desert from Beersheba.) 30,000 Indian army troops were sent to the canal's defence.

On 2 February, advance elements of the Ottoman Fourth Army reached the canal and began their assault. They were met and beaten back by an Indian force, reinforced by Australian infantry. The next day they retreated back to Beersheba.

Mesopotamia (now Iraq)

British and Indian troops, sent to the Persian Gulf in early November 1914 to protect British oil interests at Abadan, made rapid progress inland against weak Turkish resistance. In less than a month, they had occupied the town of Kurna, capturing more than 1,000 Turkish prisoners and losing just 65 of their own men.

Despite the unforgiving climate, British forces continued to march steadily up the River Tigris in 1915. By 28 September, they had taken the town of Kut-al-Amara, just 120 miles south of Mesopotamia's major city, Baghdad.

The tide turned quickly, however, at the Battle of Ctesiphon (22-26 November 1915). Envisaged as a trouble-free prelude to the final march on Baghdad, it was a bloody affair, in which Turkish troops – withstood heavy casualties to defeat British attacking forces.

More than half of the 8,500 British and Indian troops who fought at Ctesiphon were killed or wounded. The survivors then endured a dangerous and exhausting retreat to Kut-al-Amara without decent medical or transport facilities.

Bolstered by 30,000 reinforcements, Turkish troops besieged British forces in Kut-al-Amara before the Allied troops could withdraw further down the Tigris. The siege of Kut-al-Amara lasted 147 days, before the 11,800 British and Indian troops inside the garrison town finally surrendered on 29 April 1916.

Conditions during the siege were appalling. In bitterly cold weather and with little medical treatment, many of the soldiers did not survive the winter. Several attempts were made to relieve the besieged town, but they encountered stubborn Turkish resistance and all ended in failure.

The surrender of Townshend's army in late April 1916 shocked people

in Britain, for whom the Mesopotamia campaign had previously been a distant – and largely successful – venture. Kitchener rushed to defend the honour of the British and Indian forces at Kut-al-Amara, but it was impossible to avoid the fact that – after the humiliating retreat at Gallipoli – Allied forces had suffered another defeat at the hands of the despised Turks.

Captured British and Indian soldiers were brutally treated on their march to Turkish prisoner-of-war camps in Anatolia. Of the 11,800 men who left Kut-al-Amara with their captors on 6 May 1916, 4,250 died either on their way to captivity or in the camps that awaited them at the journey's end.

However, despite the setback at Kut-al-Amara, British and Indian forces again advanced rapidly up the Tigris in early 1917.

Kut-al-Amara was recaptured on 24 February, and Ctesiphon, where the previous British advance had been checked in November 1915, was taken soon afterwards. On 11 March, British troops finally entered Baghdad. The path was cleared for an advance into northern Mesopotamia, towards the heart of the Ottoman empire in Anatolia. When the war with Turkey ended on 30 October 1918, British forces in Mesopotamia had reached as far north as the oil-rich district of Mosul, which was captured on 3 November.

During the four years of fighting in the region, more than 31,000 officers and men from the British and Indian armies had died in combat or from disease.

Arabia

The war in the Middle East did not go well for the British in the early days of the conflict. Their defeat at Gallipoli and inability to dislodge the Turks from the Dardanelles exposed the Suez Canal to potential attack. Meanwhile, the Arabs viewed the involvement of the Ottoman Empire in World War One as an opportunity to revolt and drive the Turks from their land. Seizing this chance to harass the Turks, the British lent support to the Arabs through shipments of arms and money. The revolt sputtered however and was, by 1916, in danger of collapsing.

The twenty-six-year-old T.E. Lawrence was sent to bring order and direction to the Arab cause. Before 1914, he worked for the British Museum digging among the Hittite ruins in Mesopotamia. The Oxford graduate had spent years in the desert developing an intimate knowledge and love of the Bedouin tribes that roamed the region. At the outbreak of war Lawrence was rejected as physically unfit for military service but his unique knowledge of the area made him a perfect candidate for the Intelligence Service at Cairo.

For two years Lawrence and his band of Arab irregulars attacked Turkish strongholds, severed communications, destroyed railways and supported the British regular army in the drive north to Damascus. The experience transformed Lawrence into one of the most colourful military figures of the war and set the stage for the independence of Saudi Arabia and the other Arab states.

Letters home

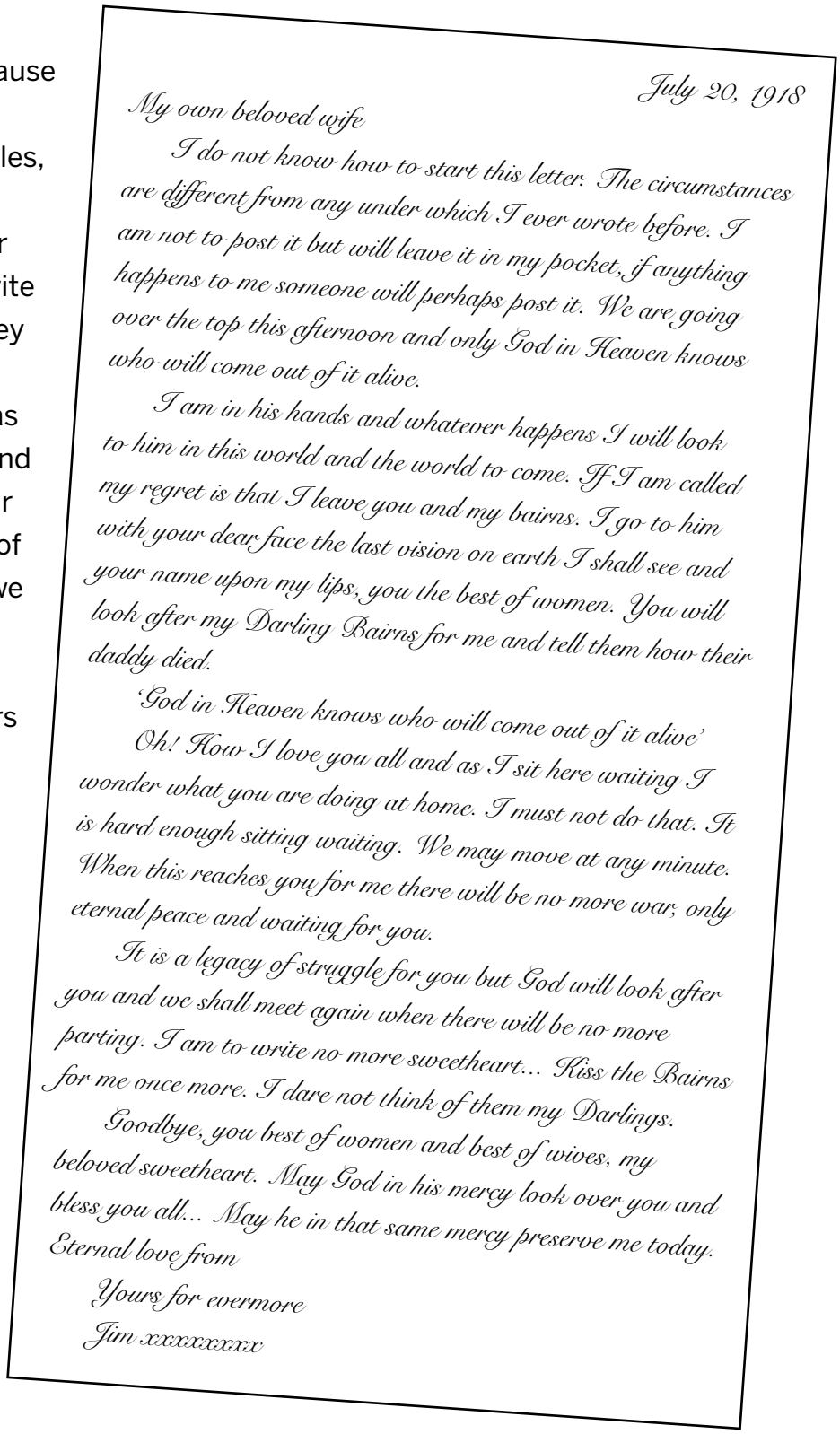
Writing letters home was a major part of this war. In part, this was because letter writing was still the major form of communication back home. Hundreds of thousands of letters from soldiers to their loved ones sit in archives around the world and give us a picture of how people actually felt as they were fighting.

We know so much about what soldiers felt during the war because men were encouraged to write letters home. Before major battles, the men were often given a few hours warning, along with paper and pens and encouraged to write letters to loved ones, in case they did not return. Many men kept diaries and personal accounts as well. Many well known writers and poets also went to war, and their accounts add to the great deal of very well written material that we have in archives today.

Back home, families often sent the letters in to newspapers to be published as first person accounts of the war and of particular battles.

James Milne

Company Sergeant-Major James Milne wrote this poignant letter to his wife moments before he was ordered over the top. It was to be delivered in the event of his death – but luckily he survived and was later reunited with his family. (Letter in the Imperial War Museum archives)



July 20, 1918

My own beloved wife

I do not know how to start this letter. The circumstances are different from any under which I ever wrote before. I am not to post it but will leave it in my pocket, if anything happens to me someone will perhaps post it. We are going over the top this afternoon and only God in Heaven knows who will come out of it alive.

I am in his hands and whatever happens I will look to him in this world and the world to come. If I am called my regret is that I leave you and my bairns. I go to him with your dear face the last vision on earth I shall see and your name upon my lips, you the best of women. You will look after my Darling Bairns for me and tell them how their daddy died.

'God in Heaven knows who will come out of it alive'

Oh! How I love you all and as I sit here waiting I wonder what you are doing at home. I must not do that. It is hard enough sitting waiting. We may move at any minute. When this reaches you for me there will be no more war, only eternal peace and waiting for you.

It is a legacy of struggle for you but God will look after you and we shall meet again when there will be no more parting. I am to write no more sweetheart... Kiss the Bairns for me once more. I dare not think of them my Darlings.

Goodbye, you best of women and best of wives, my beloved sweetheart. May God in his mercy look over you and bless you all... May he in that same mercy preserve me today.

Eternal love from

Yours for evermore

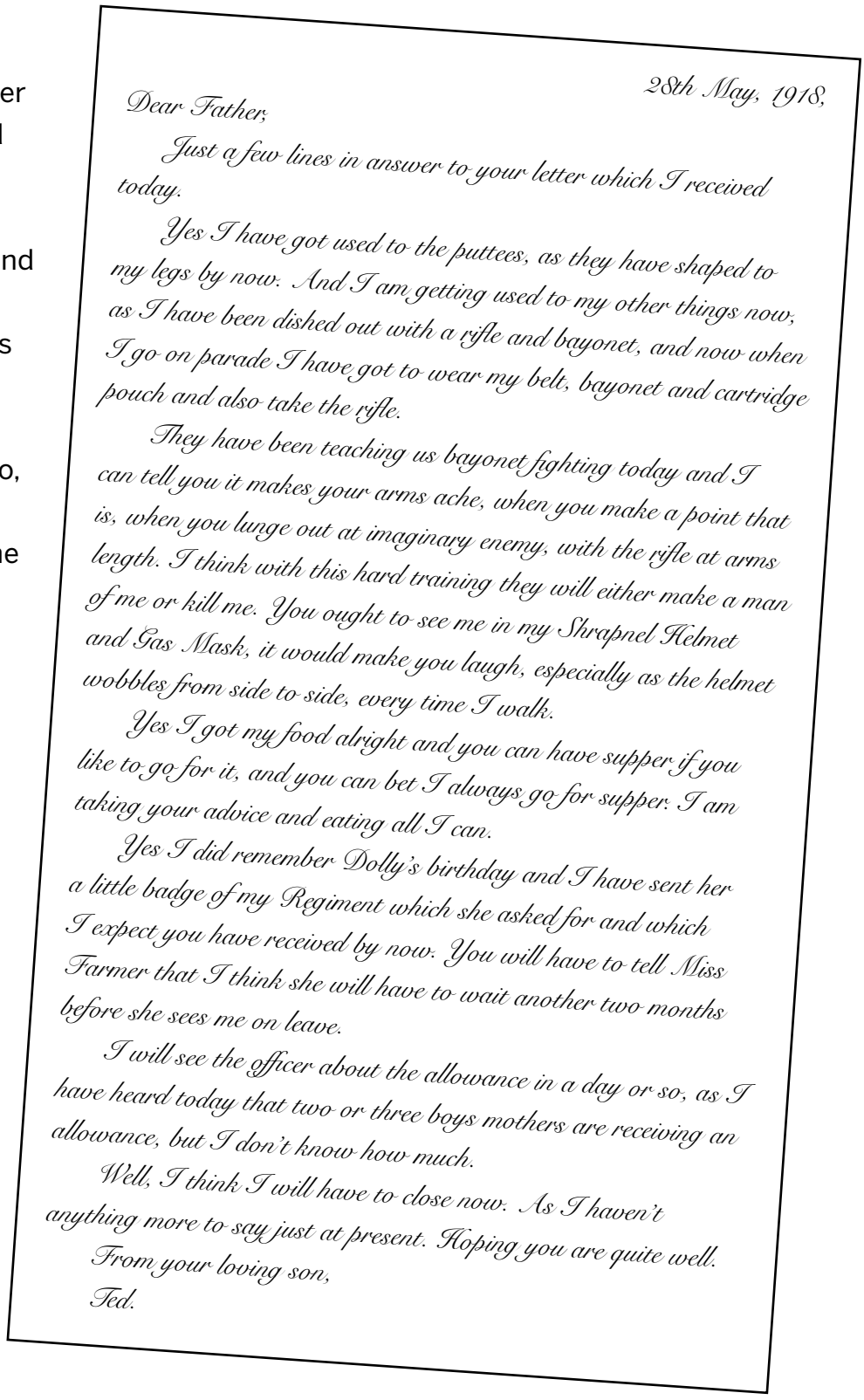
Jim xxxxxxxx

EJ Poole

EJ 'Ted' Poole was the younger brother of a soldier who was killed at the third battle of Ypres in 1917.

The young Ted was conscripted in May 1918 and trained at Aldershot, from where the letter below was posted. It is clear he was replying to the concerned enquiries of his father, who, having already lost one son, wanted Ted to become a good soldier in the hope that it would improve his chances of survival.

Ted, who was sent to France in August 1918, wrote that he was sure that the training would "either make a man of me or kill me". Scarcely two months later, on 13 October, he was killed in action. He was 18.



