



HOUSE OF LORDS

Library Note

Britain and the First World War: Parliament, Empire and Commemoration

The centenary of the start of the First World War will be marked in 2014. Britain entered the war in August 1914 and remained so until November 1918.

This Library Note provides background reading on several aspects of the First World War. It discusses the activity of the British Parliament during the war: briefly describing a number of debates and statements which took place in August 1914 regarding the outbreak of war and Britain's entry into the conflict; and summarising a small selection of legislation that was enacted by Parliament during the war. The Note then looks at a number of countries from the British Empire and the British Dominions who sent troops overseas to fight in the war. Finally, it provides information on the British Government's programme to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First World War.

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1. Introduction

The centenary of the start of the First World War will be marked in 2014. Britain entered the war in August 1914 and remained so until November 1918.

This Library Note considers three aspects of the First World War. The following section discusses the activity of the British Parliament during the war, briefly describing ministerial statements and debates which took place in August 1914 regarding the outbreak of war and Britain's entry into the conflict. It then summarises a small selection of legislation that was enacted by Parliament during the First World War. The reader should note that the political party designations which have been used in this section are those which have been adopted in a number of recent studies and secondary sources.¹ The next section looks at several countries from the British Empire and the British Dominions who sent troops overseas to fight in the war. This section focuses on several key battles that the troops fought in, and includes estimates on the number of men deployed from each of these countries. The final section provides a short history of memorials and commemorations that were established in Britain and the British Empire during and shortly after the war. It then discusses the British Government's programme to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First World War. The Note also presents a series of tables on the number of soldiers who died in the First World War, as well as a Bibliography of books on various subject areas on the war.

2. Parliament

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, approximately two percent of the population was eligible to vote in parliamentary elections. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, following the Great Reform Act of 1832, there were a number of changes to the franchise, including the Reform Act of 1884, which extended the franchise to around 60 percent of all adult males.² One year later the constituency boundaries were changed, with the result that there was only one MP to any given constituency.

In the 1910 parliamentary elections, the Conservative and Liberal parties each won 272 seats, the Irish Nationalist party won 84, and the Labour party won 42 seats.³ At the by-elections which took place up until the outbreak of the war, the Liberals lost eleven seats and Labour lost five. These were all won by the Conservative party. The ruling Liberal party, and the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, remained in office due to the support of the two minority parties.⁴

Under Asquith's Government, the Parliament Act 1911 was passed, which removed from the House of Lords the power to veto a bill, except one which would extend the lifetime of a Parliament. Henceforth, the Lords could only delay legislation for a maximum of three parliamentary sessions.⁵ The act also introduced payment to MPs and reduced the length of

¹ For instance, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* refers to Bonar Law as a Conservative and not a Unionist MP, and as the Conservative Party Leader at the outbreak of the war in 1914: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, '[Andrew Bonar Law](#)', accessed 14 February 2014.

² *Cambridge History of the First World War*, 2014, vol II, pp 55–6. Further information on the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867/8 and 1884 can be found in the House of Commons Library Research Paper, '[The History of Parliamentary Franchise](#)', 1 March 2013, RP 13/14.

³ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 56.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Further information on the Parliament Acts can be found in the House of Commons Library Standard Note, '[The Parliament Acts](#)', 28 June 2012, SN00675.

parliamentary sessions from seven to five years. However, the House of Commons elected in 1910 remained for eight years, as no elections took place during the war.⁶

At the outbreak of the war, Herbert Asquith's Government remained in power.

2.1 Entry into War

On 3 August 1914, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, made a statement to the House of Commons on the situation in Europe. He announced that Russia and Germany had declared war on each other, and because of France's "definite alliance with Russia", they would also be involved in the conflict.⁷ He stated that while Britain had a "long standing friendship with France", he argued that as to "how far that entails an obligation let everyman look into his own heart".⁸ He insisted that he did "not wish to urge upon anyone else more than their feelings dictate as to what they should feel about the obligation".

Grey insisted that the more serious issue was the question of the neutrality of Belgium.⁹ He notified the House that Germany had given Belgium an ultimatum, the "object of which was to offer Belgium friendly relations with Germany on condition that she would facilitate the passage of German troops through Belgium".¹⁰ Grey stressed the "honour and interest" in sustaining the Treaty of 1839, and the subsequent declaration by Prince Bismarck in 1870,¹¹ which stated that the German Confederation and its allies would respect the neutrality of Belgium.¹² He argued therefore that Britain could not issue a "proclamation of unconditional neutrality".¹³ He concluded that:

We are now face to face with a situation and all the consequences which it may yet have to unfold. We believe we shall have the support of the House at large in proceeding to whatever the consequences may be and whatever measures may be forced upon us by the development of facts or action taken by others. I believe the country, so quickly has the situation been forced upon it, has not had time to realise the issue.¹⁴

A short debate followed the statement in which Bonar Law, Leader of the Conservative party, expressed support for the action the Government had taken, stating that:

I do not believe there is a single Member of this House who doubts that, not only the right hon Gentleman himself, but the Government which he represents, have done everything in their power up to the last moment to preserve peace, and I think we may be sure that, if any other course is taken, it is because it is forced upon them, and that they have absolutely no alternative.¹⁵

⁶ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 56.

⁷ *HC Hansard*, 3 August 1914, [cols 1809–15](#).

⁸ *ibid*, [col 1815](#).

⁹ *ibid*, [col 1818](#).

¹⁰ *ibid*, [col 1821](#).

¹¹ Under the Treaty of London 1839, the powers of Europe recognised and guaranteed the independence of Belgium, shortly after the new Kingdom was created. In 1870, both France and Prussia had honoured this undertaking: David Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, 2004, p 32.

¹² *HC Hansard*, 3 August 1914, [cols 1818–20](#).

¹³ *ibid*, [col 1825](#).

¹⁴ *ibid*, [col 1826](#).

¹⁵ *ibid*, [col 1827](#).

He gave the Government assurance, on behalf of the Conservative party, that “in whatever steps they think necessary to take for the honour and security of this country, they can rely on the unhesitating support of the Opposition”.¹⁶

However, Ramsay McDonald, Leader of the Parliamentary Labour party, stated that he had not been convinced that the country was in danger and argued that:

If the right hon Gentleman could come to us and tell us that a small European nationality like Belgium is in danger, and could assure us he is going to confine the conflict to that question, then we would support him. What is the use of talking about coming to the aid of Belgium, when, as a matter of fact, you are engaging in a whole European war which is not going to leave the map of Europe in the position it is in now.¹⁷

The House did not vote following the debate on 3 August, and did not vote at a later date on the issue of entry into the war. However, Britain was the only power to debate the matter in Parliament.¹⁸

On 4 August 1914, the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, informed the House of Commons that the Government had:

[...] repeated the request we made last week to the German Government, that they should give us the same assurance in regard to Belgian neutrality as was given to us and to Belgium by France last week. We have asked that a reply to that request, and a satisfactory answer to the telegram of this morning—which I have read to the House—should be given before midnight.¹⁹

On 5 August 1914, the Prime Minister announced that “since eleven o’clock last night a state of war has existed between Germany and ourselves”.²⁰

Following the Prime Minister’s statement in the House of Commons, the situation in Europe was debated in the House of Lords. The Lord Privy Seal and Secretary of State for India, the Marquess of Crewe, informed the House that during the previous few days the Government had been in talks with representatives of finance and commerce in the country, who had shown a “universal desire” to work together to “meet the crisis which has arisen, in the interests of the country at large”.²¹ The Marquess of Lansdowne expressed support for the steps the Government had taken to ensure that there should be minimum disruption to business,²² and the Archbishop of Canterbury made an appeal to the “public at large to co-operate in this

¹⁶ *ibid*, [col 1828](#).

¹⁷ *ibid*, [col 1830](#).

¹⁸ Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, p 35.

¹⁹ *HC Hansard*, 4 August 1914, [col 1927](#).

²⁰ *HC Hansard*, 5 August 1914, [col 1963](#).

²¹ *HL Hansard*, 5 August 1914, [col 375](#).

²² *ibid*, [cols 380–1](#).

particular matter”. Lord St Davids further suggested that a leaflet should be published and distributed which set out:

[...] in very short sentences, what I would call “the duty of a citizen” in the matter. I mean such sentences as not to hoard food, not to crowd the main thoroughfares, not to hoard gold.²³

On 6 August 1914, the Prime Minister moved a motion in the House of Commons for a vote of credit of £100,000,000. Speaking to the motion, Mr Asquith argued that all the resources of the United Kingdom and of the Empire should be “thrown into the scale”, and explained that the money would not only be applied to naval and military operations, which was usually the case when a vote of credit had been agreed to, but also to “assist the food supplies, promote the continuance of trade, industry, business, and communications [...] and generally for all expenses arising out of the existence of war”.²⁴

The motion was agreed to without division.

