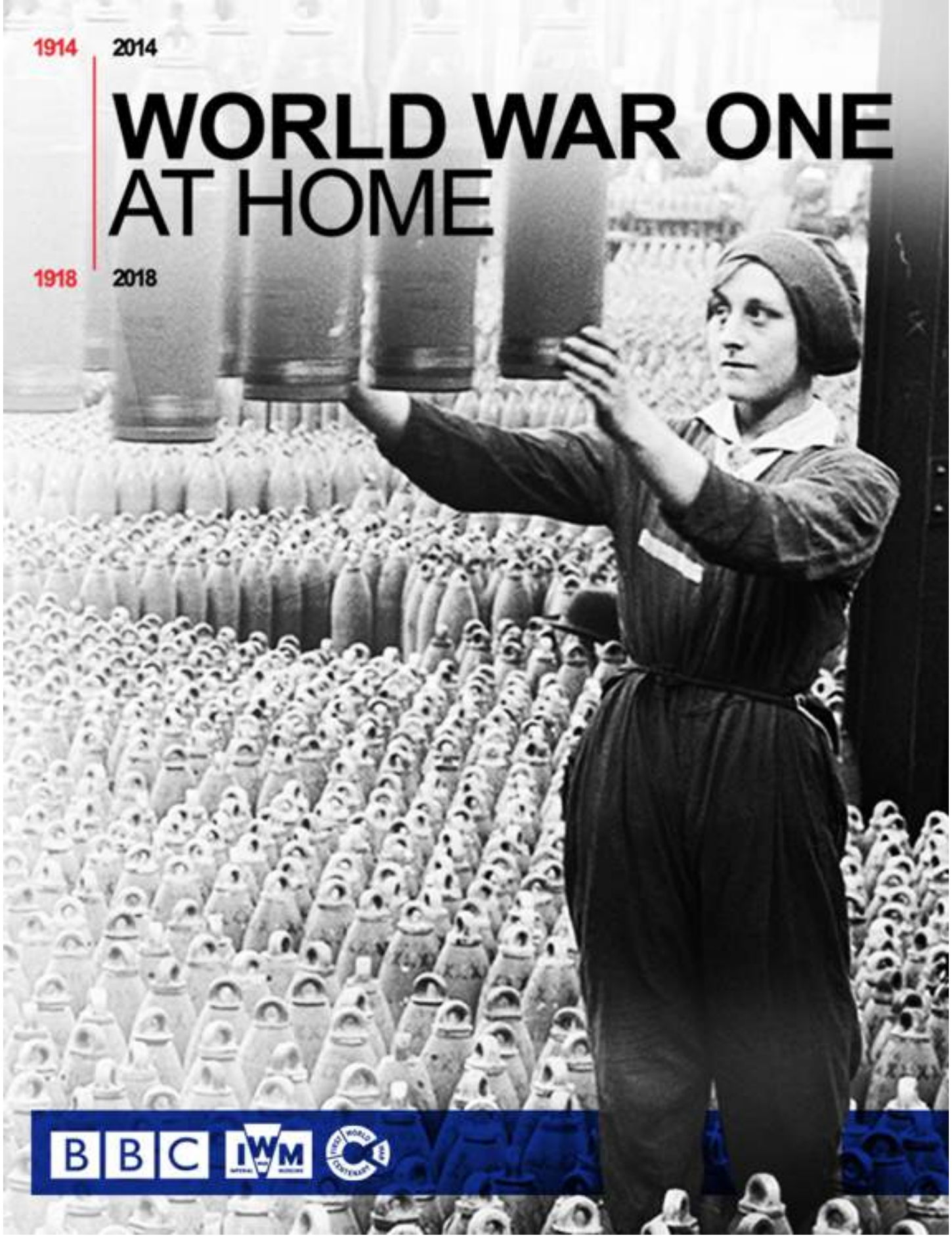
1914 2014

WORLD WAR ONE AT HOME

1918 2018



World War One at Home

In those frightening years of global conflict, wherever you lived in Britain, it must have felt as if there could be no escape. Families, friends - animals even - could quickly find themselves entangled in the machine of war. To mark the centenary of the conflict, *World War One at Home* tells some of these stories. There are first hand accounts, and tales of life on the home front - all linked to places in Britain. The stories were gathered across a two year period by dozens of local BBC journalists, with the help of the public and supported by BBC Learning, academics, local historians and the expertise and archive of Imperial War Museums. Even a hundred years on, these stories and their locations can still offer up a fresh insight into what life was like for those living through these most troubled of times.