28th May, 1918.

Dear Father,

Just a few lines in answer to your letter which I received today.

Yes I have got used to the puttees, as they have shaped to my legs by now. And I am getting used to my other things now, as I have been dished out with a rifle and bayonet, and now when I go on parade I have got to wear my belt, bayonet and cartridge pouch and also take the rifle.

They have been teaching us bayonet fighting today and I can tell you it makes your arms ache, when you make a point that is, when you lunge out at imaginary enemy, with the rifle at arms length. I think with this hard training they will either make a man of me or kill me. You ought to see me in my Shrapnel Helmet and Gas Mask, it would make you laugh, especially as the helmet wobbles from side to side, every time I walk.

Yes I got my food alright and you can have supper if you like to go for it, and you can bet I always go for supper. I am taking your advice and eating all I can.

Yes I did remember Dolly's birthday and I have sent her a little badge of my Regiment which she asked for and which I expect you have received by now. You will have to tell Miss Farmer that I think she will have to wait another two months before she sees me on leave.

I will see the officer about the allowance in a day or so, as I have heard today that two or three boys mothers are receiving an allowance, but I don't know how much.

Well, I think I will have to close now. As I haven't anything more to say just at present. Hoping you are quite well.

From your loving son,

Ted.

Laurie Rowlands

Tired of fighting at the front Laurie Rowlands wrote a frank letter to his sweetheart Alice, in which he revealed his fears and the low morale of his comrades. Rowlands, who served with the 15th Battalion Durham Light Infantry, also described his part in the battle of Brookseinde, at the third battle of Ypres.

5/2/18
France
Evening

Sweetheart Mine,

Now barring accidents you will get to know all about it. I know you will have a big surprise when you get this letter – I hope it lands without mishap. If anybody in authority was to see it -!

Of course you have guessed by now where I had my first experience of the line. Yes, it was on the Ypres salient... Oh it was a lovely 'baptism of fire' that night. We had to dig ourselves in and early in the morning Fritz started straffing.

Oh Lord, if ever a fellow was afraid, absolutely frightened to death, it was this child. Then one of my Section took shell shock when a big 'un dropped a couple of yards off the parapet and then the instinct of the leader, or one whose place it is to lead, came to the top and I became as cool and steady as a rock. I had twelve men when we went in, I came out with three. Oh it was ghastly.

Perhaps you would like to know something of the spirit of the men out here now. Well the truth is (and as I said before I'd be shot if anyone of importance collared this missive) every man Jack is fed up almost past bearing, and not a single one has an ounce of what we call patriotism left in him. No-one cares a rap whether Germany has Alsace, Belgium or France too for that matter. All that every man desires now is to get done with it and go home. Now that's the honest truth, and any man who has been out within the last few months will tell you the same.

In fact, and this is no exaggeration, the greatest hope of a great majority of the men is that rioting and revolt at home will force the government to pack in on any terms. Now you've got the real state of affairs 'right from the horse's mouth' as it were.

1

I may add that I too have lost pretty nearly all the patriotism that I had left, its just the thought of you all over there, you who love and trust me to do my share of the job that is necessary for your safety and freedom. It's just that that keeps me going and enables me to 'stick it'. As for religion, God forgive us all, it hasn't a place in one out of a million of the thoughts that hourly occupy men's minds...

God bless you darling and all those I love and who love me, for without their love and trust I would faint and fail. But don't worry dear heart o' mine, for I shall carry on to the end be it bitter or sweet, with my loved ones ever my first thought and care, my guide inspirations and spur.

Au revoir my own sweetheart and God will keep you safe till the storm's over; with all my heart's deepest love. Your own loving

Laurie

P.S. There are only I believe about 40 in this company due to leave before me now, so I may not, with any sort of luck, be more than six or eight weeks after this epistle.

2

Wartime poems

Some very famous poems were written in the First World War. Here are two examples.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Lt.-Col. John McCrae (1872–1918)

Kipling wrote this poem after his son, John (called Jack) went missing in the Battle of Loos, during World War I.

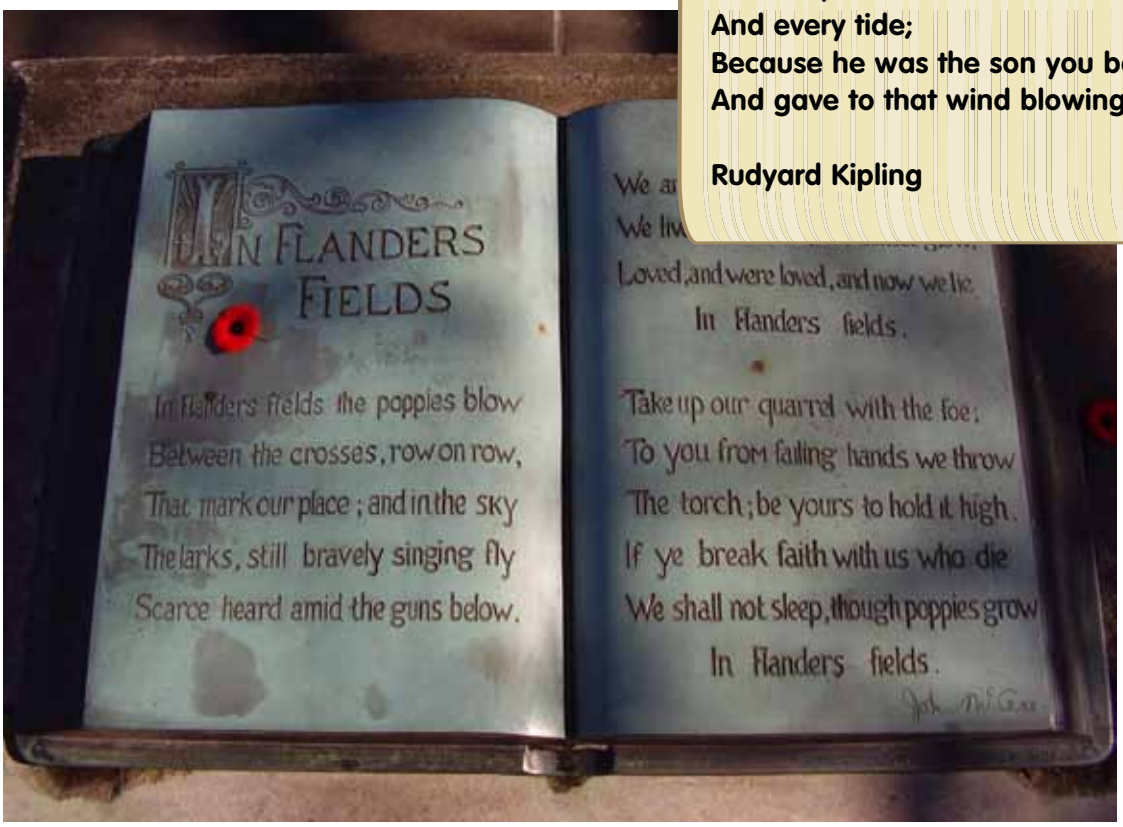
"Have you news of my boy Jack?"
Not this tide.
"When d'you think that he'll come back?"
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

"Has any one else had word of him?"
Not this tide.
For what is sunk will hardly swim,
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

"Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?"
None this tide,
Nor any tide,
Except he did not shame his kind –
Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,
This tide,
And every tide;
Because he was the son you bore,
And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!

Rudyard Kipling



Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Wartime poems

Can you make up a poem about some part of the war?

It can be about an event, or it can be by a parent about their lost son.

The end of the war

After almost four years of stalemate, the war finally ends.

The US enters the war

For the first three years of WWI, the US had remained neutral. There was a huge pacifist movement in the US at the time, and many people objected to the idea of getting involved in "Europe's war". In 1916, Woodrow Wilson was elected president of the US on a pacifist platform. At the time, Wilson believed in a solution termed "peace without victory" in which he tried to encourage the governments of Europe to simply stop the war without a victory.

But forces were already at work before 1916 to change people's minds about getting involved. Many people believed it was America's duty to assist the allied forces in the war and there was a huge amount of propaganda produced to convince Americans that they should get involved. Some Americans also fought as volunteers in the British army and these people returned with tales of daring and heroism, and of British sacrifice and German atrocities.

In 1915, the German U-boat had sunk the Lusitania – a British passenger ship sailing out of New York. More than 1,000 people died, including 138 Americans. Although the Lusitania was almost certainly secretly carrying weapons and ammunition (along with medicines), the world was shocked at what was seen as a callous sinking of a passenger ship. Wilson requested clarification from all the parties involved as to what were the goals and aims of the war – and a moratorium on attacks on civilian shipping.

At first the Germans agreed to the moratorium, but in January 1917 they resumed attacks on civilian ships – including US merchant ships.

Then, in February 1917, Britain gave the US a telegram it had intercepted. The 'Zimmerman telegram' was from the German high command to the German ambassador to Mexico. The telegram asked the German ambassador to propose to the Mexicans that they join Germany in attacking America. In exchange, once Germany wins the war, they would give Mexico all of her former territory that was now part of the US.

The telegram was made public in the US and instantly the mood in the country changed. People now demanded war. On April 6, 1917 the US declared war on Germany. The other thing that got the US involved at this moment was that the British had finally managed to convince the US government that the war could be won quickly and relatively easily – Germany was running out of supplies and hundreds of thousands of Germans were starving – this was likely the deciding factor for the US government.

The Zimmerman telegram was made public to get the public behind the decision.

The US contribution of men and material to the war helped to convince all parties that it was time for a final push. While the war had been fought in tiny increments up to now, at the beginning of 1918, the Central powers and the allies now decided it was time to go on the offensive. In Germany, things were reaching a dire state, and the economy had begun collapsing under the weight of four years of continuous war. Tens of thousands were starving.

The Turkish economy and army was also faltering as the Ottoman Empire began falling apart. Inside Turkey, rebellion was brewing, while Ottoman-ruled regions such as Arabia, Palestine and Iraq were either captured by the allies or began breaking away.

In Europe, the Germans launched three spring offensives, intended as a final push, and were beaten back each time. The Germans were forced back into Germany in early August. In September, some of the central powers began negotiating peace deals with the allies. Turkey signed an Armistice on October 30, followed by Austria-Hungary on November 3. On November 11, Germany signed an armistice, dissolving the German Empire (the Kaiser abdicated and fled and the German republic was founded on November 10). On November 11, all fighting ceased at exactly 11am.

African American soldiers marching to the Western Front.

The aftermath

Synopsis: It can be difficult for people today to realise the devastation and death caused by this war. But it also ended the old era of Empire – and set the stage for the next world war.

When describing the devastation of this war, the numbers (which vary from source to source, so can only be regarded as giving an indication) can speak for themselves.

Population in the countries involved at the outbreak of war: 941,000,000

Total number of people mobilised under arms: 65,000,000

Total military killed: 9,700,000

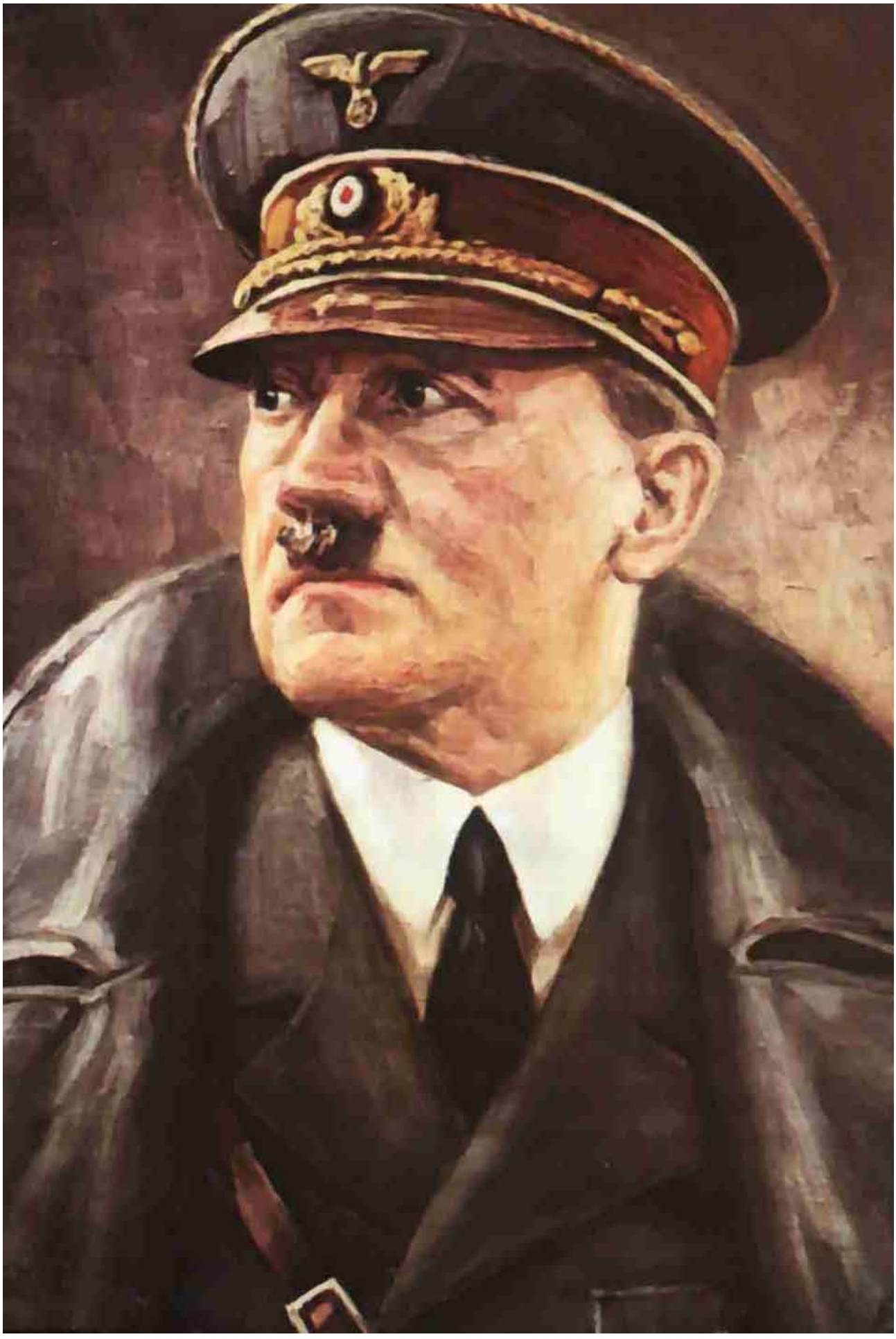
Total civilians killed (including disease and starvation): 8,900,000

Total wounded: 37,500,000

(The war ended in September 1918, but millions were still hungry, land was devastated and people were exhausted. And soldiers returning from the rat and lice infested trenches also brought something else home that winter – the flu. The pandemic that swept and exhausted the world in the winter of 1918 – 1919 would kill another 20 to 40 million people. Half the US deaths in the war, for example, were due to the flu and not enemy fire.)