On 28 August 1914, representatives from the Liberal, Conservative and Labour parties met to agree an ‘electoral truce’ to avoid contests at by-elections until January 1915 or the end of the war, whichever was sooner.²⁵ A Parliamentary Recruiting Committee was also formed to facilitate joint action by the parties to encourage volunteers to join the armed forces.²⁶ However, Ramsay MacDonald resigned as party leader because he could not endorse the Government’s policy.

2.2 Wartime Legislation

During the war, Parliament continued to sit without interruption.²⁷ However, the number of times legislation was voted on was less than prior to the war, because the Government introduced fewer bills. From autumn 1914, ‘Private Member Days’ were scrapped, but the number of questions directed at the Government increased.²⁸

Parliament passed a number of pieces of legislation between 1914 and 1918 which introduced measures for the conduct of the war, both at home and on the war front. This section will only focus on a selection, and will summarise briefly the progress of each bill through Parliament and some of the main issues that were discussed.

Alien Restriction Act and Defence of the Realm Acts

Within a few days of Britain’s entry into the war, two pieces of emergency legislation had been introduced in Parliament.

On 5 August 1914, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Reginald McKenna, introduced in the House of Commons the Alien Restriction Bill to enable “His Majesty in time of war or imminent national danger or great emergency by Order in Council to impose restrictions on Aliens, and make such provisions as may be necessary or expedient for carrying

²³ *ibid*, [col 383](#).

²⁴ *HC Hansard*, 6 August, [cols 2080–1](#).

²⁵ David Powell, *British Politics, 1910–35: The Crisis of the Party System*, 2004, p 62.

²⁶ *ibid*, p 60.

²⁷ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 58.

²⁸ *ibid*; and David Butler and Anne Sloman, *British Political Facts 1900–1979*, 1980, p 169.

such restrictions into effect”.²⁹ He stated that the main object of the Bill was the removal or detention of spies. He further informed the House that within the previous twenty-four hours there had been “no fewer than twenty-one spies, or suspected spies” arrested in the country.³⁰ Although some concern was expressed about the powers the Bill granted the Home Secretary,³¹ it completed all of its stages in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and received Royal Assent, on 5 August 1914.

The Alien Restriction Act 1914 required all foreign nationals to register with the police, enabled their deportation, and restricted where they could live.

Two days later, on 7 August 1914, Mr McKenna introduced the Defence of the Realm Bill, which made provision for the Government, during the continuance of the war, to issue regulations as to the powers and duties of the Admiralty, the Army Council, members of the Forces and other delegated persons for securing the public safety and defence of the Realm. The Bill passed through both Houses without amendment, and received Royal Assent on 8 August 1914. This Act was shortly afterwards amended by a second Defence of the Realm Act, which received Royal Assent on 28 August 1914, and there were amendments and revisions to both Acts in the Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act of 27 November 1914. This was further modified by Acts of 1915 and 1916.

Trial by court-martial for civilians was possible under the original DORA; the consolidation Act of November 1914 authorised the death penalty in the case of offences committed with the intention of assisting the enemy; and placed at the Admiralty’s and the Army’s disposal the output of a factory or workshop which produced arms, ammunition or warlike stores and equipment, when required.³²

However, opposition in the House of Lords resulted in the Defence of the Realm (Amendment) Act in March 1915, which largely restored the right of trial by jury. Nevertheless, it also included provisions which meant that this could be suspended in the case of an invasion or other military emergency.³³ In the later stages of the war there were a number of orders and regulations from various ministries, which covered areas such as lighting, early closing of shops and food control.

Munitions of War Act 1915

In 1915, legislation was introduced in Parliament to enable the Government to maximise the supply of munitions and prohibit strike action in the munitions industry.

Without compulsory national service, the United Kingdom held no combined records of servicemen and had no administration capable of directing the workforce as a whole.³⁴ Furthermore, as the Government appealed for volunteer recruits to increase the size of the army, it had a reduced authority over directing workers into war factories. The Government also had to negotiate with the trade unions, which had 2.2 million members in 1913, and had a number of rules of trade which they imposed, particularly in respect to worker hierarchy.³⁵

²⁹ HC *Hansard*, 5 August 1914, [col 1986](#).

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *ibid.*, [col 1990](#).

³² Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge*, 2006, p 77; and HC *Hansard*, 25 November 1914, [col 1274](#).

³³ Marwick, *The Deluge*, p 77.

³⁴ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 329.

³⁵ *ibid.*

In May 1915, following concerns over munitions and armament shortages, which had been voiced both by the army and a number of members in Parliament,³⁶ the Ministry of Munitions, headed by Lloyd George, was created. On 23 June 1915, Lloyd George introduced the Munitions of War Bill in the House of Commons.

The first part of the Bill was concerned with the avoidance of industry stoppages: strikes and lockouts in all industries covered by the Bill were to be prohibited, and all labour differences were, if the Board of Trade decided, to be resolved by compulsory arbitration. The second part of the Bill made provisions for the Ministry of Munitions to take direct control of certain factories concerned in war production.³⁷

During the debate at second reading on 28 June 1915, a number of members voiced their support for the Bill. However, they also expressed their concern at the length of time it had taken for the Government to respond to the issue of munitions shortages. Robert McNeill (Conservative MP for St Augustine's) stated that there had been "a lack of appreciation of all that was required",³⁸ and Sir Edwin Cornwall (Liberal MP for Bethnal Green) argued that after the first month of war "the country [had been] lulled into a sense of false security".³⁹ He stressed that "every Member of this House feels, that behind him in his constituency is the driving force that we do not mind what the Government does, so long as it has ample power, it uses its power and it sets about doing everything it can do to win the war".

John Hodge (Labour MP for Gorton) also expressed support for the Bill. However, he raised questions about the provisions concerning the rights of workers. He argued that trade unions and workers had been "subjected to a great deal of [...] captious criticism", and insisted that "if the workers of this country had had the seriousness of the position placed before them months ago we should not have been confronted with our present difficulties".⁴⁰ He further stated that:

The right hon Gentleman has a free hand here, and will take the means to secure the factories and the tools and appliances that he needs. He will get the advantage of this tremendous upheaval which is going to sweep many to his works for a patriotic task. He will get all these things; but there will be the human factor to be dealt with.⁴¹

Alexander Wilkie (Labour MP for Dundee) also insisted that the conditions set out for the workforce were fair. He stated that:

The clauses of this Bill should apply equally to the employers and the workers [...] By this Bill, a man at present on war work is not allowed to leave it, but there is nothing in the Bill to provide that where a man happens to think a little bit too loud for his foreman he cannot be discharged. We want the conditions to be made equal. We do not want a man to be any more a victim than a foreman. We want equal justice.

³⁶ The Unionist Business Committee, constituted in January 1915 by the Conservative party, and claimed to have the support of 40 MPs, threatened to openly challenge the truce by insisting on a parliamentary debate on the issue: Alan Simmonds, *Britain and World War One*, 2012, p 101; and *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 330.

³⁷ Marwick, *The Deluge*, p 100.

³⁸ HC *Hansard*, 28 June 1915, [col 1487](#).

³⁹ *ibid*, [col 1525](#).

⁴⁰ *ibid*, [cols 1515–9](#).

⁴¹ *ibid*, [col 1522](#).

[...] We all admit that this Bill is drastic, and it is bound to be drastic because we are at war. All we desire is that where a man feels that he has been unjustly treated he will have this appeal to the court and get fair play.⁴²

Philip Snowden (Labour MP for Blackburn) argued that the Government had not made a case for the Bill, and expressed concern that the trade unionists could be potentially “prejudicing their position after the war”.⁴³

Responding for the Government, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Sir John Simon, stated that:

The object of this Bill is not to secure compulsory powers. The object of the Bill is rather to take advantage of the voluntary spirit of our people and organise it in a way which will produce the greatest quantity of munitions in the shortest possible time.

[...] This is not a Bill for compulsory arbitration over the whole field of labour. It is limited, and deliberately limited, to that particular class of factory and of work which is directly and immediately connected with the production of the munitions of war.⁴⁴

The Bill reached its committee stage on 1 July 1915, and completed its final stages on the same day. A number of Government amendments were made and several other amendments were accepted by the Government.

On 2 July 1915, the Bill received its second reading in the House of Lords. While a number of Members expressed support for the Bill, several of the issues which had been raised in the House of Commons were also discussed in the Lords. Viscount Bryce stated that he appreciated the “extreme importance of taking such measures”, but he suggested that the “only regret is that the country was not sooner informed of the very serious position in which we find we stand”.⁴⁵ Lord Loreburn also suggested that had the “condition of things which has been disclosed quite recently with regard to munitions” been disclosed sooner, “every defect or shortcoming would have been rectified long ago”.⁴⁶

The Bill completed its remaining stages on 2 July, and received Royal Assent on 3 July 1915.

The Munitions Act 1915 defined “controlled” industrial establishments, and imposed a six month-delay before a worker could be taken on if they had changed employment without a leaving certificate.⁴⁷ Special tribunals were instituted to settle refusals of leaving certificates and to sanction workers.