Digital technology has played a huge part in allowing us to illustrate these stories in such an accessible and vivid way. And no more elegantly than here in this interactive e-book, where images, film and audio come together to illustrate just a selection of the 1,400 *World War One at Home* stories gathered. Do make sure that you fully explore their interactive content; there are some treasures to discover, from the heartbreaking audio of Manchester war widow Kitty Eckersley or the poignant, flickering faces of the young men from Grimsby, filmed as they prepared for the battlefield.

This book is a tribute to those who fought, struggled, and triumphed in this great conflict. We hope it preserves some of the memories of those whose lives were caught up in extraordinary events - and who sacrificed so much.

Craig Henderson
Executive Editor, BBC

World War One was a turning point in history for the people of Britain. It was the first time that all levels of society had been equally affected by adversity and the ravages of war. One hundred years on 1914-18 retains a powerful meaning for us all. The war still colours our cultural values, resonating in poetry and art, and it continues to affect our lives directly, such as through the changes to our clocks that we make twice a year – a practice first introduced in 1916.

The BBC's *World War One at Home* set out to show how the influence of the war, although buried, remains not far beneath the surface of the nations and regions of Britain. The stories that it has gathered and broadcast reflect the many different people who lived in Britain during those difficult years and the many different communities from which they came.

Working with the BBC on *World War One at Home* has been one of the highlights of the Centenary years of 1914-18. To complement those found by the BBC and received from the public, IWM has been able to draw from its archives stories of people and places from across the breadth of Britain and pass these to broadcasters to tell in the regions where the stories were set. Hundreds of lives have been renewed in their telling and, collected in this e-book, they will continue to offer up fragments of distant memories to keep alive the essence of those who lived through the challenging years of World War One.

Nigel Steel, Principal Historian
First World War Centenary Programme
Imperial War Museums

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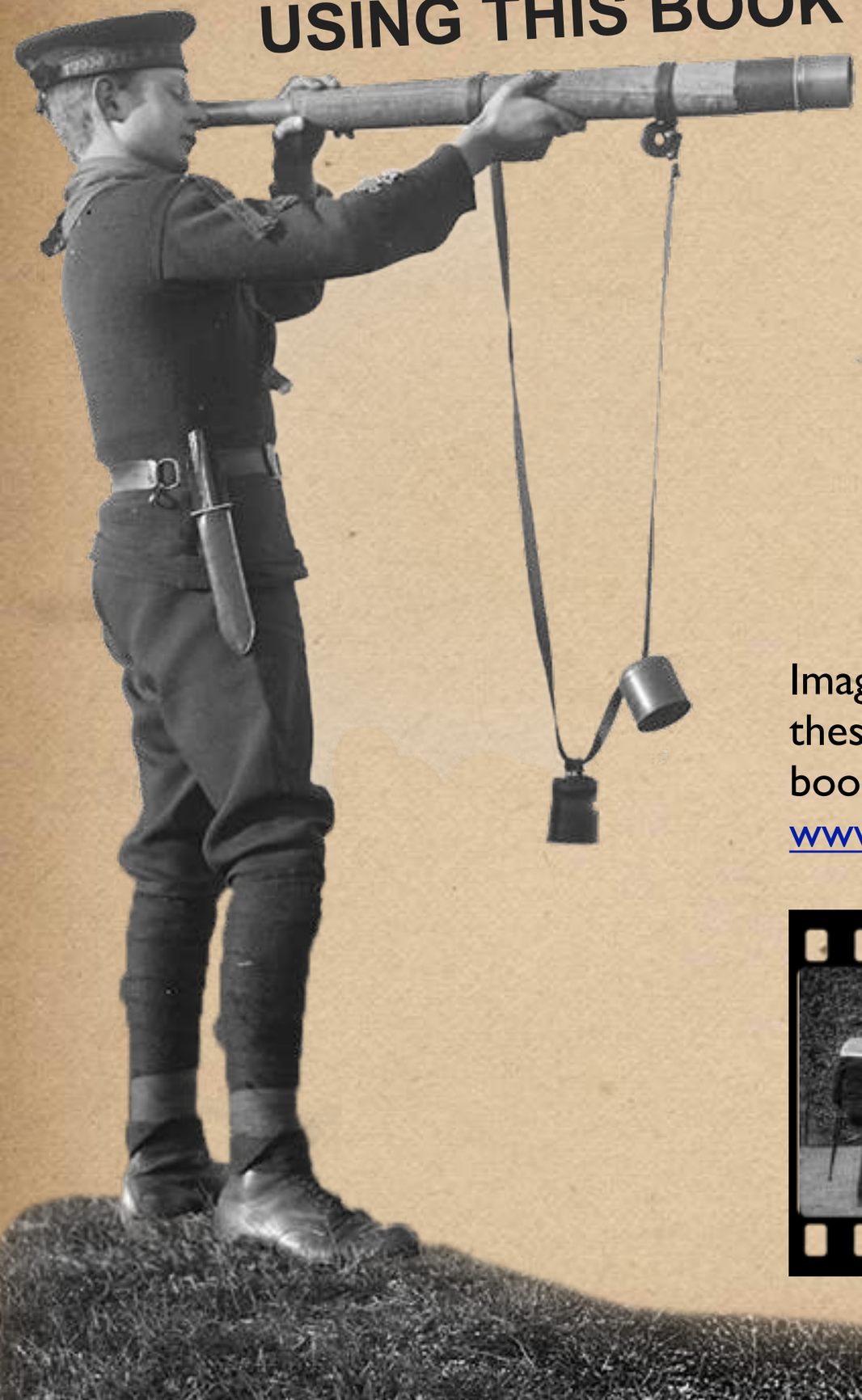