The Ottoman Empire, German Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire were all broken up into individual countries and lost their overseas territories. The age of Empire had come to an end.

But the largest price was paid by Germany, which was forced to accept blame for the war. The Germans lost all of their overseas territory and their entire navy and were made to pay war reparations that would bankrupt the country and destroy its industrial base. The weak German republican government, the humiliating defeat and the even more humiliating conditions of the armistice agreement, and the devastating economic toll it took, would eventually lead to the growth of German nationalism and the rise to power of a man who fought as a lowly lance corporal in the First World War – Adolf Hitler (pictured on page 75).



Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Remembrance

Many people from many countries were killed in the First World War. Many of these were not British and were not Christians, but belonged to other faiths.

Find out how other faiths remember their war heroes from these times. There will be Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish fallen. If you have people of these faiths in your class, ask them what they do on Remembrance Day and how, if at all, they use the poppy.

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Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Objectives and outcomes

To see that Remembrance is not just a UK Christian affair, but also appropriate for many people in many countries and of many faiths.

To notice that the poppy is not a Christian symbol, but a secular one. When wreaths made into the shape of a cross are used on Remembrance day, the cross is a Christian symbol. Other faiths do not have the same symbol to represent their faith.

Poppies

A poppy is a sign of remembrance that is not connected to any particular faith, but is a symbol of the war.

You can make a poppy using a piece of thin card, a plastic bag fastener and a piece of Plasticine for the central button.

It is best if you find an old poppy and take it apart to see that it is made of three parts: the poppy is a flat piece of stiff material, cut in the shape of petals. In your case this will be a piece of red card. The centre is a piece of plastic (in your case a piece of plasticine) and the stem will be a wire used to close plastic bags.

By looking at an original you will be finding out how things are made and the sizes of each part. Notice that poppies are not all the same size. You will then see how to reconstruct a poppy.

Now write a personal message on the front of your poppy.

What should it be?

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

5B Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Objectives

To think about the construction of a poppy. Poppies are made by disabled service people and are made on a fairly mass-production system, so they have to be simple. In order that the maximum amount of money goes to the good cause that it is meant for, the poppy must cost very little.

Outcomes

Children learn that objects are made of components and that these components are manufactured separately. They understand about value added manufacturing (in this case so that the majority of the money collected goes to help servicemen and not on materials).

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Who were they?

Visit your local War Memorial, and photograph and write down the names of the fallen engraved on it from the First World War.

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✎ .....

✎ .....

Can you obviously see any people who seem to be from the same family?

✎ .....

✎ .....

Answers, Notes, Background

First World War and Exploring Remembrance Day

Objectives

To put the First World War into the context of local history by trying to find out something of the people who were killed and whose names are on the memorial.

We will remember them...

This is the story of the First World War. It was the first war ever to affect all continents. It was meant to be the war to end all wars. It was not.

If you go around the country, no matter where you go, you will find, in parish, city or borough, an upright slab of stone with names of local people (picture ①, page 44) carved on it in neat rows. Many of these memorials are in the shape of a cross. Some of the largest, like the national memorial called the Cenotaph, in London's Whitehall, are shaped more like tall coffins. They are completely unique.

If you go to any of these memorials on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of any year, you will find people gathered there, holding wreaths made of poppies. There will be people holding flags belonging to the **ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**. Then, when the hour strikes, all these people, and people all over the country, will stop whatever they are doing. They will stop driving, stop working, stop learning. They will stand, or sit in complete silence for 2 minutes.

Then, in the silence, a distant cannon might be heard and a single bugler might blow a baleful tune known as the Last Post.

In the short service that follows, one of the readers will say these words:

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them."

All of these memorials, the service of remembrance, the poem, the poppies of the wreaths and the flags are all part of our nation giving just a moment's thought to the terrible events of a war like no other before or since.

... and it happened just a century ago.

▼ ① The Worcestershires going into action.

▶ ② The poppy is the symbol of the First World War because it was the first thing to flower over the battlefields after the war.

4

5

This part of the Teacher's Resources highlights some of the reasons for the pictures throughout the 48-page book. The same ideas can be used in the 32-page Explorer book.

This is a book about the First World War, with an emphasis on Remembrance Day. The war reshaped the world, and its impact has been felt down the decades. It destroyed empires, begun the foundation for new states (for example Israel) and much more. And it all came about because of the destabilising effect of radicals of the day (then called anarchists). The parallels with modern times are very striking. The difference is that today, after the experience of the First World War, we are more aware of the destabilising effect of local actions and can take measures to prevent trouble spots developing into world wars. This is one of the main advantages of history.

But we start with a picture of young recruits going off to war. Ask children to look carefully at what they are wearing and how much of it is similar and how much different to modern battle dress. And you might ask why they are walking anyway, and not driving around in armoured cars. Then the difference of now and a century ago will start to have more impact.

The poppies are to tie the first page of the book in with the last page for, as you might imagine, most of those marching to this war did not march back home, but were lost on Flanders' fields.

The terrible war

The First World War was called 'the terrible war', not simply because of the number of dead, but because of the terrible conditions it was fought in.

The First World War (also known as the Great War, World War I, WWI) was meant to be the 'war to end all wars'. Of course we know it wasn't. It did not even have the most casualties.

In the First World War the figures for Britain and her **ALLIES** were: dead: 9.6 million; wounded: 12.8 million (picture ①).

▼ ① Wounded British troops returning from the battlefield.

Forces' casualties for Germany and her allies: 8.0 million; wounded: 8.8 million. British and allies' deaths were higher than German and allies' deaths.

During the Second World War about 11 million German, Italian and Japanese troops and civilians were killed, while about 60 million British and allied troops and civilians were killed, including those in Russia, in concentration camps and who died from starvation.

In both wars, the people trying to restore peace paid a heavier price than those who caused the war, and quite often civilians paid a higher price than troops.

The terrible war

Why, then, was the First World War called the 'terrible war'? Well, it was due to the indescribably ghastly conditions in which soldiers fought – and the fact that no one seemed to care. The story of the terrible war is told in the following pages...

6

7

The purpose of the second page is to show how enthusiasm can quickly turn into depression as the reality of the war hits home. Ask children to compare the two pictures, the expressions, the clothes, the equipment and so on.

You can do this by putting one spread on your whiteboard, while looking at the other in books. The whiteboard version is available as part of the online subscription.

On the verge of war

Britain still ruled an empire – and, with the world's largest navy, it ruled the waves. What could go wrong?

You can't understand the war unless you know what was going on just before it.

In 1914 British people had enjoyed great prosperity for more than a century. The **British Empire** was still the largest in the world and British industry was still the envy of other countries. Although there had been many wars involving Britain, they had all been far from home. And we had won them all. People still remembered Admiral Horatio Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar, and the Duke of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo. They were all great victories.

▼ (1) The coronation of King George V as emperor in New Delhi, India, 1911.

As far as most people in Britain were concerned, everything was fine. **Britannia** still ruled the waves. But it was not fine, for events were about to unfold that would shatter the lives of many people across the world. War was in the air, and it was coming closer to home – but no-one was listening.

Leading to war

In 1914 news of events in Europe did not really interest British people because Britain, as an island, thought of itself as completely safe from attack.

As it happened, most of the kings and queens of Europe were related. For example, the Kaiser (King) of Germany was the cousin of King George V of Britain (picture (1)). This gave the false impression that, if any problems arose, one king would talk to another and sort out the mess. People thought it would keep Europe a safer place. It did not. It had the opposite effect.

Assassination

Some people across Europe wanted to overthrow the idea of monarchs and democracy by setting off bombs. They were known as anarchists. They thought that if only they could kill the king of a country, it might turn one country against another and that might bring down the whole of Europe.

They were right (picture (2)). It would happen because most countries of Europe had treaties which said that if one was attacked, others would come to their aid. It was meant to make things safer. It turned out to be a recipe for disaster.

◀ (2) The First World War was started by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian empire, by a Serbian student.

This spread details what things were like just as the war began. It was a time of empire, and the king of that empire is seen here in India, the jewel in the crown.

It is a time when no one has ever experienced world war, and where the British Empire was kept in check by tiny numbers of soldiers who were rushed to trouble spots as and when needed.

India is also put on this spread because it is important to realise that many countries of the Empire gladly sent their troops, and none more so than India (modern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh). So although it may seem like a European war, it was a war affecting many of the ancestors of the people who were to come from the Commonwealth to live here in modern times.

Your country needs YOU

Britain was suddenly faced with war, but it only had a small army. Something had to be done.

Britain was one of the most powerful countries in the world and it had the world's largest navy. That was because the British Isles are islands and all of its colonies and **DOMINIONS** were reached by ship.

The main worry had always been defending shipping routes using convoys. As a result, Britain had a tiny army which was only used to go to trouble-spots in the empire. But when Germany began to advance across Europe, it was clear that a massive British army would be needed to support the French and other European countries in danger of invasion.

The problem was how to get an army together quickly. Lord Kitchener was a former army commander and famous for his campaigns in Africa. He predicted a long war and one in which millions of men would be needed. At that time, such huge numbers were undreamt of.

Because Lord Kitchener was one of the most respected and popular men in Britain, when a massive campaign to swell the army did finally get under way, it seemed right to use him to get volunteers to join. This was done by one of the most famous poster campaigns of all time. You can see variations of it on these pages.

The most striking posters showed Kitchener pointing straight towards the reader. It was probably this, rather than anything else, that persuaded many young men and even schoolboys, to turn up at recruiting stations all over the country so they could volunteer to help to save their country.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

TO MY PEOPLE

Many volunteers were under the accepting age of 16, but they falsified documents and got up to many other tricks just to be able to join. They thought it was going to be all good fun – and they wanted to be part of it.

The point about having a small army is highlighted in the posters on these pages. Britain had the world's largest navy, but one of the smallest armies. So when war began, and Germany rushed in vast numbers of troops, Britain had to find a similar number. To begin with they hoped to fill the need with volunteers, so the emphasis was on duty and honour.

You may care to talk with children about how differently people see things down the ages. People at the end of Victorian times (which they still really were) thought very differently to many people today. Because of that they also behaved differently.

This is a continuation of the previous spread, with more examples. Ask children to identify which part of the Empire the soldiers came from on the Bulldog poster for example: bottom: India; top: Australia. It's mostly done by hat style.

The 'pals' join up

One way to get more men to join up was to get people to enlist with their friends – their 'pals'. Then they could all laugh and joke with people they knew all the way to the front line.

Britain declared war on the 4th of August 1914. But it could only contribute 150,000 men, about a tenth of the forces of France or Germany.

The British government (as well as all other governments involved in the war) appealed to young men's sense of adventure, pride, patriotism, and, quite an important extra, the fact that they would get a regular wage in the army. The government also tried to get women to encourage their husbands and boyfriends to join up. Later, women would be encouraged to join as nurses, and to support the war at home in many other ways, such as by knitting winter clothing for the men at the Front.

The campaign (see pages 10–13) run by Lord Kitchener was amazingly successful and by January 1916, more than one million British, and hundreds of thousands of Canadians, Anzacs (Australians and New Zealanders), and other members of the Empire had signed up (for example, a million Asians would fight in the war, and two all-Sikh battalions fought on the Western Front alone).

◀ ① Enlistment poster

C. J. Arthur:
"I was born in November 1898 so that when war was declared I was at school. I joined the School Cadet Battalion in 1914 and was appointed corporal.

At Whitsun, 1915, I told the Officer in command of cadets I was going to join up. "Good," he said. "How old do you want to be?"

We fixed things between us, and armed with a letter from him, I presented myself to the colonel of an infantry battalion which was just being formed, and on the strength of the letter I was appointed a lance-corporal and told to get my hair cut. I was in the army."

Propaganda

Propaganda is telling a story from just one side. By the end of 1914, more than 54 million propaganda posters had been printed encouraging people to enlist (picture ①).

One thing men were told was that it would be a quick and easy war, and that they would all be home for Christmas. It was also a quick and easy way to become a hero in the eyes of their loved ones. Another tactic was to give the press stories of horrible acts committed by the Germans and others. This was designed to make people hate the other side and see their own war as just. At the same time a just war made heroes of men. In a way it was seen as a kind of holy war.

The football battalion

At the start of the war there were 5,000 professional footballers. The football association publicly called for all un-married professional footballers to volunteer. This was a great coup for the army because most footballers were heroes. So they kept many of them together and formed the 17th Service (Football) Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment – the 'football battalion'.

Professional footballers were among the real heroes. Donald Bell, a footballer from Bradford City, was the first professional footballer to join up (picture ②). He took part in the Battle of the Somme (see page 26), filling his pockets with hand grenades and attacking a machine gun. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery. He was killed five days later.

▲ ② Donald Simpson Bell, VC.

Walter Tull was a black man who had played for Tottenham Hotspurs. He was part of the football battalion. He showed such promise that his senior officers wanted to send him to officer training school. At that time military regulations prohibited 'persons of colour' from being officers. With huge support, he became an officer all the same. He was an extremely popular and brave soldier. In 1918 he was hit by a bullet, and other soldiers risked their lives to get him back into the trenches. Unfortunately he died. Altogether twelve members of the Spurs football team were killed in the First World War.

This is all about role models. For young children interested in football, they may find the football battalion of especial interest. They may like to see the way that football was used for propaganda and also how brave many of the footballers really were. They turned out to be heroes on the pitch and in war.

A new kind of war – the Western Front

The Western Front was the largest front of the war, and where most British servicemen saw action.

After six weeks of training, most of the new recruits were sent to the Front (picture ①). Many companies marched first through their home towns, so their friends and family could give them a send off. But once at the Front, they quickly realised this war was not going to be easy, fun or quick.

The start of modern warfare

The First World War was like no war that had taken place before. It has been called the start of modern warfare.