Military Service Act January 1916 and May 1916

In January 1916, Parliament enacted the Military Service Act which imposed conscription on all single men, with exceptions for those in essential war time employment, those deemed medically unfit, religious ministers and conscientious objectors. The Act was modified by subsequent legislation throughout the war, including the Military Service Act of May 1916,

⁴² *ibid*, [cols 1587–8](#).

⁴³ *ibid*, [cols 1556–7](#).

⁴⁴ *ibid*, [cols 1540–1](#).

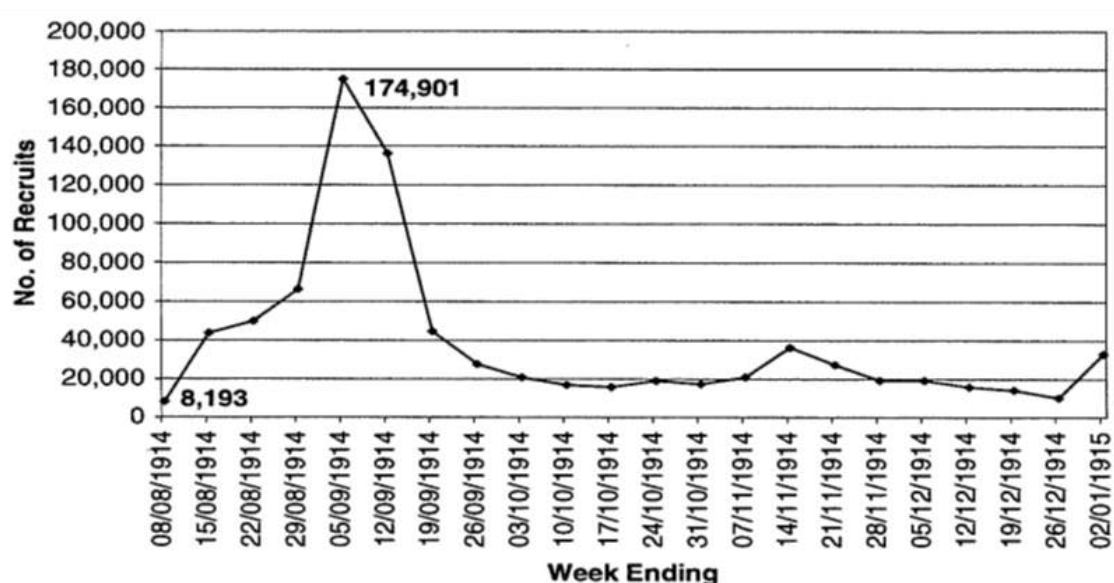
⁴⁵ HL *Hansard*, 2 July 1915, [col 224](#).

⁴⁶ *ibid*, [col 226](#).

⁴⁷ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 330.

which extended conscription to married men, and the Military Service Act of April 1918, which raised the conscription age limit to 51, and was for the first time extended to Ireland. The following section will focus on the Military Service Acts of January and May 1916.

In 1915, in addition to a shortage of munitions, there were also signs that insufficient numbers of men were volunteering to serve in the army.⁴⁸ In 1914, the British army, not including reservists, consisted of only 247,432 officers and men, about one-third of whom were in India.⁴⁹ Between August 1914 and January 1915, the highest monthly rate of enlistment occurred in September 1914. By the end of 1915, more than 2.5 million men had joined up; 32 percent of them volunteered in 1914 and 16 percent in September. The highest peak for recruiting in Britain during the entire war was the week ending 5 September 1914.⁵⁰ Figure 1 below illustrates the number of recruits who enlisted per week to the regular army between the weeks ending 8 August 1914 and 2 January 1915.⁵¹



In response, the Government implemented a number of measures in 1915 which were intended to organise the recruitment of men through the volunteer system.⁵² In July 1915, Parliament passed the National Registration Act which established a record of all men and women between the ages of 15 and 65. The intention of the Act was to centralise a number of schemes then in force, and resolve the opposing needs of the home front and war front.⁵³ In October 1915, a scheme led by Lord Derby invited men to attest their willingness to serve. Men could either enrol into the army immediately, which produced 215,000 soldiers, or promise to respond to the call as soon as it was demanded of them.⁵⁴ However, a pledge was made that no married men were to be considered until there were no longer any unmarried men available.⁵⁵ Every man was to attest, but those who were found to have good national or personal reasons were given exemptions. It was for the purpose of determining these exemptions that tribunals were established throughout the country, with a central tribunal under Lord Sydenham in

⁴⁸ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 330; and Marwick, *The Deluge*, p 116.

⁴⁹ Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, 2012, p 143.

⁵⁰ National Archives, CAB 21/107, 13 April 1916; and Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p 144.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 330.

⁵³ Marwick, *The Deluge*, p 101.

⁵⁴ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol II, p 330.

⁵⁵ Marwick, *The Deluge*, p 117.

London.⁵⁶ Out of 5 million men who were not enrolled, 1.2 million worked in protected businesses.⁵⁷

On 4 January 1916, Lord Derby published the White Paper, *Report of Recruiting*, which announced that of 2,179,231 single men shown by the National Register to be of military age, only 1,150,000 had attested, and only 1,679,263 out of 2,832,210 married men had. He concluded that:

[...] it will not be possible to hold married men to their attestation unless and until the service of single men have been obtained by other means, the present system having failed to bring them to the colours.⁵⁸

On 5 January 1916, the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, moved a motion for leave to introduce “a Bill to make provision with respect to Military Service in connection with the present war”.⁵⁹ The debate on the motion took place over two days.

Opening the debate, he acknowledged that there had been “considerable controversy in the early autumn of last year as to whether we could best do our duty in the war by persevering with our Voluntary System”, and stated that the Bill was the “the redemption of a promise publicly given by me in this House in the early days of Lord Derby’s campaign” that married men would not be called to service until “single men of military age who have no ground whatever for exemption or excuse [...] shall be deemed to have done what everyone agrees is their duty to the State in times like these to do, and be treated as though they had attested or enlisted”.⁶⁰ He confirmed that the Bill was confined exclusively to those who were concerned with, or affected by, Lord Derby’s scheme. He stated that the Bill applied to:

[...] to all male British subjects who, on the 15 August 1915—Lord Derby’s date—had attained eighteen years and not attained forty-one years of age, and who at that date were unmarried or widowers without children dependent upon them. Such persons, and such persons only, subject to the exceptions and exemptions which I will enumerate, will be deemed to have been duly enlisted for the period of the war as from the Appointed Day.⁶¹

Support for the Bill was expressed by a number of Members. Thomas Hickman (Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South) stated that he could not see how the House could “ask the Prime Minister or the Government to go back on the pledge which has been given to these married men”, and argued that this was the “first attempt we have had since the war began, to establish a reasonable business-like system for keeping the Army at its proper strength”.⁶² George Barnes (Labour MP for Glasgow Blackfriars and Hutchesontown) acknowledged that

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *The Cambridge History of the World War*, vol II, p 330.

⁵⁸ Earl of Derby Director-General of Recruiting, *Report on Recruiting*, January 1916, Cd 8149, pp 5–7.

⁵⁹ HC *Hansard*, 5 January 1916, [col 1133](#). In the House of Commons, in the early twentieth century, a Member could either present a bill or move for leave to bring in a bill, but in either case due notice would have to be given. In making a motion for leave to bring in a bill, the Member could explain the object of the bill, and give reason for its introduction. When an important measure was to be offered by a Minister or other Member, this opportunity was frequently taken for a full exposition of its character and objects. If the motion was agreed to, the bill was ordered to be prepared and brought in: Erskine May, *A Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, 1906, pp 461–2.

⁶⁰ HC *Hansard*, 5 January 1916, [cols 950–4](#).

⁶¹ *ibid.*, [cols 954–5](#).