The way the war was fought (called tactics) was still similar to those that had been used for hundreds of years – trenches, frontal attacks and calvary charges using horses. Yet it was also the first war in which aeroplanes, tanks, poison gas, **MINES**, submarines and machine guns were used.

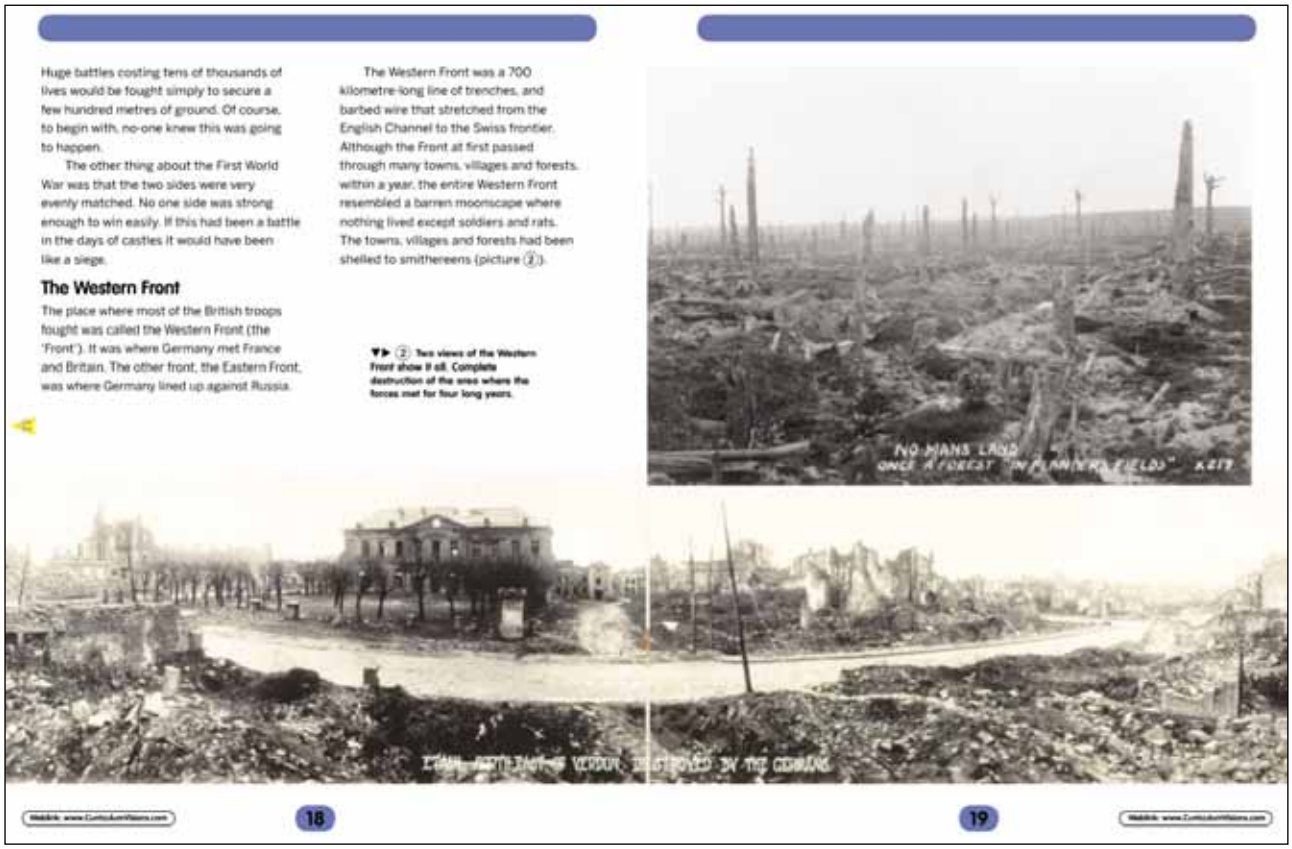
What was the effect of combining old and new? Commanders did not yet know how to use the new weapons best, so they used them as they always had. But machine guns and shells (the 'bullets' from a large gun on wheels) were far more deadly than the single-shot rifles and cannon used before. The result was that using the old tactics caused vast numbers of extra casualties.

▼ ① Here you see the new war at its start. These are German troops going to the Western Front. Notice the great line of marching troops. The supplies are carried in horses and carts. The commander travels in a car. It shows how the new and the old were all mixed up, but it especially shows how slowly people moved, for they had to walk every step of the way from the distant railway stations.

16

17

This spread tries to highlight the incongruity between the past and the future and how many problems were produced by a mix of old and new. For example, the whole idea of fronts was old fighting. The weapons that were introduced were new. Mixing the two without trying to plan how to conduct war in the context of new technology led to old set-piece battles and enormous waste of life.



Huge battles costing tens of thousands of lives would be fought simply to secure a few hundred metres of ground. Of course, to begin with, no-one knew this was going to happen.

The other thing about the First World War was that the two sides were very evenly matched. No one side was strong enough to win easily. If this had been a battle in the days of castles it would have been like a siege.

The Western Front

The place where most of the British troops fought was called the Western Front (the 'Front'). It was where Germany met France and Britain. The other front, the Eastern Front, was where Germany lined up against Russia.

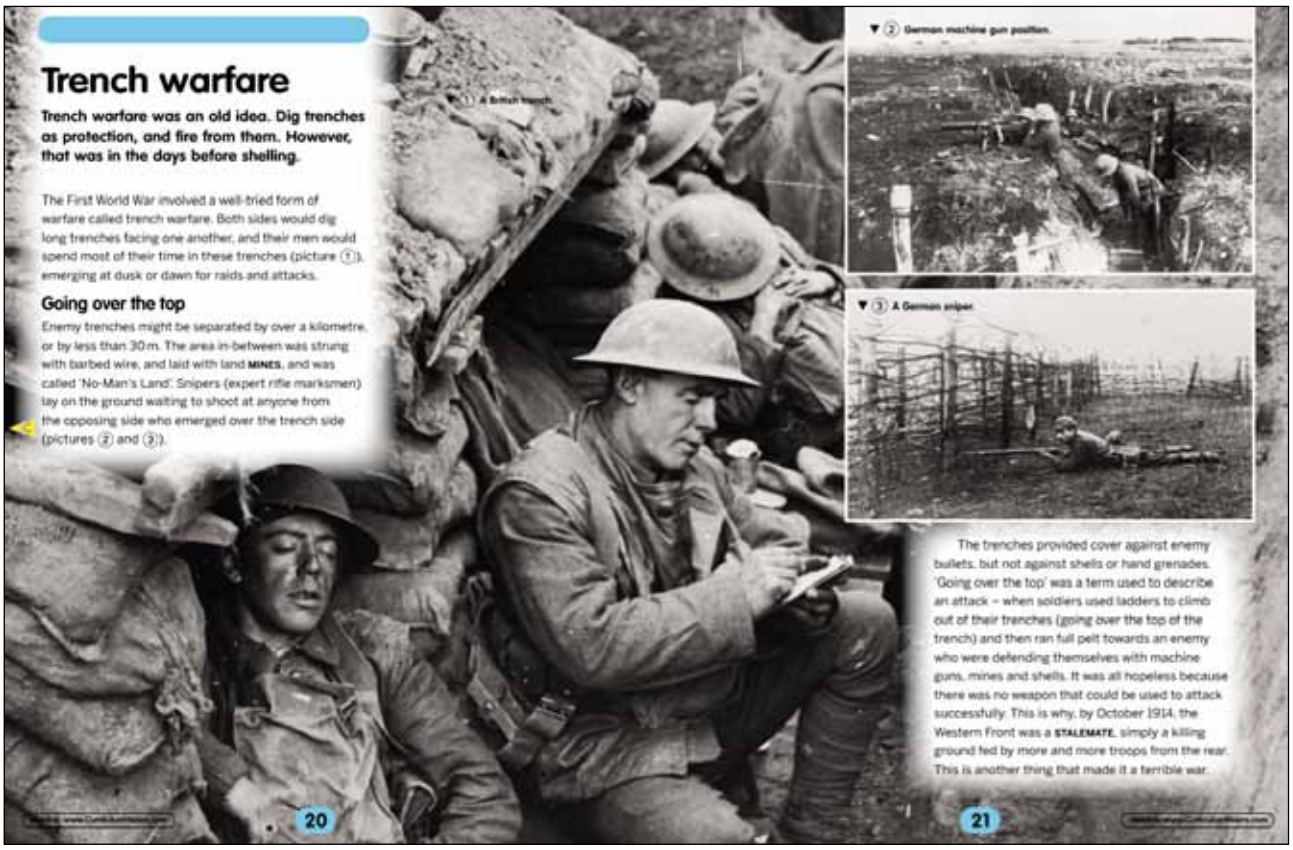
The Western Front was a 700 kilometre-long line of trenches, and barbed wire that stretched from the English Channel to the Swiss frontier. Although the Front at first passed through many towns, villages and forests, within a year, the entire Western Front resembled a barren moonscape where nothing lived except soldiers and rats. The towns, villages and forests had been shelled to smithereens (picture 2).

▼▶ 2 Two views of the Western Front show it all. Complete destruction of the area where the forces met for four long years.

18

19

The destructive power of the heavy artillery is so clear to see here. Shells explode, doing far more damage than old cannon used to. The result was a nightmare scenario and complete destruction of small parts of the landscape. Remember the front hardly moved through the war, so the destruction, though total in some places, was not widespread as it was to be in the Second World War.



Trench warfare

Trench warfare was an old idea. Dig trenches as protection, and fire from them. However, that was in the days before shelling.

The First World War involved a well-tried form of warfare called trench warfare. Both sides would dig long trenches facing one another, and their men would spend most of their time in these trenches (picture 1), emerging at dusk or dawn for raids and attacks.

Going over the top

Enemy trenches might be separated by over a kilometre, or by less than 30 m. The area in-between was strung with barbed wire, and laid with land **MINES**, and was called 'No-Man's Land'. Snipers (expert rifle marksmen) lay on the ground waiting to shoot at anyone from the opposing side who emerged over the trench side (pictures 2 and 3).

▼ 2 German machine gun position.

▼ 3 A German sniper.

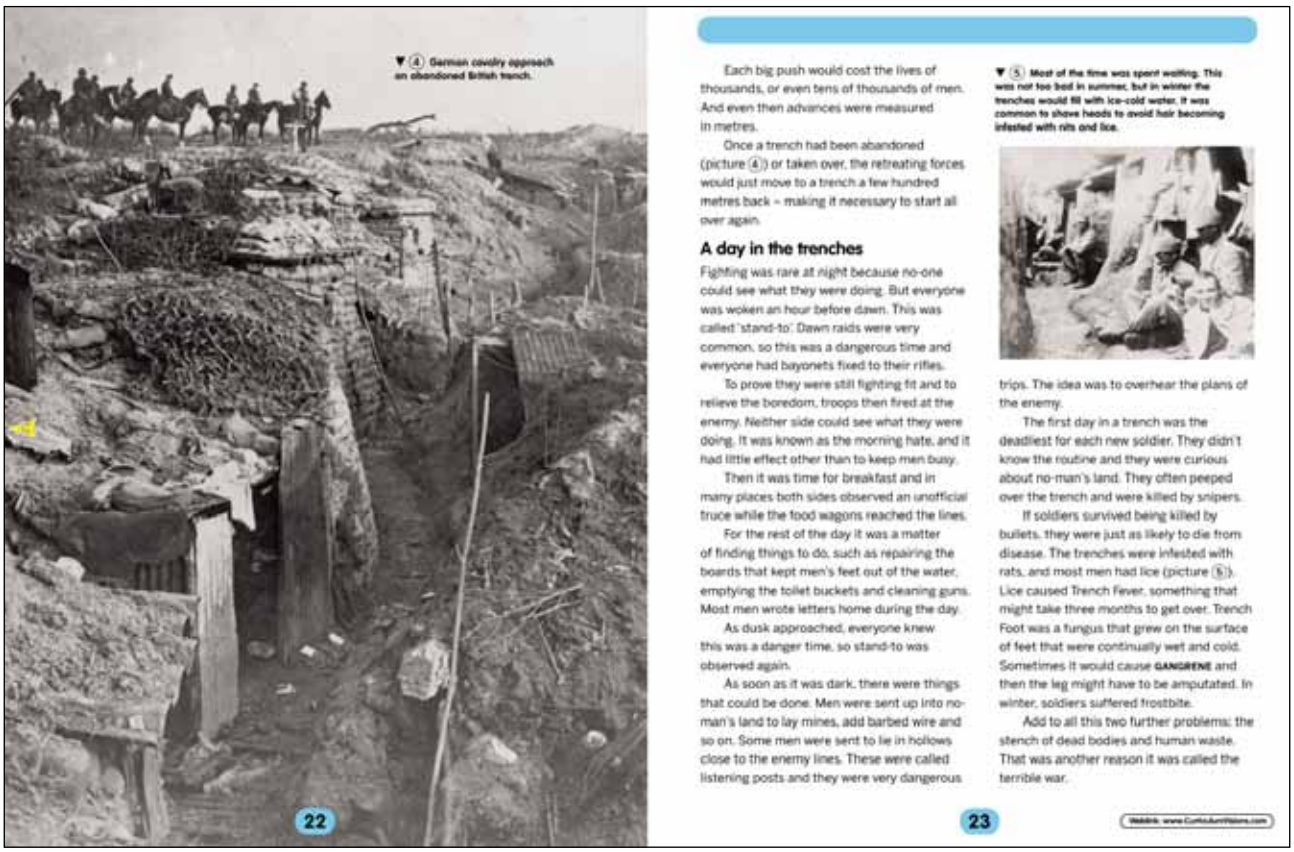
The trenches provided cover against enemy bullets, but not against shells or hand grenades. 'Going over the top' was a term used to describe an attack – when soldiers used ladders to climb out of their trenches (going over the top of the trench) and then ran full pelt towards an enemy who were defending themselves with machine guns, mines and shells. It was all hopeless because there was no weapon that could be used to attack successfully. This is why, by October 1914, the Western Front was a **STALEMATE**, simply a killing ground fed by more and more troops from the rear. This is another thing that made it a terrible war.

20

21

It is extremely difficult to imagine the real nature of trench warfare. These pictures show it during rest periods and in summer. They do not show the flooded trenches and ice of winter, the overflowing latrine pits and so on.

The stories given in the earlier part of these Teacher's Resources may be read out to give a better idea.



▼ (4) German cavalry approach an abandoned British trench.

Each big push would cost the lives of thousands, or even tens of thousands of men. And even then advances were measured in metres.

Once a trench had been abandoned (picture (4)) or taken over, the retreating forces would just move to a trench a few hundred metres back – making it necessary to start all over again.

A day in the trenches

Fighting was rare at night because no-one could see what they were doing. But everyone was woken an hour before dawn. This was called 'stand-to'. Dawn raids were very common, so this was a dangerous time and everyone had bayonets fixed to their rifles.

To prove they were still fighting fit and to relieve the boredom, troops then fired at the enemy. Neither side could see what they were doing. It was known as the morning hate, and it had little effect other than to keep men busy.

Then it was time for breakfast and in many places both sides observed an unofficial truce while the food wagons reached the lines.

For the rest of the day it was a matter of finding things to do, such as repairing the boards that kept men's feet out of the water, emptying the toilet buckets and cleaning guns. Most men wrote letters home during the day.

As dusk approached, everyone knew this was a danger time, so stand-to was observed again.

As soon as it was dark, there were things that could be done. Men were sent up into no-man's land to lay mines, add barbed wire and so on. Some men were sent to lie in hollows close to the enemy lines. These were called listening posts and they were very dangerous

▼ (5) Most of the time was spent waiting. This was not too bad in summer, but in winter the trenches would fill with ice-cold water. It was common to shave heads to avoid hair becoming infested with rits and lice.

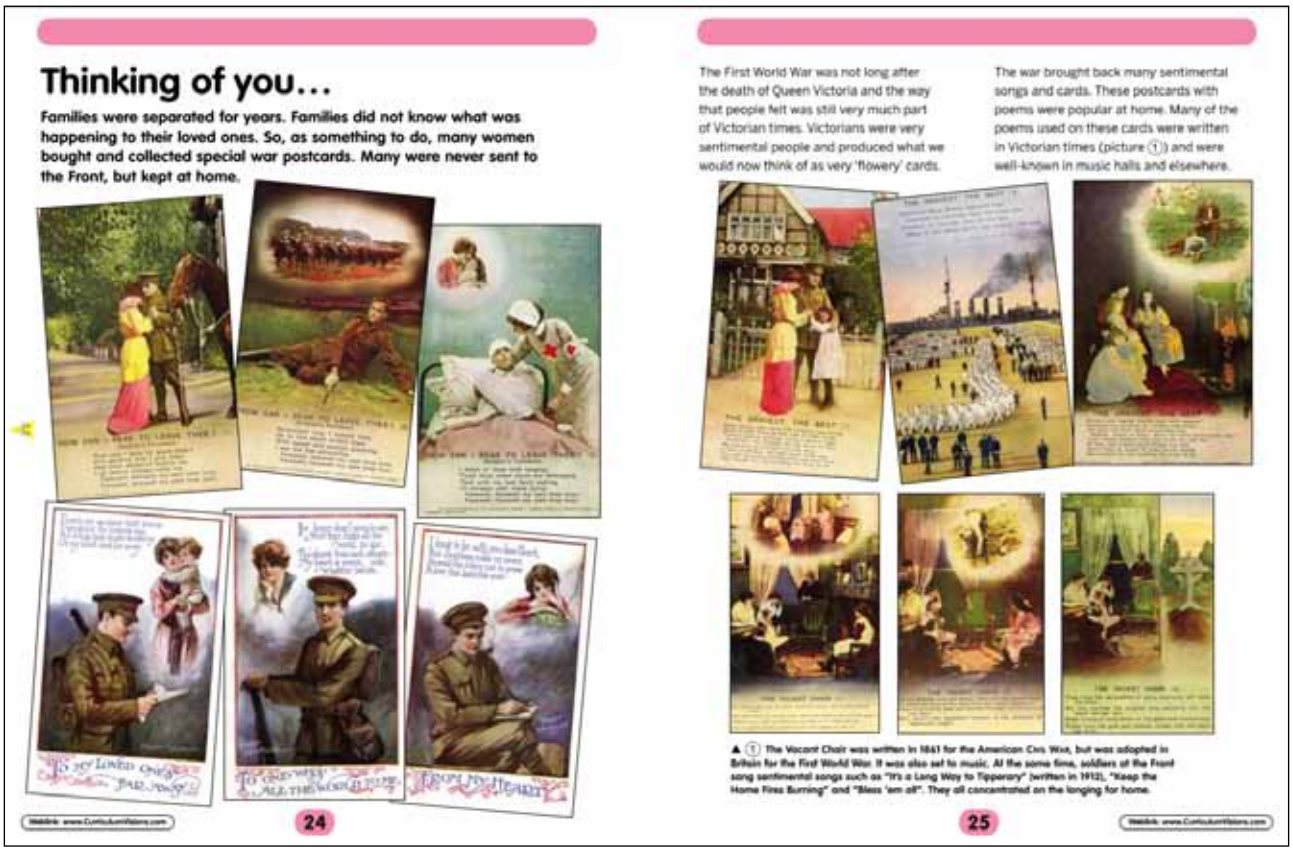
trips. The idea was to overhear the plans of the enemy.

The first day in a trench was the deadliest for each new soldier. They didn't know the routine and they were curious about no-man's land. They often peeped over the trench and were killed by snipers.

If soldiers survived being killed by bullets, they were just as likely to die from disease. The trenches were infested with rats, and most men had lice (picture (5)). Lice caused Trench Fever, something that might take three months to get over. Trench Foot was a fungus that grew on the surface of feet that were continually wet and cold. Sometimes it would cause **GANGRENE** and then the leg might have to be amputated. In winter, soldiers suffered frostbite.

Add to all this two further problems: the stench of dead bodies and human waste. That was another reason it was called the terrible war.

(Trench warfare continued)



Thinking of you...

Families were separated for years. Families did not know what was happening to their loved ones. So, as something to do, many women bought and collected special war postcards. Many were never sent to the Front, but kept at home.

The First World War was not long after the death of Queen Victoria and the way that people felt was still very much part of Victorian times. Victorians were very sentimental people and produced what we would now think of as very 'flowery' cards.

The war brought back many sentimental songs and cards. These postcards with poems were popular at home. Many of the poems used on these cards were written in Victorian times (picture 1) and were well-known in music halls and elsewhere.

▲ 1 The Vacant Chair was written in 1861 for the American Civ War, but was adopted in Britain for the First World War. It was also set to music. At the same time, soldiers of the Front sang sentimental songs such as "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" (written in 1912), "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Bless 'em all". They all concentrated on the longing for home.

In the midst of a battle that those at home could not imagine, the loneliness and uncertainty gave rise to emotional postcards. What would the equivalent be today?

Several examples are given here so that you and the children can discuss the poetry from many aspects.

▼ ① Members of the Cheshire regiment in the Battle of the Somme.

26

27

The Somme

All battles are awful, but some are more awful than others. One of these was called the Battle of the Somme.

The Somme is the name of a river in northern France. The first day of the Somme offensive was the bloodiest in the history of the British Army (picture ①). More than 20,000 were killed and 60,000 injured. Sixty per cent of all the officers were also killed on the first day.

The reason for the battle was that the British and French were trying (yet again) to break through the German lines. It was intended to be the winning battle. It was not – and two more wearying years of war followed.

The idea

In the northeast of France is a region called Flanders (picture ③, page 29). The battle line ran north to south through Flanders. British and French to the west, Germans to the east.

The countryside of Flanders is very flat and the ground is soft and often waterlogged. It is good trench-digging country, but there is no other shelter from attack.

The French plan was to attack from the south, but to confuse the Germans there would be a British attack from farther north to act as a diversion. However, there was a problem. In an earlier battle for the city of Verdun

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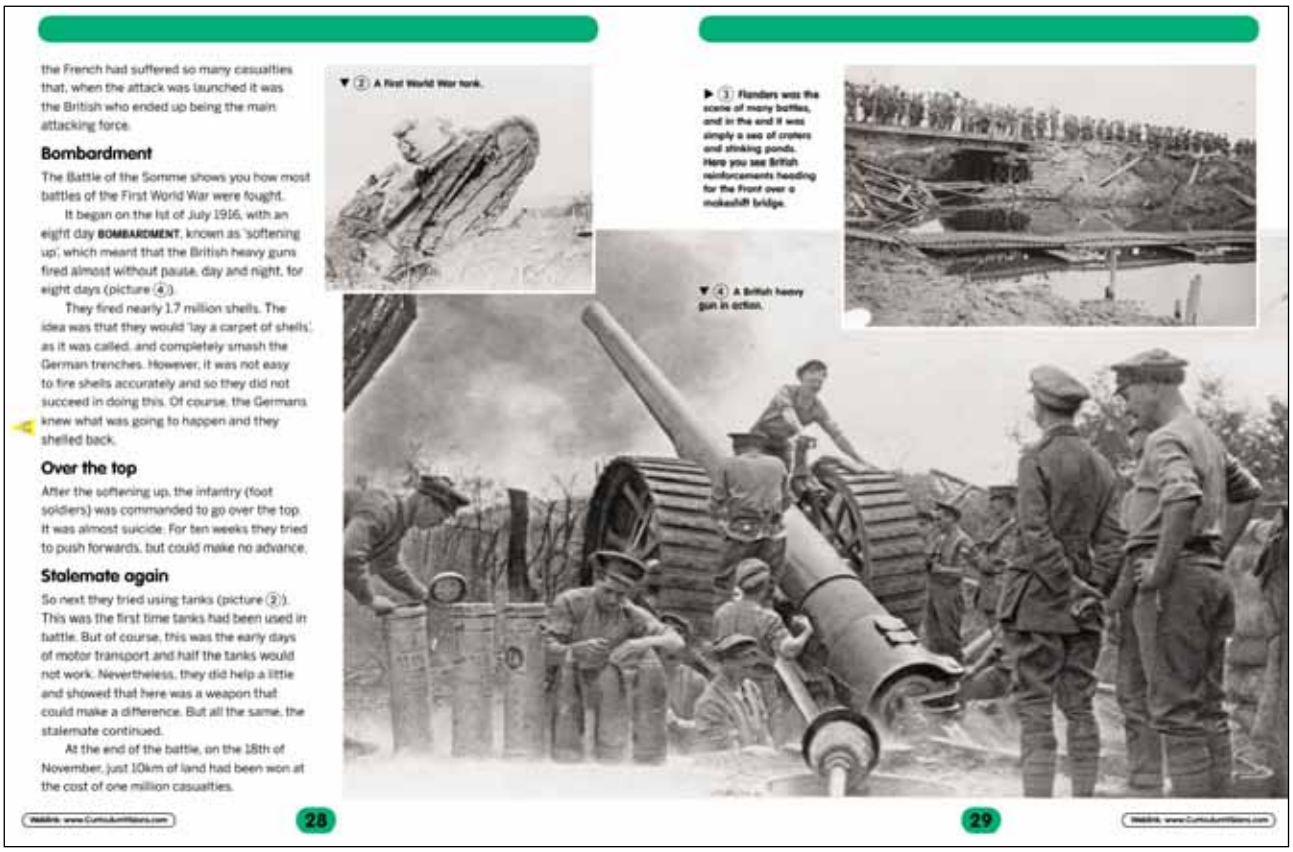
These spreads try to portray some aspects of the war, with new inventions such as tanks and shells. The ferocity of the weapons and the slowness of getting about is what resulted in stalemate and a war that lasted four years.



the French had suffered so many casualties that, when the attack was launched it was the British who ended up being the main attacking force.

Bombardment

The Battle of the Somme shows you how most battles of the First World War were fought.

It began on the 1st of July 1916, with an eight day **BOMBARDMENT**, known as 'softening up', which meant that the British heavy guns fired almost without pause, day and night, for eight days (picture 4).

They fired nearly 1.7 million shells. The idea was that they would 'lay a carpet of shells' as it was called, and completely smash the German trenches. However, it was not easy to fire shells accurately and so they did not succeed in doing this. Of course, the Germans knew what was going to happen and they shelled back.

Over the top

After the softening up, the infantry (foot soldiers) was commanded to go over the top. It was almost suicide. For ten weeks they tried to push forwards, but could make no advance.

Stalemate again

So next they tried using tanks (picture 2). This was the first time tanks had been used in battle. But of course, this was the early days of motor transport and half the tanks would not work. Nevertheless, they did help a little and showed that here was a weapon that could make a difference. But all the same, the stalemate continued.

At the end of the battle, on the 18th of November, just 10km of land had been won at the cost of one million casualties.

28

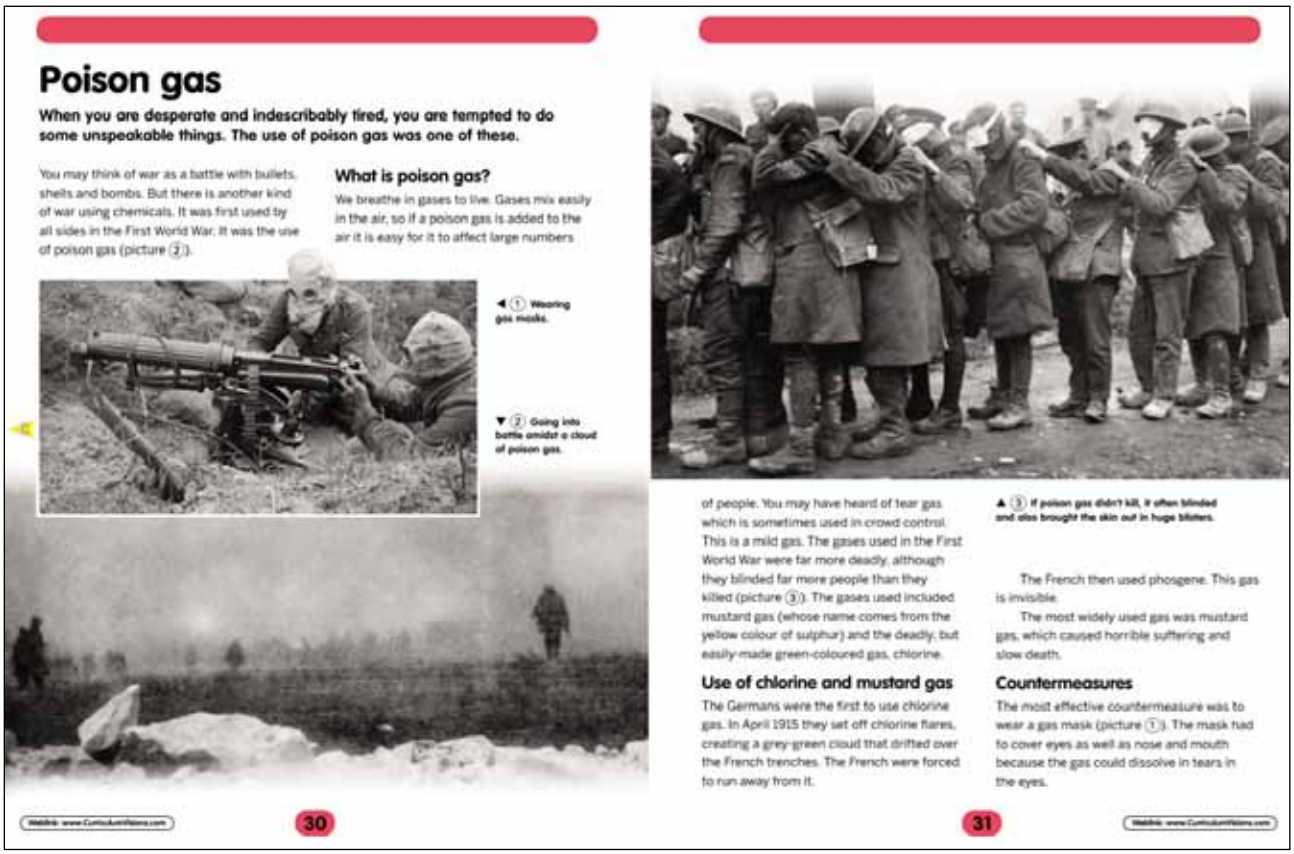
▼ 2 A First World War tank.