⁶² HC *Hansard*, 6 January 1916, [col 1194](#).

there was strong opposition in his constituency, but he stated that he would vote in favour of the Bill because it was “necessary to apply some little pressure to bear upon the young unmarried men”, while First Lord of the Admiralty, Arthur Balfour, insisted that “this is a Bill for the occasion; it is an occasional Bill; it is a Bill for this war”. He further stated that:

It is the essence of such a Bill that it should raise as few difficult questions as it can raise, and that it should be so framed as not to deal with great controversies on internal politics, that it should indulge in as few elaborate provisions as need be, but that it should be as rapid as possible in its passage through this House, and as easy as possible in its operation in the country after it passes through this House.⁶³

However, Sir John Simon (Liberal MP for Walthamstow), who was the only cabinet minister to resign in response to the introduction of the Bill,⁶⁴ argued that the Bill should be “resisted”, because “the figure that was to be regarded to see whether it was negligible was to be a figure arrived at after claims had been investigated, and they have never been investigated”.⁶⁵ He suggested that “at this moment nobody can say how many young men remain who could perfectly be spared and who are hanging back without excuse”. John Hodge (Labour MP for Gorton) also argued that there was insufficient evidence to show that the voluntary system had failed.⁶⁶

A division followed the debate on the motion to introduce a Bill to make provision with respect to Military Service. The motion was agreed to by 403 votes to 105, and the Bill received its first reading.⁶⁷

The debate at second reading also took place over two days, and occurred on 11 and 12 January 1916. Opening the debate, William Anderson (Labour MP for Sheffield Attercliffe) spoke to his amendment which would have delayed the motion for the Bill to receive a second reading by three months. He stated that it could not be “claimed that there is general consent in this House, and still less can it be claimed that there is general consent in the country”.⁶⁸ Richard Lamerbert (Liberal MP for Cricklade) seconded the amendment and stated that he had a number of letters from his constituency, private letters and letters “from bodies of sufficient numerical strength to convince me that it is quite impossible to say there is anything in the nature of general consent to a bill of this character”.⁶⁹

Responding for the Government, the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, argued that unless Parliament passed the Bill “to obtain those men” needed, the Government could not “do our part in the prosecution of this war”.⁷⁰

Following the debate, the motion for second reading was pressed to a division and was agreed to by 431 to 39 votes.⁷¹

⁶³ *ibid*, [cols 1242–3](#).

⁶⁴ Marwick, *Deluge*, p118.

⁶⁵ *HC Hansard*, 5 January 1916, [cols 962–6](#).

⁶⁶ *ibid*, [cols 978–81](#).

⁶⁷ *HC Hansard*, 6 January 1916, [col 1252](#).

⁶⁸ *HC Hansard*, 11 January 1916, [col 1458](#).

⁶⁹ *ibid*, [col 1468](#).

⁷⁰ *HC Hansard*, 12 January 1916, [col 1660](#).

⁷¹ *ibid*, [col 1736](#).

The committee stage of the Bill took place on 17, 18 and 19 January 1916. A number of opposition amendments were tabled, none of which were successful, including an effort to raise the age that an individual had to enlist from 18 to 21, and to lower the upper age bracket for conscription from 41 to 30. Robert Outhwaite (Liberal MP for Hanley) also moved to a division an amendment which would have required an individual to make a declaration on oath of conscientious objection to military service before two justices, rather than to a tribunal. Outhwaite stated that he “fear[ed] that the tribunals” which were to be set up to hear cases for exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection would be “prejudicial ones”.⁷² The amendment was defeated by 287 votes to 37.⁷³

During its passage through the House of Commons, 27 Liberal and nine Labour MPs consistently voted against the Bill.⁷⁴

The Bill received its second reading in the House of Lords on 25 January 1916, and reached its committee stage on 26 January. During the committee stage, one of the issues the Members discussed was the provisions relating to exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection. The Earl of Malmsbury expressed regret that the measure had been inserted in the Bill, and stated that he “consider[ed] that any man who has a conscientious objection to taking up arms for his country is sailing dangerously near the very ugly word ‘traitor’”.⁷⁵ However, Lord Courtney of Penwith suggested that the “difficulties involved in the existence of the conscientious objector have been painfully underrated”.⁷⁶ Lord Courtney subsequently moved an amendment which would have redefined exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection from an objection to undertake combat service, to an objection to undertake “any service or engage in any action in support of the war”.⁷⁷ Responding for the Government, the Marquess of Lansdowne argued that the wording “went a great deal too far”, and the amendment was negatived.⁷⁸

The Bill received its third reading on 26 January and was given Royal Assent on 27 January 1916.

The Military Service Act of January 1916 made provision for an individual to seek exemption from enlistment by appearing before the Local Military Service Tribunal. While not convened as a court of law, the tribunals were still subject to strict regulation, and all hearings were held in public. Applicants, if successful, would be granted an exemption certificate, which could be either absolute or conditional.⁷⁹

On 3 May 1916, the Prime Minister introduced another Military Service Bill in order to extend “compulsory obligation to all male British subjects in Great Britain, married as well as single, between the ages of eighteen and forty-one”.⁸⁰

⁷² HC *Hansard*, 19 January 1916, cols 463–4.

⁷³ *ibid.*, col 470.

⁷⁴ John Tuner, *British Politics and the Great War: Coalition and Conflict 1915–1918*, 1992, p 76; and Powell, *British Politics, 1910–35: The Crisis of the Party System*, p 69.

⁷⁵ HL *Hansard*, 26 January 1916, [col 1047](#).

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, [col 1055](#).

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, [col 1067](#).

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, [col 1069](#).

⁷⁹ Simmonds, *Britain and World War One*, p 54.

⁸⁰ HC *Hansard*, 3 May 1916, [col 41](#).

The Bill received its second reading on 4 May 1916. Opening the debate, Richard Holt (Liberal MP for Hexham) moved an amendment which would have delayed the motion for second reading for six months. Holt stated that the “first Bill [was] the foundation of the second Bill, and the second Bill is simply by reference to the first”.⁸¹ He also expressed concern that the provisions of the Bill would exacerbate existing industrial shortages of labour, and that this would have adverse financial implications.⁸²

Hastings Lees-Smith (Liberal MP for Northampton) also questioned whether the Bill was:

[...] imperilling the factors which this country alone can provide, and on which in a war of endurance the whole allied combination will become dependent upon us, in order to give a comparatively slight increase of numbers to the military role in which we are no more essential than the others of the Allies.⁸³

However, the Minister of Munitions, Lloyd George, responded that there had been a “demand from those responsible for advising us about the conduct of the War that it is essential that we should call up every available man and make him ready to go into the field”.⁸⁴

Following the debate there was a division on the motion that the Bill should receive a second reading. The motion was agreed to by 328 votes to 36.⁸⁵

A number of opposition amendments were moved at the committee and report stage. These included: an amendment which would have raised the age an individual had to enlist from 18 to 19; and a new clause, moved by Thomas Harvey (MP for Leeds West), which would have made provision for an individual who had failed to secure exemption on the ground of conscientious objection, had refused to obey an order on those grounds and had subsequently faced a court-martial as a result, to be able to refer the case to a civil court. However, the opposition amendments were unsuccessful.

The Bill received its third reading on 16 May 1916, and was introduced in the House of Lords on 17 May 1916. Opening the debate at second reading on 18 May, Lord Sandhurst stated that he was generally opposed to National Service.⁸⁶ However, he argued that the circumstances, owing to the war, were “entirely changed”, and stated that:

If the Prime Minister of a great party, whichever it might be, came to Parliament and on the responsibility of the Government suggested such a course, I could not conceive that it would be the duty of anybody but, waiving aside his previous convictions, to give the proposal his whole hearted and unstinted support.⁸⁷

He further argued that the “Bill having passed the House of Commons by the large majorities that we remember, [...] shows to my mind that it has at its back the support of the vast majority of our countrymen”.⁸⁸

⁸¹ HC *Hansard*, 4 May 1916, [col 153](#).

⁸² *ibid*, [cols 146–8](#).

⁸³ *ibid*, [col 155](#).

⁸⁴ *ibid*, [col 177](#).

⁸⁵ *ibid*, [col 266](#).

⁸⁶ HL *Hansard*, 18 May 1916, [col 1071](#).

⁸⁷ *ibid*, [cols 1071–2](#).

⁸⁸ *ibid*, [col 1078](#).

The Marquis of Salisbury concurred that the “vast mass of the people of this country [were] unanimous in supporting the principle of this Bill”, and stated that he desired to co-operate with the Government.⁸⁹ However, he argued that a measure was needed to enable a conscientious objector to appeal the decision of an Appeals Tribunal:

I am told it is, that certain Appeal Tribunals have refused to allow the conscientious objector a further leave to appeal when they themselves are dealing out to him the scantiest justice, then I say an amendment in the Bill before your Lordships is absolutely required. There ought to be some means by which a vexatious or unreasonable refusal of an Appeal Tribunal to allow an appeal to the Central Tribunal could be set right.⁹⁰

Lord Parmoor also argued that the term conscientious objector had been “used unfairly and for matters of prejudice”,⁹¹ and suggested that the Local Tribunals had been “constituted in a most haphazard manner”.⁹²

The Earl of Derby expressed support for the Bill, but he suggested that the final stage of recruiting “could have taken the form of a voluntary effort amongst the unattested married men instead of the present proposal”.⁹³ He argued that “from the point of view of administration I do not hesitate to say that that would have been far easier work for Army officials than the present system”.

At committee and report stage a number of Government amendments were made to the Bill, and on 23 May 1916, it had its third reading. The Bill received Royal Assent on 25 May 1916.