▶ 3 Flanders was the scene of many battles, and in the end it was simply a sea of craters and stinking ponds. Here you see British reinforcements heading for the Front over a makeshift bridge.

▼ 4 A British heavy gun in action.

29

(The Somme continued)



Poison gas

When you are desperate and indescribably tired, you are tempted to do some unspeakable things. The use of poison gas was one of these.

You may think of war as a battle with bullets, shells and bombs. But there is another kind of war using chemicals. It was first used by all sides in the First World War. It was the use of poison gas (picture 2).

What is poison gas?

We breathe in gases to live. Gases mix easily in the air, so if a poison gas is added to the air it is easy for it to affect large numbers of people. You may have heard of tear gas which is sometimes used in crowd control. This is a mild gas. The gases used in the First World War were far more deadly, although they blinded far more people than they killed (picture 3). The gases used included mustard gas (whose name comes from the yellow colour of sulphur) and the deadly, but easily-made green-coloured gas, chlorine.

◀ (1) Wearing gas masks.

▼ (2) Going into battle amidst a cloud of poison gas.

▲ (3) If poison gas didn't kill, it often blinded and also brought the skin out in huge blisters.

Use of chlorine and mustard gas

The Germans were the first to use chlorine gas. In April 1915 they set off chlorine flares, creating a grey-green cloud that drifted over the French trenches. The French were forced to run away from it.

The French then used phosgene. This gas is invisible.

The most widely used gas was mustard gas, which caused horrible suffering and slow death.

Countermeasures

The most effective countermeasure was to wear a gas mask (picture 1). The mask had to cover eyes as well as nose and mouth because the gas could dissolve in tears in the eyes.

30

31

Chemical weapons have frightened people more than any other kind of weapon. They were first used in the First World War and are still used today, even though modern treaties ban them.

First World War gas masks were little more than canvas hoods with filters of cotton wool. They stopped some of the gas getting into eyes, nose and mouth, but they were not particularly effective. They were a physical solution to a chemical problem. The answer had to be a chemical solution, and it took time to develop and often had hazards in itself. For example, gas masks used asbestos filters.

The first use of poison gas on the Western Front was on 22 April 1915, by the Germans at Ypres, against Canadian and French colonial troops. The initial response was to equip troops with cotton mouth pads for protection. Soon afterwards the British added a long cloth which was used to tie chemical-soaked mouth pads into place, and which was called the Black Veil Respirator. Dr. Cluny MacPherson of Royal Newfoundland Regiment brought the idea of a mask made of chemical absorbing fabric and which fitted over the entire head to England, and this was developed into the British Hypo Helmet of June 1915. This primitive type of mask went through several stages of development before being superseded in 1916 by the canister gas mask of 1916 This had a mask connected by a hose to a tin can containing the absorbent materials.

The earliest absorbent was charcoal. Urinating on the gas masks made them more effective!

The first war in the skies

Aircraft were just a few years old when they were called into battle.

The first aeroplane was flown by the Wright Brothers in 1903. It stayed up for 12 seconds and flew 40m. But, quite remarkably, aircraft design improved by leaps and bounds. By 1909 Blériot had crossed the English Channel. In 1911 the Italians, who were fighting Turkey at the time, dropped hand grenades from planes, making this the first use of an aircraft in war.

Not surprisingly, when war broke out there were hardly any aircraft, but they were so vital that many thousands were built (picture ①). France, for example, had 140 aircraft at the start of the war, but during the war France built 68,000 aircraft, although three-quarters were lost in battle. Being a pilot above the battle proved to be even more dangerous than being on the Front in a trench.

Although planes were too light to carry anything but the tiniest bombs (picture ③), they did carry machine guns which could be used to fire at ground troops or attack other aircraft. Battles between planes were known as dog fights. Planes were also able to drop leaflets on the people below, suggesting they should surrender, and the like.

Aircraft were also used to spy out for the troops, who could not see over their trenches.

Airships

Airships – vast balloons filled with hydrogen gas and with a little basket underneath – had been invented earlier than aeroplanes and they were also used in the war. They were able to drop bigger bombs.

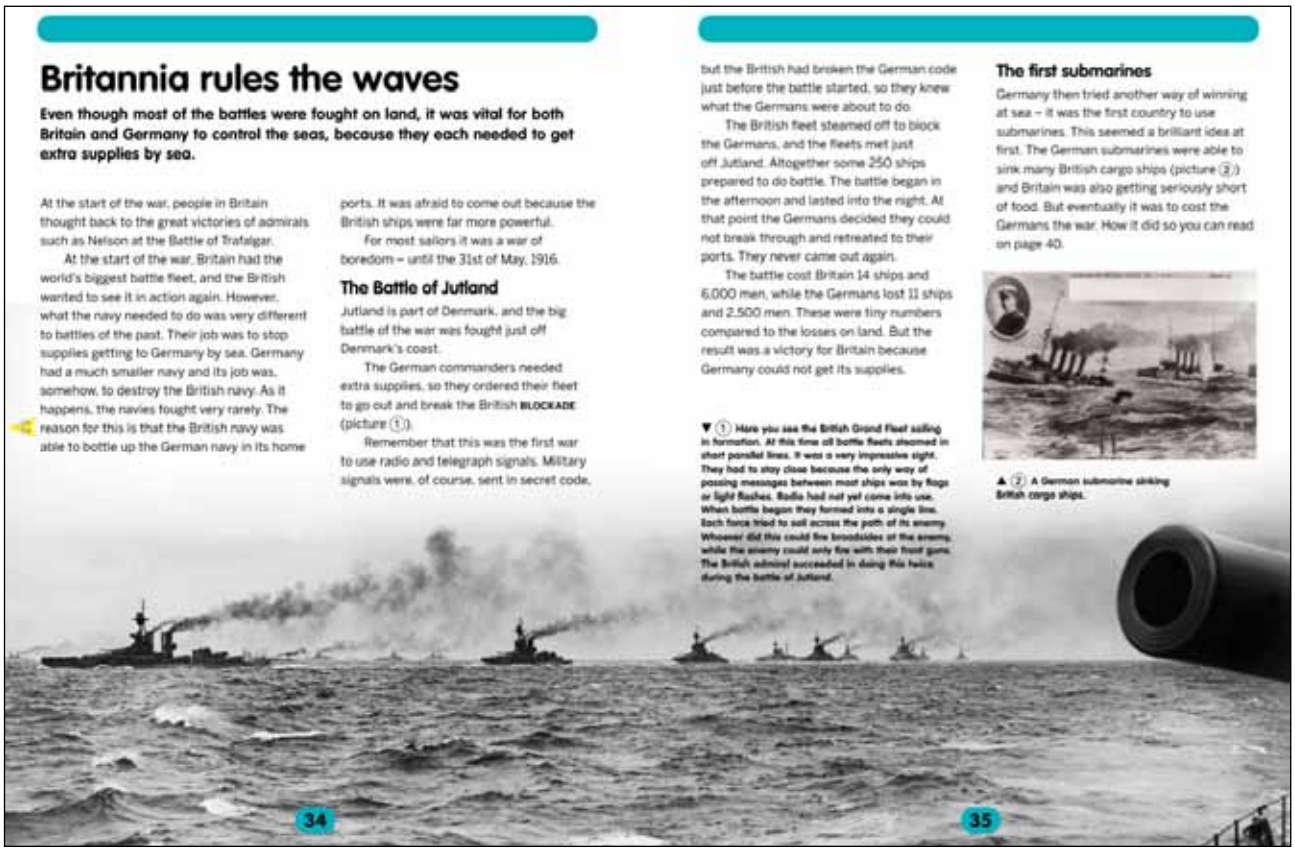
The most famous airships belonged to Germany and were called Zeppelins. They made a bombing raid on London during the night of the 31st of May, 1915 (picture ②) although these bombs did little damage.

▼ ① An artist's drawing of the aircraft crews as heroes.

▼ ② A plaque commemorating a Zeppelin bombing raid in central London.

▼ ③ Small bombs were dropped by pilots from their cockpits!

This spread shows the earliest, and obviously primitive, use of aeroplanes. The pilot dropping a bomb by hand shows that the planes were not yet effective. However, they played an important reconnaissance role. Their machine guns could also be used to staff the trenches.



Britannia rules the waves

Even though most of the battles were fought on land, it was vital for both Britain and Germany to control the seas, because they each needed to get extra supplies by sea.

At the start of the war, people in Britain thought back to the great victories of admirals such as Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar.

At the start of the war, Britain had the world's biggest battle fleet, and the British wanted to see it in action again. However, what the navy needed to do was very different to battles of the past. Their job was to stop supplies getting to Germany by sea. Germany had a much smaller navy and its job was, somehow, to destroy the British navy. As it happens, the navies fought very rarely. The reason for this is that the British navy was able to bottle up the German navy in its home ports. It was afraid to come out because the British ships were far more powerful.

For most sailors it was a war of boredom – until the 31st of May, 1916.

The Battle of Jutland

Jutland is part of Denmark, and the big battle of the war was fought just off Denmark's coast.

The German commanders needed extra supplies, so they ordered their fleet to go out and break the British **BLOCKADE** (picture ①).

Remember that this was the first war to use radio and telegraph signals. Military signals were, of course, sent in secret code, but the British had broken the German code just before the battle started, so they knew what the Germans were about to do.

The British fleet steamed off to block the Germans, and the fleets met just off Jutland. Altogether some 250 ships prepared to do battle. The battle began in the afternoon and lasted into the night. At that point the Germans decided they could not break through and retreated to their ports. They never came out again.

The battle cost Britain 14 ships and 6,000 men, while the Germans lost 11 ships and 2,500 men. These were tiny numbers compared to the losses on land. But the result was a victory for Britain because Germany could not get its supplies.

▼ ① **Here you see the British Grand Fleet sailing in formation. At this time all battle fleets steamed in short parallel lines. It was a very impressive sight. They had to stay close because the only way of passing messages between most ships was by flags or light flashes. Radio had not yet come into use. When battle began they formed into a single line. Each force tried to sail across the path of its enemy. Whoever did this could fire broadsides at the enemy, while the enemy could only fire with their front guns. The British admiral succeeded in doing this twice during the battle of Jutland.**

The first submarines

Germany then tried another way of winning at sea – it was the first country to use submarines. This seemed a brilliant idea at first. The German submarines were able to sink many British cargo ships (picture ②) and Britain was also getting seriously short of food. But eventually it was to cost the Germans the war. How it did so you can read on page 40.

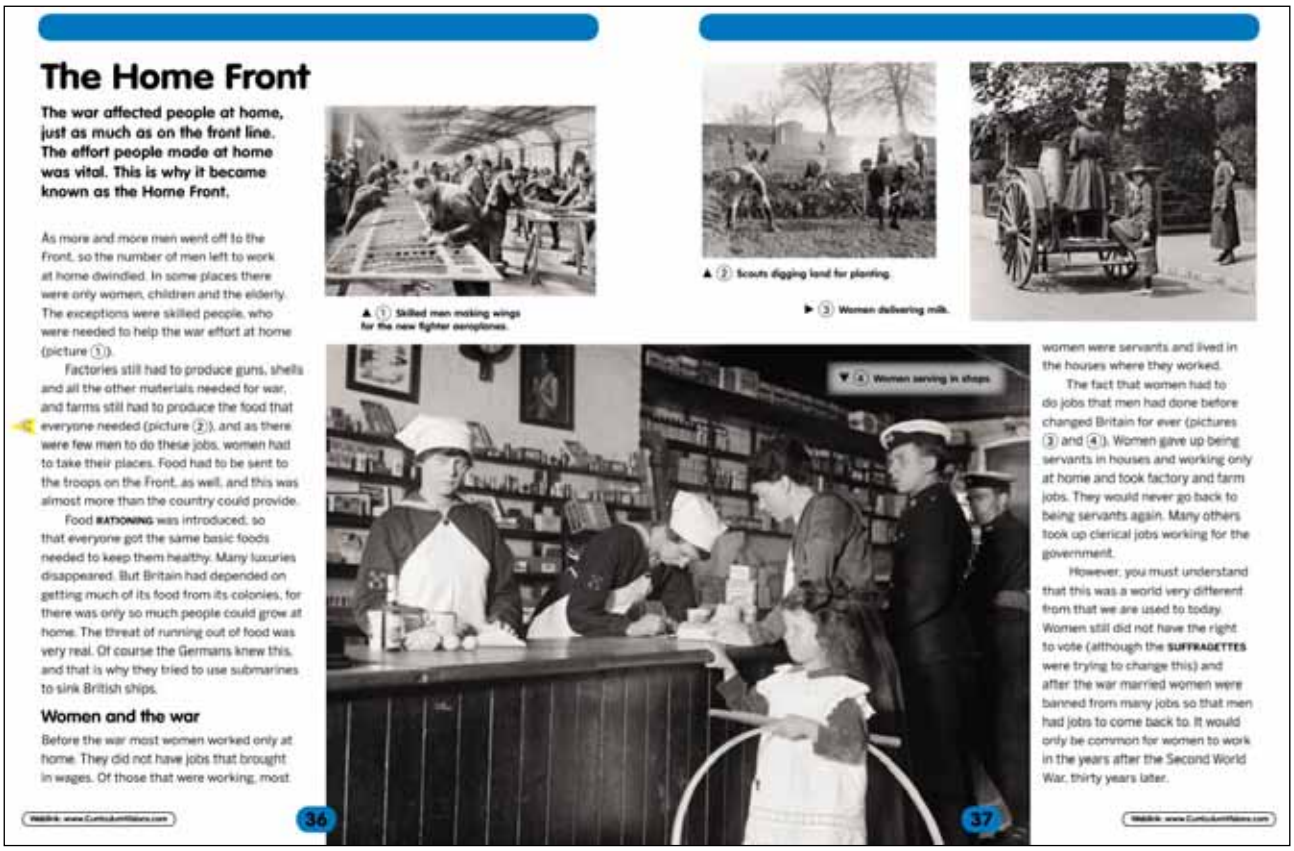
▲ ② **A German submarine sinking British cargo ships.**

34

35

The British navy was huge, but again it was hampered in its role by old strategies for a new kind of war. The pictures show the enormity of the British ships, although it has to be said that a modern nuclear submarine is about as long as one of the ships shown here.

The ships were floating gun emplacements. Later, in the Second World War, aircraft would be used so effectively that battleships would be made redundant.



The Home Front

The war affected people at home, just as much as on the front line. The effort people made at home was vital. This is why it became known as the Home Front.

As more and more men went off to the Front, so the number of men left to work at home dwindled. In some places there were only women, children and the elderly. The exceptions were skilled people, who were needed to help the war effort at home (picture 1).

Factories still had to produce guns, shells and all the other materials needed for war, and farms still had to produce the food that everyone needed (picture 2), and as there were few men to do these jobs, women had to take their places. Food had to be sent to the troops on the Front, as well, and this was almost more than the country could provide.

Food **RATIONING** was introduced, so that everyone got the same basic foods needed to keep them healthy. Many luxuries disappeared. But Britain had depended on getting much of its food from its colonies, for there was only so much people could grow at home. The threat of running out of food was very real. Of course the Germans knew this, and that is why they tried to use submarines to sink British ships.

Women and the war

Before the war most women worked only at home. They did not have jobs that brought in wages. Of those that were working, most

▲ 1 Skilled men making wings for the new fighter aeroplanes.

▲ 2 Scouts digging land for planting

▶ 3 Women delivering milk.

▼ 4 Women serving in shops

36

37

women were servants and lived in the houses where they worked.

The fact that women had to do jobs that men had done before changed Britain for ever (pictures 3 and 4). Women gave up being servants in houses and working only at home and took factory and farm jobs. They would never go back to being servants again. Many others took up clerical jobs working for the government.

However, you must understand that this was a world very different from that we are used to today. Women still did not have the right to vote (although the **SUFFRAGETTES** were trying to change this) and after the war married women were banned from many jobs so that men had jobs to come back to. It would only be common for women to work in the years after the Second World War, thirty years later.

We mostly hear about the Home Front concerning the Second World War, but rationing and other changes to lifestyle were a (lesser) feature of the First World War. They are illustrated here.

War spreads around the world

The war started in Europe. But most European countries had colonies, so they quickly got dragged in, too.

▲ (1) Russian soldiers on the Eastern Front.

The major countries involved in the First World War all had allies, interests and colonies spread around the world. From these came men and material that they used to fight the war.

The Eastern Front

About 4 million men faced one another across the trenches in the Eastern Front. It was the coldest kind of war, but the Russians (picture (1)) were more used to it than the Germans. Yet other things were happening. The Russians were becoming fed up with their rulers and with war, and in 1917 the **Russian Revolution** took place. In this year **communism** began and, as a result, the Russian army stopped fighting and Germany was able to force peace terms on them and take large areas of territory. Russians would remember this in the Second World War.

Turkey

Outside Europe, two of the major campaigns were the Gallipoli campaign in Turkey and the battle for Palestine in the Middle East.

The attack on Turkey began as the British forces tried to find a way around the German trenches in Europe. Could there be a backdoor way in through Turkey, Germany's ally?

Allied forces tried to take the area near to the port city of Constantinople (now called Istanbul). But the Turkish guns were too powerful and the British ships could not land their troops properly.

The battles that occurred made up the campaign known as Gallipoli and they were a disaster for the allies. It cost 600,000 casualties and at the end the allies had to withdraw. Nothing was achieved.

▼ (2) Turks at the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem in Palestine. Events in the First World War would eventually lead to the collapse of the Turkish Empire and the founding of the state of Israel.

Middle East

The Middle East had two great treasures: oil and the Suez Canal. The Germans and Turkish forces tried to capture the Suez Canal, which was British territory. Thirty thousand Indian army troops were sent to the canal's defence. Indians, helped by Australians, fought the attack off.

Meanwhile the British and Indian troops were sent to Mesopotamia (now Iraq) but the allied forces soon suffered another defeat at the hands of the Turks. But they tried again, and this time they captured Iraq, which then became British territory along with Palestine (picture (2)).

Lawrence of Arabia

The British did not fight in Arabia, which was under Turkish control, but they helped the Arabs by giving assistance and leaders. The most famous leader was Colonel T.E. Lawrence – soon to be the famous hero, Laurence of Arabia. For two years Lawrence and his band of Arab tribesmen successfully attacked Turkish positions.

38 39

The First World War spread across to Asia, and many Empire troops were used in these campaigns. Notice that the battles were with Turkey, as an ally of Germany, something that was to be repeated in the subsequent war.

You may want to spend some time looking at the story of Lawrence of Arabia, who was fulfilling a training role with the armies of Saudi Arabia.

America enters the war

The war in Europe was a stalemate – until the United States entered on the side of Britain.

To understand about the United States, you have to know that almost all Americans come from immigrant backgrounds. There are Russian Americans, German Americans, Irish Americans, British Americans, Italian Americans, and so on. Indeed, in the middle of the 19th century there had actually been a vote to decide whether English or German should be the official language of America.

So, for the Americans, entering the war and taking sides was not an easy decision. Far better, they thought, to stay out of it, to stay neutral.

On top of this, America had been through a civil war not so many years before and it had fought for independence from Britain only a little over a century earlier.

But there was more. The president, Woodrow Wilson, was a pacifist, which means he did not believe in war. So, for three years, America stayed on the sidelines. To make it enter the war, one side or another in Europe had to do something to anger the Americans.

The President of America tried to get the governments of Europe to stop the war without a victory. But some Americans were already fighting as volunteers in the British army and these people returned with tales of daring and heroism, and of British sacrifice and German atrocities.

Yet it was none of these things that changed America's mind. It was an unbelievably stupid German 'own-goal'.

Sinking of the Lusitania

Remember that the Germans had started using submarines. The Americans were not at war, so they believed their ships would be left alone – including ships of other nations carrying Americans.

▲ (1) Propaganda poster reminding the American Government (shown as Uncle Sam in the front) of the death of American children due to the monstrous Germans (shown as the Kaiser at the back)

However, the German government gave the order to sink any ship that approached Britain.

In 1915 a German submarine attacked and sunk a passenger liner sailing from New York to Britain. It was called the Lusitania (pictures (1) and (2)). More than 1,000 people died, including 138 Americans.

Americans were shocked, and for a while Germans stopped attacking American ships. Then, in January 1917 they resumed attacks on civilian ships – including American merchant ships.

Worse was to follow. In February 1917, Britain gave the American government a telegram they had obtained in which the German government asked the German ambassador to suggest to the Mexicans that they join Germany in attacking America. In exchange, once Germany had won the war, they would give Mexico all of her former territory that was now part of America.

The telegram was made public and instantly the mood in America changed. People now demanded war. On the 6th of April, 1917 the United States finally declared war on Germany.

▼ (2) A painting of the sinking of the Lusitania.

40

41

As was to be the case in the Second World War, the entry of the United States, with its vast army, resources and population, was to be a turning point.

These spreads try to show why America was so ambivalent about entering the war. Children should be reminded that America is a country of immigrants, and those immigrants came from both sides of the struggle in Europe. America should not be seen as a natural ally of Britain (and at this time it was only just a century after America became independent of Britain!)

By now the American government had also decided that sending American soldiers could end the war quickly, so it did not oppose the demands of the people.

At the same time, Germany was on the brink of starvation. Germany's allies, such as Turkey, were also collapsing.

The Americans arrive

The Americans arrived in force (picture 3). The United States, like Britain, entered the war with a small army, but it **DRAFTED** four million men in a few months and was soon sending ten thousand fresh soldiers (nicknamed 'dough-boys') to France every day. This was important, because all of the European soldiers were war-weary.

▼ (3) Americans arrive with more supplies.

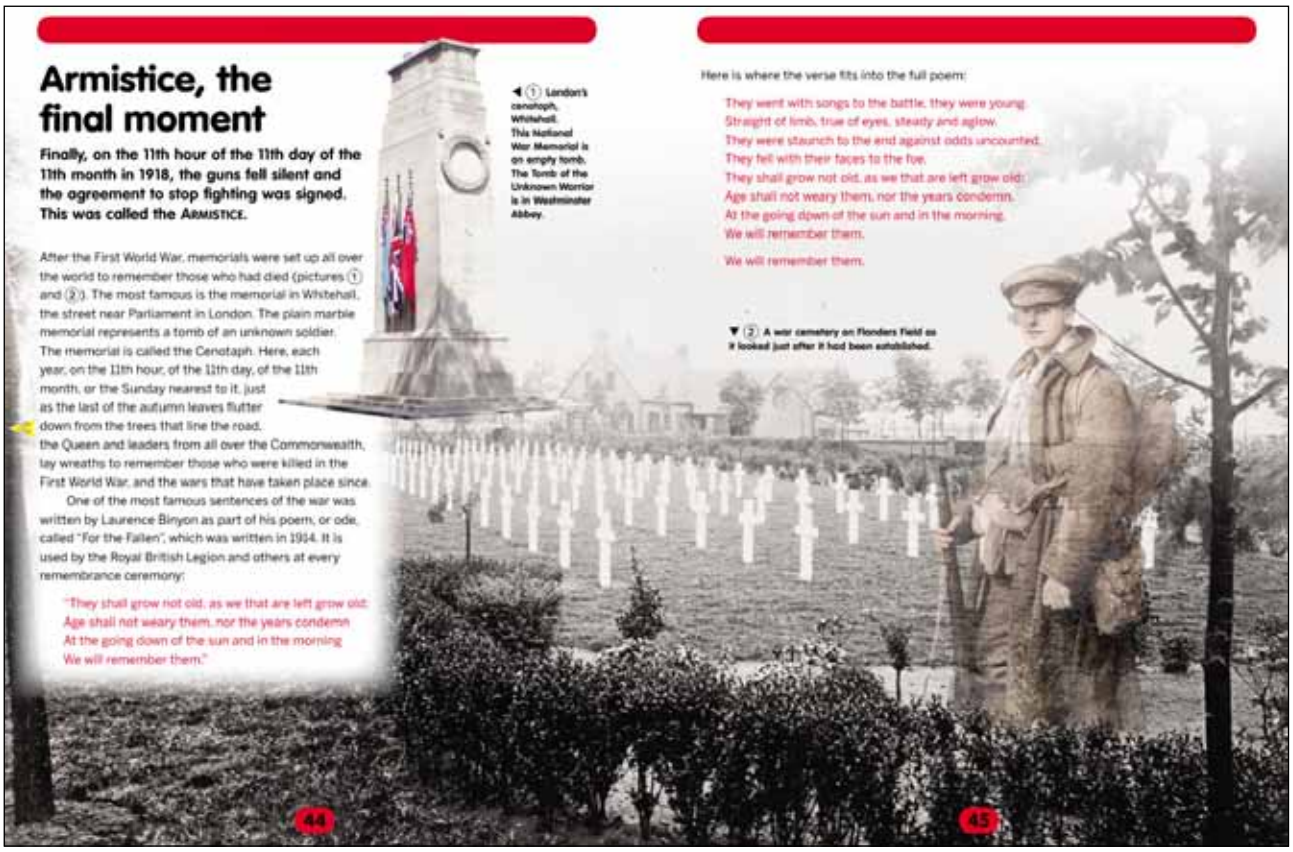
The Americans were eventually persuaded to be part of a joint force. It was after this that the allies made their first advances against Germany (picture 4).

The final push began on the 8th of August, 1918. They advanced 12 kilometres into German-held territory in just seven hours. Soon advances were being made everywhere simply because Germany was overwhelmed thanks to the help of the American troops. Advances were even made in Flanders for the first time.

In four weeks of fighting over 100,000 German prisoners were taken, 75,000 by the British. The Germans realised they could not hold out any longer. In September they began to look for a peace treaty. Turkey signed an armistice on the 30th of October, followed by Austria-Hungary on the 3rd of November. On the 11th of November, Germany signed an armistice and all fighting ceased at exactly 11am.

▼ (4) American troops throw hand grenades at a German position.

(America enters the war continued)



Armistice, the final moment

Finally, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, the guns fell silent and the agreement to stop fighting was signed. This was called the ARMISTICE.

After the First World War, memorials were set up all over the world to remember those who had died (pictures ① and ②). The most famous is the memorial in Whitehall, the street near Parliament in London. The plain marble memorial represents a tomb of an unknown soldier. The memorial is called the Cenotaph. Here, each year, on the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month, or the Sunday nearest to it, just as the last of the autumn leaves flutter down from the trees that line the road, the Queen and leaders from all over the Commonwealth, lay wreaths to remember those who were killed in the First World War, and the wars that have taken place since.

One of the most famous sentences of the war was written by Laurence Binyon as part of his poem, or ode, called "For the Fallen", which was written in 1914. It is used by the Royal British Legion and others at every remembrance ceremony:

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them."

◀ ① London's cenotaph, Whitehall. This National War Memorial is an empty tomb. The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior is in Westminster Abbey.