3. Troops from the British Empire and Dominions

In 1914, the British Empire encompassed nine million square miles and 348 million people.⁹⁴ The Empire and Dominions were important to Britain in terms of recruitment for the war. During the First World War, approximately one third of the troops Britain raised were colonial.⁹⁵ In 1915, 138,000 Indian troops were stationed on the Western Front, where temporarily they filled a major part of the British line, and in the Middle East, where they served in much larger numbers; Canada sent abroad 458,000 men; Newfoundland (at this stage a Dominion in its own right) 8,000; Australia 332,000; New Zealand 112,000; and South Africa sent 136,000 whites as combatants as well as enlisting 75,000 non-whites to serve in Europe and Africa in the South African Native Labour Contingent.⁹⁶ From the Caribbean, 16,000 volunteered; British East Africa raised some 34,000 fighting troops; and the British West African colonies recruited 25,000.⁹⁷

The following section will focus on the troops which were sent from Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa. It will provide a brief summary of some of the key battles that these troops were involved in, and present estimates that have been made about the number of men deployed from each of these countries.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, [col 1080](#).

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, [col 1083](#).

⁹¹ *ibid.*, [col 1085](#).

⁹² *ibid.*, [col 1087](#).

⁹³ *ibid.*, [col 1096](#).

⁹⁴ Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, p 106.

⁹⁵ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, 2003, p 302.

⁹⁶ Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, p 201.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

Further information on the involvement of the British Empire and Dominions in the First World War, and more extensive consideration of the key issues, can be found in the books listed in the bibliography included at the end of this Library Note.

3.1 Australia

At the outbreak of war in 1914, Andrew Fisher, the Scottish-born leader of the Australian Labour party, pledged “our last man and last shilling in defence of the mother country”.⁹⁸ Australia’s early involvement in the war included the Naval and Military Expeditionary Force landing at Rabaul on 11 September 1914, and taking possession of German New Guinea at Toma on 17 September 1914. On 25 April 1915, members of the Australian Imperial Force landed at Gallipoli together with troops from New Zealand, Britain and France. This began a campaign that ended with the evacuation of troops on 19 and 20 December 1915. Following Gallipoli, Australian forces fought campaigns on the Western Front and the Middle East.⁹⁹

Recruitment in Australia had declined from late 1915 onwards.¹⁰⁰ The Australian Government held two referenda on the question of conscription in October 1916 and December 1917. The electorate voted against conscription both times, with the ‘No’ majority increasing in the December referendum. However, between the two referenda the Australian electorate voted for William Hughes in a general election during which he campaigned on a win-the war ticket.¹⁰¹

From a population of fewer than five million, by 1918, 416,809 men had enlisted.¹⁰² Australia’s voluntary rate of enlistment in the population was 7.5 percent.¹⁰³ By the end of the First World War over 60,000 were killed, and 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner.¹⁰⁴

3.2 Canada

In Canada, support for Britain in 1914 came not only from the English-speakers and the Conservative Prime Minister, Robert Borden, who promised to send troops without recalling Parliament, but also from Sir Wilfred Laurier, head of the opposition Liberals and leading politician in Quebec.¹⁰⁵

The Canadian Expeditionary Force was first despatched in October 1914.¹⁰⁶ In January 1915, the Princess Patricia’s Light Infantry became the first Canadian battalion to see action on the Western Front. By March, the 1st Canadian Division, mobilised at the outbreak of the war, was in France at the Battle of Neuve-Chapelle. It was joined in September by a 2nd Division, and in August 1916 a 3rd and 4th Division arrived. The Canadian forces fought on the Western Front until the end of the war.¹⁰⁷ In 1917, in response to the declining number of volunteers, Canada passed the Military Service Act, which introduced conscription. However, the issue was divisive

⁹⁸ Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, p 302.

⁹⁹ Australian War Memorial, ‘[First World War 1914–18](#)’, accessed 12 February 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Holland, ‘The British Empire and the Great War 1914–18’, in Judith Brown and Roger Louis (eds), *The Twentieth Century*, vol IV, 1999, p 127.

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, p 128.

¹⁰² Australian War Memorial, ‘[First World War 1914–18](#)’, accessed 12 February 2014.

¹⁰³ Holland, ‘The British Empire and the Great War 1914–18’, p 128.

¹⁰⁴ Australian War Memorial, ‘[First World War 1914–18](#)’, accessed 12 February 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, p 107.

¹⁰⁶ Holland, ‘The British Empire and the Great War 1914–18’, p 118.

¹⁰⁷ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, ‘[Canada](#)’, accessed 12 February 2014.

in Canada, and the Government granted a number of exemptions following protests, in particular from Western farmers who feared the loss of family labour.¹⁰⁸

Canada also provided other support to Britain, which included a million bags of flour, and the supply of ammunition shells; one-third of the British army's munitions in France during 1917–18 were Canadian made.¹⁰⁹

Approximately 619,636 men and women enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War as soldiers, nurses and chaplains, of whom 424,589 served in Europe.¹¹⁰ It has been estimated that 61,000 soldiers from Canada died during the First World War.¹¹¹

3.3 New Zealand

New Zealand immediately pledged its support following Britain's entry into the War.¹¹² In October 1914, the New Zealand Expeditionary Force sailed from Wellington. Diverted from their original destination in Europe, they landed in Egypt where they were involved in the conflict against the Turks on the Suez Canal in February 1915. On 25 April 1915, as part of the Australian and New Zealand Division, the New Zealanders landed at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli.

On the Western Front, the New Zealand Division took part in a number of battles, including the Army's fourth attack during the Battle of Somme on 15 September 1916. By the time they were relieved on 4 October, they had advanced three kilometres and captured eight kilometres of enemy front line. More than 7,000 had become casualties, of whom 1,560 were killed.¹¹³ In October 1918, the New Zealand Division was repulsed in its second attack in Passchendaele, during which 850 men died.

New Zealand was the first Dominion to adopt conscription in 1916.¹¹⁴ Ten percent of the population, which was approximately one million, served overseas. It has been estimated that more than 18,000 died, and over 40,000 were wounded.¹¹⁵

3.4 India

Following Britain's entry into the war, politicians in Delhi on the Legislative Council approved military assistance.¹¹⁶

The first 28,500 Indian Army troops arrived on the Western Front on 26 September 1914,¹¹⁷ and by the autumn of 1914, approximately one third of the British forces in France were from India (either Indian Army troops or British Army personnel drawn from Indian garrisons).¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁸ Holland, 'The British Empire and the Great War 1914–18', p 128.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, p 118.

¹¹⁰ Government of Canada Library and Archives Canada, '[Soldiers of the First World War: 1914–18](#)', accessed 12 February 2014.

¹¹¹ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol III, p 588.

¹¹² Commonwealth War Graves Commission, '[New Zealand](#)', accessed 12 February.

¹¹³ *ibid*.

¹¹⁴ Holland, 'The British Empire and the Great War 1914–18', p 125.

¹¹⁵ WW100 Programme, '[About New Zealand's First World War Centenary Commemorations](#)', accessed 12 February 2014.

¹¹⁶ Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, p 107 and Holland, 'Britain and the Great War, 1914–18', p 115.

¹¹⁷ British Library, '[Learning: Asians in Britain: World Wars](#)', accessed 12 February 2014.

¹¹⁸ Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, p 303; and Holland, 'Britain and the Great War,

Indian soldiers were deployed widely and fought in a number of battles including the Battle of Ypres, Neuve-Chapelle, the Somme, Passchendaele, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia.¹¹⁹ During the war, recruitment initially came from the northern areas of Nepal and Punjab. However, as the war progressed, men were enlisted from the southern parts of India.¹²⁰

In total, approximately 1,105,000 Indian personnel were sent overseas during the First World War. This included: 138,000 to France; 657,000 to Mesopotamia; 144,000 to Egypt and Palestine; and smaller contingents to Aden, East Africa, Gallipoli and Salonika.¹²¹ It has been estimated that 60,000 died during the war. India also provided over 170,000 animals and 3,700,000 tons of supplies and stores.¹²²

3.5 South Africa

South Africa experienced some of the earliest actions of the war; by 14 September 1914, South African troops had entered German South West Africa.¹²³ That campaign ended in July 1915 with few casualties. However, a second campaign, which was launched in April 1915 against German East Africa, was more costly. The German contingent did not surrender until 23 November 1918, twelve days after the European Armistice had been signed.

In August and September 1915, an infantry brigade was raised and sent overseas. The four battalions, numbering 160 officers and 5,648 men, were drawn from the various provinces in South Africa.¹²⁴ They were initially sent to Britain, but in December 1915 they were diverted from Europe to Egypt. The Infantry Brigade was withdrawn from Egypt in February 1916 and sent to France, where they fought in the Battle of Somme. The South African Infantry Brigade served on the Western Front until the Armistice, suffering more than 4,000 fatal casualties.¹²⁵

In 1916, the South African Native Contingent also began recruiting for overseas service.¹²⁶ Approximately 25,000 men volunteered. Although they did not bear arms, the contingent carried out transport and supply work in France, primarily in the ports of lines of communication, but also in the forward areas. Almost 1,300 men of the South African Native Labour Contingent died during the war, many of sickness or disease.