Here is where the verse fits into the full poem:

They went with songs to the battle, they were young
Straight of limb, true of eyes, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted.
They fell with their faces to the foe.
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

We will remember them.

▼ ② A war cemetery on Flanders Field as it looked just after it had been established.

44

45

And it all leads up to this: the idea of Remembrance. The slightly ghostly figure of the soldier with a field of grave markers says it all. We will remember them. It is, of course, just as important a concept today in a world filled with fractures and with armies still fighting to protect the welfare of those they serve.

Skills and comprehension

These pages are designed to draw out English skills.

These are the main skills being tested in all page spread skills sheets:

- Tell the author's main idea or argument in one sentence.
- What were the facts and details that support the author's main idea or agreement?
- What was fact and what was opinion?
- What was essential information and what was less important?
- Interpret the graphic features used in the text (charts, maps, illustrations, diagrams, timelines, tables).
- Use graphic organisers to compare, contrast and categorise ideas and information.
- What did the author do to make the material clear or interesting?

More advanced

Identify organisational structures used in text (compare/contrast, cause/effect/ chronological sequence).

C

6

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War pages 4–5

1. In the first paragraph the author could have said: "Every place in the country has a war memorial." Why did he describe it without the word memorial?

✎ .....

2. Why has the author used the word 'coffin' to describe the shape of some memorials?

✎ .....

3. In the second paragraph, the author writes: "If you go…." Why does he not say "Memorials are held on…"?

✎ .....

4. How does the author help you to understand the way the remembrance service is conducted?

✎ .....

5. Does the author help you to feel what it is like to be there? If so, can you say how he does this?

✎ .....

6. Against the text is a picture showing troops going into action in 1914. The author also uses the word 'terrible' in the last paragraph. Why, then, are the people in the picture cheering?

✎ .....

7. What is the purpose of putting the poppies over the picture of the men?

✎ .....

8. From the way the page is set out, do you think the author wants you to know that these men came back or were killed?

✎ .....

9. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

✎ .....

7

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 6–7

1. What do you think is meant by the word 'Great' in the Great War? Was it great fun, or does the word great mean something else? Which other main event can you think of that has the word Great in it? (hint: Fire of…)

✎ .....

2. What are allies?

✎ .....

3. The author has put a different picture on this page. How is this picture different from the one on pages 4-5?

✎ .....

4. Why put such different pictures on pages next to one another?

✎ .....

5. Look at the clothes on pages 4-5 and say how they differ from those on pages 6-7.

✎ .....

6. Who are civilians?

✎ .....

7. What is a 'concentration camp'?

✎ .....

8. The author has used the word 'ghastly' on page 7. Find and write down, other words that have the same kind of meaning.

✎ .....

9. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

8

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 8–9

1. What time does this spread refer to: before the war, during the war or after the war?

✎ .....

2. Which word is used to explain why the British were proud of the Battle of Trafalgar and the Battle of Waterloo?

✎ .....

3. This is a coronation, and it is happening in India, not London. Why do you think this was, and what does it tell us about an empire?

✎ .....

4. People used to say "Britannia rules the waves". What does that tell you about the British navy before the First World War?

✎ .....

5. Most countries had treaties with one another. What is a treaty?

✎ .....

6. On page 9, the author says (on the line above the heading 'Assassination')

"This gave the false impression that, if any problems arose, one king would talk to another and sort out the mess. People thought it would keep Europe a safer place. It did not. It had the opposite effect."

Is this fact or opinion?

✎ .....

7. If the author had not made that statement, do you think you would understand what had happened just as well? To find out, read the page, covering up that sentence.

✎ .....

8. Do you think history should be all about facts, or is it useful to have opinions, too?

✎ .....

9. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

✎ .....

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War pages 10–13

1. Why did Britain have a large navy?

✎ .....

2. What is a convoy? ✎ .....

3. The posters on this spread were a new kind of way of talking to people. Before this, adverts and posters had been full of detailed writing. How are these new styles of poster different?

✎ .....

4. Choose one poster as the most powerful and explain why it is so effective.

✎ .....

5. Why did the king not use the same kind of poster to ask people to join up?

✎ .....

6. In the king's letter he uses the word 'grave'. What does he mean by this word, a place where a coffin is laid or something else?

✎ .....

7. Can you think of other words that have more than one meaning?

✎ .....

8. Can you imagine yourself volunteering? Say why you would or would not.

✎ .....

9. Which poster or posters on pages 12–13 tells you that people from many parts of the empire joined up?

✎ .....

10. The bottom poster on page 13 shows an image of different peoples. They are caricatures. Where do you think the people at the top and bottom are supposed to come from?

11. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

C

10

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 14–15

1. What does the word 'pal' mean?

✎ .....

2. Is there a difference between 'pal' and 'chum'?

✎ .....

3. What words would we use today to mean 'pal' or 'chum'?

✎ .....

4. Look across the 2 pages and find every place where numbers are used. Write them down, whether they are written with numerals or with words. Why does the author use so many numbers on this spread?

✎ .....

5. What does VC mean?

✎ .....

6. Find a list of VCs and see how many of them were awarded in the First World War, and for what.

✎ .....

7. In the left column on page 15, the author uses the term 'loved ones'. Who is he referring to?

✎ .....

8. What is a hero? Would you say that the men described on page 15 were heroes? Why?

✎ .....

✎ .....

9. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War pages 16–17

1. In some places the word 'front' is used. What does it mean in this case?

✎ .....

2. The first heading says it is the 'start of modern warfare' Now look at the picture and say which parts belong to old warfare and which bits to new warfare. Do you think it was mostly old or mostly new at the start of the war?

✎ .....

3. The picture tells you a lot about what things were like. What kind of road surface is this? What would it be like if it rained?

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

4. Looking at the picture still, how fast do you think an army could advance, or retreat, for that matter?

✎ .....

✎ .....

5. The caption to the picture says 'distant railway stations'. Why were there no railway stations close to the battle?

✎ .....

✎ .....

6. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

12

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 18–19

1. What is common about the pictures shown on this page?

✎ .....

2. What was the Western Front?

✎ .....

3. Why does the author call the land a 'moonscape'?

✎ .....

4. Can you think of any other words to describe these pictures, besides moonscape? Write them down.

✎ .....

5. Describe what you can see in the top picture.

✎ .....

✎ .....

6. Before the war what kind of land was the top picture? City, meadow, forest, or something else?

✎ .....

7. In warfare, soldiers often refer to 'shells'. They don't mean things you find on a beach. What do they mean and why do you think they use the word?

✎ .....

8. In the bottom picture the buildings are mostly rubble, but the roads are clear. Do you think the shells from the guns missed the roads, or is there some other reason?

✎ .....

9. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

13

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 20–23

1. What is a trench? ✎ .....

2. In the first paragraph, the author uses the words 'dusk' and 'dawn'. Why does he not use a time of day?

✎ .....

3. On page 20 in the section called 'Going over the top', you will find the term 'opposing side'. Can you think of other words that mean the same thing?

✎ .....

4. Look at the main picture of the trench. By reading the page you should be able to work out what time of day the picture was taken. What time of day was it?

✎ .....

5. On the right you can see sandbags. What do you think sandbags were used for?

✎ .....

6. By now, you should know that conditions in winter were different to those in summer. What time of year was the picture taken?

✎ .....

7. The top pictures on page 21 show a rifle and a machine gun. These two weapons would be used for different purposes. When was each weapon used?

✎ .....

8. Look at the pictures again. Say which features you think suggest that the soldiers expected to stay in them for a long time.

✎ .....

9. At night men from each side were sent to listen on the enemy. What special skills would they have needed to do this job?

✎ .....

10. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

14

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 24–25

1. Many of the postcards were designed by the same man. What was his name?

✎ .....

2. What does the word 'sentimental' mean (page 25)

✎ .....

✎ .....

3. Do you think soldiers away from home still send the same kind of postcard? Would you send postcards like this?

✎ .....

✎ .....

4. What was a music hall? Why did people go to music halls and sing sentimental songs?

✎ .....

✎ .....

5. One of these famous postcards has the poem 'The Vacant Chair'. What was it about?

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

6. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

✎ .....

15

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 26–29

1. The Battle of the Somme is described as awful. What does awful mean?

✎ .....

2. Can you suggest other words that could be used instead of awful?

✎ .....

3. The writing talks about 'breaking through the German lines'. What does 'lines' mean?

✎ .....

4. The author is trying to tell you about what it was like by using adjectives. How many adjectives can you find on pages 26-29 that do that job? Write them all down.

✎ .....

5. Look at the main picture on pages 26-27. What is the soldier with the rifle doing?

✎ .....

6. Are the other people in the picture dead? How can you tell whether they are dead or not? If they are not dead, what are they doing?

✎ .....

7. Why is there only one soldier near the top of the trench?

✎ .....

8. On page 28, going over the top is described as 'almost suicide'. Is this what you would normally think of as suicide? Can you think of another word?

✎ .....

9. What new weapon was used in this battle? ✎ .....

10. On the top picture on page 29 you can see a large pond. Do you think that pond is natural, and if not, how was it made?

✎ .....

11. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War pages 30–31

1. What is a chemical?

✎ .....

2. Why is a gas likely to affect so many more people than shells or bullets?

✎ .....

3. Why is poison gas so nasty?

✎ .....

✎ .....

4. Gases often have the most effect when they mix with body liquids. They then turn into acids that burn the body. Why do you think so many people were blinded?

✎ .....

5. If gases landed on the skin, they caused blisters. Why didn't they do more harm on the skin?

✎ .....

6. If you wanted to protect people what piece of equipment did you need?

✎ .....

7. Chemicals can only be made harmless if they are made to mix with other chemicals. Where would you put such chemicals in a gas mask?

✎ .....

8. Why are the people in the picture on page 31 resting their hands on one-another's shoulders, and why are they in a long line?

✎ .....

9. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the page is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

17

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 32–33

1. What is a plane with two wings called? ✎ .....

2. From these pictures, how many people were usually in a plane?

✎ .....

3. How did they drop their bombs? ✎ .....

4. Where do you think the bombs were kept during the flight?

✎ .....

5. In the picture on page 32 you see a plane and a heavy gun. What were heavy guns used for, and would they have been of any use against a plane?

✎ .....

6. What were the number of French planes at the start of the war, and how many did they add during the war?

✎ .....

7. Look at the answer in question 6. Do you think aircraft were seen as a good idea?

✎ .....

8. What else could you use a plane for besides dropping bombs?

✎ .....

9. The other machine in the sky was the air balloon (airship). These were filled with hydrogen because hydrogen gas is lighter than air. Airships were enormous and could carry more bombs than a plane, But what was their big disadvantage?

✎ .....

10. There were some famous books written about the war. They were written as though they were adventure stories. The Biggles books were famous examples. Find out about, and read a part of one of the first Biggles books.

✎ .....

11. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

18

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 34–35

1. Who was Admiral Nelson and what was the Battle of Trafalgar?

✎ .....

✎ .....

2. What is meant by the term 'bottle up'?

✎ .....

3. How did the British set up a blockade?

✎ .....

4. The British broke the German code. What is the purpose of a secret code?

✎ .....

5. Can you make up a secret code?

✎ .....

✎ .....

6. Very few ships had radio, so how did they signal to one another?

✎ .....

7. Without radio, why did ships stay close together?

✎ .....

8. Would they have stayed close together (in a convoy) even if they had radio?

✎ .....

9. Why were submarines important?

✎ .....

10. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War pages 36–37

1. Why do you think the words 'Home Front' were used?

✎ .....

2. What is meant by the word 'dwindled'?

✎ .....

3. In the picture at the top of page 37, women are seen delivering milk to doorsteps. What are they actually doing?

✎ .....

4. Why are men making aircraft wings when so many others are on the Western Front? Find the single word in the caption that tells you.

✎ .....

5. What were some of the jobs women did before the war?

✎ .....

6. Women went back to many of their old jobs after the war, but which ones did many NOT go back to?

✎ .....

7. War was not the time for suffragettes, but what were suffragettes?

✎ .....

8. The child in the big picture has a toy. What is it and how did it work?

✎ .....

9. How did people get their food at the time of the First World War? The big picture shows you. How is that different from today?

✎ .....

10. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

20

Name:..... **Form:**.....

First World War pages 38–39

1. Why was the First World War called a WORLD war?

✎ .....

2. Which two armies fought on the Eastern Front?

✎ .....

3. The collapse of Turkey in the First World War led to the founding of a new state. What was that new state called?

✎ .....

4. What was an old name for Iraq?

✎ .....

5. What can you find out about Lawrence of Arabia?

✎ .....

6. Under the heading Turkey, the first sentence contains the word 'campaign'. What is a campaign?

✎ .....

7. What were the 'allies'?

✎ .....

8. A very famous event took place in Russia in 1917. It caused the Russians to stop fighting. What was that event?

✎ .....

9. The Middle East had two great treasures that both sides wanted. What were they?

✎ .....

10. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War pages 40–43

1. Which year did the United States enter the war?

✎ .....

2. How many years had the British been fighting before America entered the war?

✎ .....

3. Why did America find it so hard to take sides in the war?

✎ .....

4. What happened to the Lusitania?

✎ .....

5. What is the message in the propaganda poster in picture 1?

✎ .....

6. Why did the telegram from Germany to Mexico cause America to enter the war?

✎ .....

✎ .....

7. Why did the arrival of lots of Americans help to end the war?

✎ .....

✎ .....

8. On which date did Germany sign an armistice?

✎ .....

9. On page 43 it says "The final push began…" What is a push?

✎ .....

10. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

22

Name:..... Form:.....

First World War pages 44–45

1. What is the difference between an armistice and the end of a war?

✎ .....

2. Why has the book designer shown a partly transparent picture of a soldier against a war cemetery?

✎ .....

3. Why do you think the generals chose the time and date they did for the armistice?

✎ .....

4. What is the British Legion?

✎ .....

5. The tomb of the unknown soldier and the place where the queen and other people hold the remembrance service are not in the same place. Where is each one?

✎ .....

6. Why does the cenotaph say "To the glorious dead"?

✎ .....

7. In the poem the last sentence is repeated. Why is it repeated, with a pause between the lines?

✎ .....

8. The poem says "They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old" Why is that?

✎ .....

9. From the look on the soldier's face, can you guess whether this picture was taken in the early stages of the war, or sometime later?

✎ .....

10. In a single sentence, say what the main idea of the section is.

✎ .....

✎ .....