4. Commemorating the First World War

The year 2014 marks the centenary of the start of the First World War. A number of countries, including Britain, have developed a programme of commemoration and memorials to mark the anniversary.

The first of the following sections will briefly describe the memorials and commemorations that were established in Britain and the British Empire during and shortly after the war. The second section will concentrate on the British Government's programme to commemorate the First

1914–18', p 122.

¹¹⁹ British Library, '[Learning: Asians in Britain: World Wars](#)', accessed 12 February 2014.

¹²⁰ Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, p 202.

¹²¹ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, '[Forever India: First World War—Context](#)', accessed 12 February 2014.

¹²² *ibid.*

¹²³ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, '[South Africa](#)', accessed 12 January 2014.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

World War, but will also summarise a selection of other projects that have been set up to mark the 100th anniversary.

4.1 Memorial and Commemoration during the First World War

During the First World War, Sir Fabian Ware, a commander of a mobile unit of the British Red Cross in France, began identifying and recording all the graves that could be found.¹²⁷ At the beginning of 1915, Ware and his unit undertook the task of establishing collection cemeteries and registering all soldiers buried, with their name, regiment and rank wherever possible.¹²⁸ In 1915, the work of Ware and his unit was given official recognition by the War Office and incorporated into the British Army as the Graves Registration Commission. In 1917, the Commission was renamed the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). The Commission's work increased after the Armistice.¹²⁹ Once land for cemeteries and memorials had been guaranteed, the task of recording the details of the dead began. By 1918, some 587,000 graves had been identified, and a further 559,000 casualties were registered as having no known grave.

Before the war ended, IWGC had appointed Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Reginald Blomfield, who subsequently designed a number of monuments in France and Belgium.¹³⁰ By the early 1930s, the IWGC had completed 918 cemeteries on the Western Front with 580,000 named and 180,000 unidentified British graves; there were further cemeteries set up in Italy and the Balkans, at Gallipoli, and in Iraq and Palestine.¹³¹

54,000 memorials were built in the British Isles, 38,000 in France, and at least 1,500 in Australia. In New Zealand there were over 500.¹³² Most went up in the early 1920s, but some were established a decade later. The Imperial War Museum was established with official backing in 1917, and an Irish national museum was completed in 1938. A museum was the centre piece of the Australian War Memorial at Canberra, which was not completed until 1941; a South African memorial was constructed at Delville Wood on the Somme; a Canadian national memorial was built at Vimy, bearing the names of 11,000 Canadian servicemen who had died in France; and the names of 64,449 Indian war dead were inscribed on the arch of India Gate in New Delhi.¹³³

In Britain, Lutyens designed the Cenotaph, an empty tomb, which was a temporary feature for the Whitehall victory parade that celebrated the peace treaty. It proved so popular that a permanent replacement was unveiled on 11 November 1920, when the Unknown Warrior was buried at Westminster Abbey.¹³⁴

In Cape Town, during the war, a daily silence had been observed.¹³⁵ The former High Commissioner in South Africa raised the idea with the British Government, with the aim, he wrote, not of mourning but saluting the dead. Announced by maroons, gunfire and bell-ringing, a two minutes silence was observed at 11am on 11 November 1919. The occasion received

¹²⁷ Commonwealth and War Graves Commission, '[History of CWGC](#)', 12 February 2014; and Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, p 545.

¹²⁸ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol III, p 572.

¹²⁹ Commonwealth and War Graves Commission, '[History of CWGC](#)', 12 February 2014.

¹³⁰ Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, pp 545–6.

¹³¹ *ibid*, p 546.

¹³² *ibid*, p 547.

¹³³ *ibid*.

¹³⁴ *ibid*, p 548.

¹³⁵ *ibid*, p 549.

popular support, and demands began at once for it to be an annual event.¹³⁶ In November 1920, the Silence accompanied the dedication of the Cenotaph and the burial of the Unknown Warrior. Up to a million visitors paid homage to the latter's tomb within a week. The sale of poppies for the Haig Fund for the disabled began in 1921, and wearing poppies soon became almost universal.¹³⁷ By the late 1930s, the Cenotaph service on Armistice Day was broadcast nationally, and the Festival of Remembrance throughout the Empire. In Australia, Anzac Day, the anniversary of the Gallipoli landings on 25 April 1915, was also commemorated.

4.2 Commemoration of the Centenary

In October 2012, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced the Government's plans to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War in 2014.¹³⁸ He stated that over £50 million would be committed to the centenary commemorations, and that an advisory panel, headed by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, Maria Miller, would be appointed to offer independent oversight of the UK's preparations for the centenary. He also announced that the plans would include a £35 million refurbishment of the World War I galleries at the Imperial War Museum.

During a debate in the House of Commons on 7 November 2013, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Defence, Andrew Murrison, provided further details on the Government's framework for the centenary. He stated that:

There will be national events to capture the moment and set the tone [...] A centrepiece of the commemorations will be the reopening of the Imperial War Museum in London next year, following the £35 million refurbishment of its First World War galleries. There will be an enduring educational legacy, funded by £5.3 million from the Department for Education and the Department for Communities and Local Government, to enable a programme based on, but not confined to, visits to the battlefields.

The Heritage Lottery Fund will provide at least £15 million, including a £6 million community project fund, to enable young people working in their communities to conserve, explore and share local heritage from the first world war, epitomised by yellowing photos of young men posing stiffly in uniform, possibly for the first and last time. Much of the public interest in the period is personal and parochial, and this will provide a non-threatening entry point to the wider story. There will also be at least £10 million in the programme of cultural events taking place as part of the centenary commemorations over the four-year period.¹³⁹

Shadow Minister for Justice, Dan Jarvis, paid "tribute to the Minister for the calm, measured and dedicated way in which he has prepared for centenary commemorations".¹⁴⁰ Sir Bob Russell (Liberal Democrat MP for Colchester) also welcomed the Minister's speech and stressed that "this is not a celebration; it is a commemoration. The language is therefore very important, and we are off to a good start".¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ Prime Minister's Office, '[Prime Minister David Cameron Unveils Plans to Build a Truly National Commemoration, Worthy of this Historic Centenary](#)', 11 October 2012.

¹³⁹ HC *Hansard*, 7 November 2013, [cols 483–4](#).

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, [col 486](#).

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, [cols 498–9](#).

On 10 November 2013, the Government further announced a programme of events to commemorate the centenary which included: a national series of commemorative events starting on 4 August 2014; commemorative paving stones to be laid in communities where Victoria Cross recipients of the First World War were born; a £5.3 million educational programme; a Christmas Day 'Truce' football match on the battlefields of Flanders; 2,500 local war memorials to be given the opportunity to win listed building status; and £34 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, including a £6 million community project fund.¹⁴²

In November 2013, the Senior Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Minister for Faith and Communities at the Department for Communities and Local Government, Baroness Warsi, also announced that in order to commemorate the Commonwealth contribution to the First World War, a series of lectures would be part of the Government's programme.¹⁴³

On January 2014, the Department for Culture Media and Sport published the First World War Centenary events calendar.¹⁴⁴ To implement the Government's programme of events, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has been working alongside other organisations including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Imperial War Museums.¹⁴⁵

In addition to the refurbishment of the of the World War I galleries at the Imperial War Museum, which will reopen in July 2014, the IWM has also established the First World War Centenary Partnership, which consists of a network of over 1,800 cultural and educational organisations from 37 countries.¹⁴⁶ The Programme has presented over 500 new exhibitions, 1,500 events and 700 new digital resources, including: the digital memorial, the [Lives of the First World War](#), which was launched by the IWM in February 2014; and the contribution from the British Library of more than 10,000 items to the online resource, [Europeana Collections 1914–18](#), which was launched by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media in Germany.¹⁴⁷

Within Parliament, a Member Advisory Group on the First World War commemorations, chaired jointly by Keith Simpson MP and Lord Wallace of Saltaire, has been established, and is advising officials on the planned commemorations. Activity will take place from August 2014 to November 2018 with peaks of activity based on particular anniversaries within the war and major political and parliamentary moments. This will include changes of Government, significant legislation and key debates in Parliament. Activities and events are being generated by teams across both Houses, with the Public Engagement and Learning team acting as the main co-ordinator. The House of Lords Outreach team, following the House of Lords Chamber Event

¹⁴² Prime Minister's Office, '[Cabinet to Discuss Government Plans to Mark First World Centenary](#)', 10 November 2013.

¹⁴³ Department for Communities and Local Government, '[Commonwealth Contribution to First World War to be Commemorated](#)', 8 November 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, '[First World War Centenary Events Calendar](#)', 14 January 2014.

¹⁴⁵ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Ministry of Defence, Department for Education, Department for Communities and Local Government and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, '[First World War Centenary](#)', accessed 12 February 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Imperial War Museums, '[IWM Announces the First World War Centenary Partnership Programme](#)', 4 November 2013

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*; and British Library, '[Europeana 1914–18: A New Website that Brings all Sides of World War One Together Launches in Berlin, featuring 10,000 Items from the British Library's Collections](#)', 29 January 2014.

in 2013 which discussed the legacy and lessons of the First World War,¹⁴⁸ are also proposing to create a series of short videos. The videos will consider the First World War and its legacy from a number of different perspectives, and will include interviews with various Members. It is anticipated that the final videos will be published on the House of Lords YouTube channel and Parliament's commemorative First World War hub site when it launches.

¹⁴⁸ The '[Lords Chamber Event 2013—Defence and Remembrance](#)' took place in the House of Lords Chamber on 29 November 2013. Participants, who included cadets and veterans from the armed services, debated the question: "One hundred years after World War One, what is its legacy for the UK and how does it shape the nation today".

5. Appendices

5.1 Estimate of Total Number of Soldiers Who Died During the First World War

Country	Urlanis ¹ (1972)	Winter ² (1986)	Overmans ³ (2003)	Winter ⁴ (2010)	'Chemins de memoire' ⁵	Janda ⁶	Westmoreland ⁷	Estimate ⁸
Russia	1,811,000	1,811,000	1,800,000?	1,800,000	1,700,000	1,850,000	1,700,000	1,997,500
France	1,327,000	1,327,000	1,327,000			1,322,100		
French Colonies	71,000	71,000	78,000			75,700		
France + Colonies	1,398,000	1,398,000	1,405,000	1,375,800	1,390,000	1,397,800	1,397,800	1,400,000
Great Britain	715,000	723,000	750,000		776,000	722,785		761,000
Australia	60,000	60,000				59,330		60,000
Canada	61,000	61,000				59,544		61,000
India	54,000	54,000				62,056		54,000
Newfoundland						1,082		
New Zealand	16,000	16,000				16,645		16,000
South Africa	7,000	7,000				9,050		7,000
Others						45,967		
Total Dominions	198,000	198,000	180,000		164,000	253,674		198,000
Total British Empire	913,000	921,000	930,000	908,371	940,000	976,459	908,371	959,000
Italy	578,000	578,000	450,000	578,000	530,000	680,000	462,391	600,000
United States	114,000	114,000	117,000	114,000	114,000	213,799	50,585	87,900
Japan			1,000	300		1,344	300	300
Romania	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,706	158,000	335,706	335,706	250,700
Serbia	278,000*	278,000	250,000?	278,000	40,000	127,535	45,000	278,000
Belgium	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,716	44,000	45,500	13,716	38,700
Greece	26,000	26,000	25,000	26,000	12,000	23,098	5,000	26,000
Portugal	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,222	8,000	8,145	7,222	7,200
Montenegro			13,000	3,000		3,000	3,000	3,000
Total Allies	5,135,000	5,241,000	5,269,000	5,380,115	4,936,000	5,662,386	4,889,091	5,648,300

Country	Urlanis (1972)	Winter (1986)	Overmans (2003)	Winter (2010)	'Chemins de memoire'	Janda	Westmoreland	Estimate
German Empire	2,037,000	2,037,000	2,037,000	2,037,000	1,950,000	1,808,555,	1,808,546	2,037,000
Austria–Hungry	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,460,000	1,100,000	1,047,000	1,496,200	922,500	1,457,000
Ottoman Empire	804,000	804,000	325,000	804,000	400,000	600,000	325,000	772,000
Bulgaria	88,000	88,000	88,000	87,500	100,000	101,224	75,844	87,500
Total Central Powers	4,029,000	4,029,000	3,910,000	4,028,500	3,497,000	4,005,979	3,131,890	4,353,500
TOTAL	9,164,000	9,450,000	9,206,000	9,408,615	8,433,000	9,668,365	8,020,981	10,001,800

Source: *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol III, 2014, pp 587–8.

* includes Montenegro.

¹ B T Urlanis, *Guerre et Populations*, 1973.

² Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, 1985.

³ R Overmans, 'Kriegsverluste', in G Hirschfeld, G Krumeich and Irina Renz (eds), *Enzklopädie Erster Weltkrieg*, 2003.

⁴ Jay Winter, 'Demography', in J Horne (ed), *A Companion to World War I*, 2010.

⁵ 'Chemins de memoire', DMPA website.

⁶ Lance Janda in Spencer C Tucker (ed), *World War I: Encyclopedia*, 2005, vol I.

⁷ I P Westmoreland in Spencer C Tucker, (ed), *The European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopaedia*, 1996.

⁸ *Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol III, 2014.

5.2 Peers who died in the First World War

The list of names in the table has been extracted from the Royal Gallery memorial in the House of Lords which commemorates those who died in the First World War and Second World War. The list of names and the additional information has been provided to the author by the Parliamentary Archives: The complete list of names, and further information on the memorials within Parliament, can be found on the Parliament website on the [‘Living Heritage: Memorials’](#) pages.

Full Name	Title	Birth	Death	Rank	Regiment/Squadron/Ship	Place of Death
Shelley Leopold Laurence Scarlett	5th Baron Abinger	01/04/1872	23/05/1917	Commander	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve	London, UK
Francis Annesley	6th Earl Annesley	25/02/1884	05/11/1914	Sub-Lieutenant	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve	Aeroplane over Ostend, Belgium
Wyndham Wentworth Knatchbull-Hugessen	3rd Baron Brabourne	21/09/1885	11/03/1915	2nd Lieutenant	1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards	Neuve Chapelle, France
Henry Bligh Fortescue Parnell	5th Baron Congleton	06/09/1890	10/11/1914	Lieutenant	2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards	Klein Zillebeke, Belgium
Victor George Henry Francis Conyngham	5th Marquess Conyngham	30/01/1883	09/11/1918	Lieutenant	South Irish Horse, and Staff	York, UK
Arthur Reginald French	5th Baron de Freyne	03/07/1879	09/05/1915	Captain	3rd Battalion, South Wales Borderers	Richebourg-l'Avoué, France
Gilbert George Reginald Sackville	8th Earl De La Warr	22/03/1869	16/12/1916	Lieutenant	Royal Naval Volunteer Service	Messina, Italy
Charles William Reginald Duncombe	2nd Earl of Feversham	08/05/1879	15/09/1916	Lieutenant-Colonel	21st Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps	Flers, France
Henry Gorell	2nd Baron Gorell	21/01/1882	16/01/1917	Major	19th London Battery, Royal Field Artillery	Ypres, Belgium
Thomas Carew Trollope	3rd Baron Kesteven	01/05/1891	05/11/1915	Captain	Lincolnshire Yeomanry	Oran, Algeria
Horatio Herbert Kitchener	1st Earl Kitchener of Khartoum	24/06/1850	05/06/1916	Field Marshal	British Army	Sinking of HMS ‘Hampshire’ west of the Orkneys
John Maclean Rolls	2nd Baron Llangattock	25/04/1870	31/10/1916	Major	1st Monmouthshire Battery, 2nd 4th Welsh Brigade, Royal Field Artillery	Boulogne, France
Thomas Pakenham	5th Earl of Longford and Baron Silchester	19/10/1864	21/08/1915	Brigadier-General	2nd South Midland Mounted Brigade	Gallipoli, Ottoman Empire

Auberon Thomas Herbert	8th Baron Lucas and 11th Baron Dingwall	25/05/1876	03/11/1916	Captain/Flight Commander	Hampshire Yeomanry/Royal Flying Corps	Flying over Haplincourt, France
Lionel George Carroll	16th Baron Petre	03/11/1890	30/09/1915	Captain	4th Pioneer Battalion, Coldstream Guards	Paris-Plage, France
William John Lydston Poulett	7th Earl Poulett	11/09/1883	11/07/1918	Captain	Warwickshire Royal Horse Artillery	Middlesbrough, UK
Frederick Sleigh Roberts	1st Earl Roberts	30/09/1832	14/11/1914	Field Marshal	British Army	British Expeditionary Force HQ, France

5.3 MPs who died in the First World War

The list of names in the table has been extracted from the 42 heraldic shields in the House of Commons Chamber commemorating each of the MPs killed during both World Wars. The list of names and the additional information has been provided to the author by the Parliamentary Archives: The complete list of names, and further information on the memorials within Parliament, can be found on the Parliament website on the [‘Living Heritage: Memorials’](#) pages.

Full Name	MP/Peer/Son of...	Constituency/ Title	Birth	Death	Rank	Regiment/Squadron/Ship	Place of Death
Thomas Charles Reginald Agar-Robartes	MP/ Son of Peer	Bodmin 1906, St Austell 1908–1915/ Eldest son of Thomas Charles Agar-Robartes, 6th Viscount Clifden	22/05/1880	30/09/1915	Captain	1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards	Lapugnoy, France
Guy Victor Baring	MP/ Son of Peer	Winchester 1906–1916/ 4th son of 4th Baron Ashburton	26/02/1873	15/09/1916	Lieutenant-Colonel	1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards	Martinpuich, France
Francis Bennett-Goldney	MP	Canterbury 1910–1918		27/07/1918	Major	Royal Army Service Corps	Brest, France
Duncan Frederick Campbell	MP	North Ayrshire 1911–1916	24/04/1876	04/09/1916	Lieutenant-Colonel	Duke of Wellington Regiment (West Riding)	Southwold, UK
Harold Thomas Cawley	MP/ Son of Peer	Heywood Division of Lancashire 1910–1915/ 2nd son of 1st Baron Cawley	12/06/1878	23/09/1915	Captain	6th Battalion Manchester Regiment	Gallipoli, Ottoman Empire
Oswald Cawley	MP/ Son of Peer	Prestwich 1918/ 4th son of 1st Baron Cawley	07/10/1882	22/08/1918	Captain	Shropshire Yeomanry	Merville, France
Percy Archer Clive	MP	Ross Division of Herefordshire 1900–1906, 1908–1918		05/04/1918	Lieutenant-Colonel	1/5th Lancashire Fusiliers	Bucquoy, France
Ninian Edward Crichton-Stuart	MP/ Son of Peer	Cardiff 1910–1915/ 2nd son of 3rd Marquess of Bute	15/05/1883	02/10/1915	Lieutenant-Colonel	6th Battalion, Welsh Regiment	Loos, France
Valentine Fleming	MP	Henley 1910–1917	17/02/1882	20/05/1917	Major	‘C’ Squadron, Queen’s Own Oxfordshire Hussars	Gillemont Farm, Picardy, France
William Glynne Charles Gladstone	MP	Kilmarnock Burghs 1911–1915	14/07/1885	13/04/1915	Lieutenant	Royal Welch Fusiliers	Near Laventie, France
Philip Kirkland Glazebrook	MP	Manchester South 1912–1918	24/12/1880	07/03/1918	Major	Kings Shropshire Light Infantry	Bireh, near Jerusalem, Palestine

Michael Hugh Hicks Beach	MP/ Son of Peer	Tewkesbury 1906/1916 Only son of 1st Earl St Aldwyn	19/01/1877	23/04/1916	Captain and Adjutant	Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry	Qatia, Sinai, Egypt
Francis Walter Stafford McLaren	MP/ Son of Peer	Spalding 1910–1917/ 2nd son of 1st Baron Aberconway	06/06/1886	30/08/1917	2nd Lieutenant	Royal Flying Corps	Flying near Montrose, UK
Charles Thomas Mills	MP/ Son of Peer	Uxbridge 1910–1915/ Eldest son of 2nd Baron Hillingdon	13/03/1887	06/10/1915	2nd Lieutenant	2nd Battalion, Scots Guards	Hulluch, France
Arthur Edward Bruce O'Neill	MP/ Son of Peer	Mid-Antrim 1910–1914/ 2nd son of 2nd Baron O'Neill	19/09/1876	06/11/1914	Captain	2nd Battalion, Life Guards	Zwarteleen, Belgium
Neil James Archibald Primrose	MP/ Son of Peer	North Cambridgeshire 1910–1917/ 2nd son of 5th Earl of Rosebery	14/12/1882	18/11/1917	Captain	Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars Yeomanry and Staff	Hill of Gezer, Palestine
William Hoey Kearney Redmond	MP	Wexford Borough 1883–1885, Fermanagh North 1885–1892, Clare East 1892–1917	13/04/1861	07/06/1917	Major	6th Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment	Battle of Messines, Belgium
Alexander George Boteville Thynne	MP/ Son of Peer	Bath 1910–1918/ 3rd son of 4th Marquess of Bath	17/02/1873	16/09/1918	Lieutenant-Colonel	Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry	Bethune, France
William Lionel Charles Walrond	MP/ Son of Peer	Tiverton, 1906–1915/ 2nd son of 1st Baron Waleran	22/05/1876	02/11/1915	Lieutenant	Railway Supply Detachment, Royal Army Service Corps	Craigendinnie, Scotland, as a result of action in France

5.4 Parliamentary Staff who died in First World War

This table presents a list of the parliamentary staff on the stone memorial in Chancellors Court who died in the First World War. The list of names and the additional information has been provided to the author by the Parliamentary Archives: The complete list of names, and further information on the memorials within Parliament, can be found on the Parliament website on the [‘Living Heritage: Memorials’](#) pages.

Full Name	Title	Birth	Death	Rank	Regiment/Squadron/Ship	Place of death
F Hill				Private	Canadian Forces	
A E Howard			20/11/1918	Sergeant	Royal Garrison Artillery, 35th Anti-Aircraft Company	Buried in Felixstowe New Cemetery, UK
Percival James Jones	Engineering Attendant, Engineering Division, Office of Works (Boy Labourer, Ventilation Department from 16/10/1899; Assistant Labourer, Ventilation Department from 01/04/1905)	09/08/1896	28/03/1918	Private	7th (City of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers)	Buried in Creil Communal Cemetery, France
George May	Engineering Attendant, Engineering Division, Office of Works. (Boy Cleaner, Lighting Department from 09/05/1904; Lift Attendant from 09/05/1911)	24/10/1887	16/08/1917	Private	2nd London Regiment Royal Fusiliers	Buried in Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood, Belgium
L Morris				Private	West Yorkshire Regiment	
William George Potter	Engineering Attendant, Engineering Division, Office of Works (Boy Cleaner, Lighting and Ventilation Department from 13/09/1909)	24/06/1892	01/07/1916	Private	2nd London Regiment Royal Fusiliers	Named on the Thiepval Memorial, France
Frank Orrell Perry			30/09/1917	Gunner	Royal Garrison Artillery	Buried in Lorce Hospice Cemetery, Belgium
J Richardson				Seaman	Royal Navy	
Frederick Silva	Waiter, House of Commons Refreshment Department (March 1906–February 1915)		20/09/1917	Rifleman	London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade) “A” Company 2nd/5th Battalion	Buried in Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium
E Thornton				Driver	Royal Field Artillery	
J W West				Sergeant	The Queen’s Royal Regiment	

5.5 First World War Centenary: Military and Naval Commanders given Peerages

This table presents a list of individuals who were ennobled between 1914 and 1919 as a result of their contribution to the war effort. Please note: the British Commander-in-Chief in Italy, the Earl Cavan, was already a Member of the House, having succeeded to the title in 1900; and Sir Roger Keys was elected as a Member of Parliament for North Portsmouth on 19 February 1934. His maiden speech in the House of Commons was on 12 March 1934 on the Navy Estimates.

Name	Position	Vote of Thanks*	£ Grant*	Title	Date Introduced	Maiden Speech	Subject	Date of Death
Field Marshal Sir John French	Commander-in-Chief, British Expeditionary Force, (BEF) France	Yes	50,000	Viscount French of Ypres, (Earl of Ypres, 1922)	29/02/1916	20/06/1916	Tributes to Kitchener	22/05/1925
Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Jellicoe	First Sea Lord	Yes	50,000	Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa, (Earl Jellicoe, 1925)	09/04/1918	08/05/1930	London Naval Treaty	19/11/1935
Admiral of the Fleet Sir David Beatty	Commander-in-Chief, Grand Fleet	Yes	100,000	Earl Beatty	05/11/1919	18/12/1929	Defence Cruisers	12/03/1936
Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig	Commander-in-Chief, British Expeditionary Force, (BEF) France	Yes	100,000	Earl Haig	12/11/1919	None	N/A	29/01/1928
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Rosslyn Wemyss	First Sea Lord	No	No	Baron Wester Wemyss	12/05/1920	04/08/1920	Treaty with Turkey	24/05/1933
Gen Sir Herbert Plumer	Commander, British 2 Army, BEF	Yes	30,000	Baron Plumer of Messines (Viscount Plumer of Messines and Bilton, 1929)	20/07/1921	09/04/1930	Government Policy on the Air Force	16/07/1932
Gen Sir Henry Rawlinson	Commander, British 4 Army, BEF	Yes	30,000	Baron Rawlinson of Trent	05/11/1919	None	N/A	28/03/1925
Field Marshal Sir Edmund Allenby	C-in-C, Egyptian Expeditionary Force	Yes	50,000	Viscount Allenby of Megiddo	08/07/1925	08/07/1915	Case of Major Adam	14/05/1936
Gen Sir Julian Byng	Commander, British 3 Army, BEF	Yes	30,000	Baron Byng of Vimy, (Viscount Byng, 1928)	05/11/1919	None	N/A	06/06/1935
Gen Sir Henry Horne	Commander, British 1 Army, BEF	Yes	30,000	Baron Horne of Stirrroke	12/11/1919	28/04/1920	Shell-shock	14/08/1929

* On the 6 August 1919, Parliament approved a vote of thanks to senior officers “in recognition of their eminent services during the late war”. It also approved a gift of money totalling £585,000 to those officers: *HC Hansard*, 6 August 1919, [cols 401–15](#).

Sources: Times Digital Archive, 1785–2008; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; House of Commons *Hansard*.

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