This book was originally produced as an interactive ebook, designed to be viewed on tablets and other devices. Some of the interactive content has been disabled or removed from this PDF version of the book.

All **Imperial War Museums** images, films and audio clips can be identified by the prefix IWM, followed by their catalogue number, e.g. *IWM (Q 053582)*.

Images framed in film reel indicates that video footage containing these images is available to view in the interactive version of this book. Details for how to download this ebook can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/ww1

TIMELINE OF EVENTS 1914 - 1918

4 AUGUST
Britain declares war on Germany

21 AUGUST
First Pals battalion raised

8 AUGUST
The Defence of the Realm (DORA) act introduced

6 SEPTEMBER
The first battle of the Marne

16 DECEMBER
Mainland Britain bombarded

18 FEBRUARY
Blockade of Britain by German U-boats

19 JANUARY
First Zeppelin attack

7 MAY
Germans torpedo British liner, Lusitania

25 APRIL
Allied landings at Gallipoli

25 MAY
'Shell Crisis'

21 FEBRUARY
Battle of Verdun begins

1 JULY
First day of the battle of the Somme

25 MAY
Military Service Act makes conscription law

2 SEPTEMBER
First Zeppelin shot down over Britain

7 DECEMBER
Lloyd George becomes Prime Minister

6 APRIL
US declares war on Germany

31 JULY
Third battle of Ypres begins

13 JUNE
First major bombing raid over London

19 OCTOBER
Last Zeppelin airship raid of Britain

25 FEBRUARY
Compulsory rationing introduced

11 NOVEMBER
Armistice Day

1914 1915 1916 1917 1918

Almost every street in every town in Britain was involved in the wider war effort. But across the country the experience in individual areas was very different. The following pages give a snapshot of some of what was happening during the war in each of the different regions shown on this map.

Scotland - There are many examples of Scottish patriotism during the war, including the hugely successful 'tank campaign' of 1917/18 in which battle-scarred tanks toured towns and cities to drum up sales of War Bonds and Savings Certificates. Several Scottish cities vied to outdo each other, and Dundee raised £4.5 million in one week. Yet a number of Scottish cities were also leading centres of the anti-war movement, and saw significant industrial and civil unrest, during and immediately after the war. A Scottish location famously associated with the First World War is the Craiglockhart Military Hospital in Edinburgh, where officers suffering from shell shock were treated with 'talking cures' and other newly developed therapies. It is also where the poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon first met, inspiring each other to write some of the poetry that continues to shape the view of the war that so many of us have.

Ireland - Unlike the rest of Britain, there was no conscription in Ireland, yet around 140,000 Irishmen joined during the war as volunteers. Some joined up for the perceived justice of the cause, but Ireland in 1914 was deeply divided between nationalist and unionist political groups, and these more local considerations also played their part. Recruitment posters were crucial, and special effort was made by poster companies such as Hely's in Dublin to appeal to Irish sensibilities. An estimated two million posters were displayed around Ireland, in railway stations, offices and on hoardings, and many featured Irish symbols such as the shamrock and the wolfhound, as well as messages targeted at Irish Catholics. Despite the complexity of Irish politics and individual responses to the war there were a number of significant and fascinating places that reveal other aspects of WW1. The airship mooring station in Whitehead for example, played a key role in the protection of shipping from German submarines or U-boats in the North Channel.

Wales - There has been a perception that the Welsh were less keen to go to war than people elsewhere in Britain. Recruitment figures for Wales, however, are on a par with those for England and Scotland, although there is some anecdotal evidence of farming communities being reluctant to give up their labour. In many parts of Wales the fear of 'khaki fever' (the supposedly overwhelming attraction felt by young women to men in uniform) led to some unsettling treatment of young women by the authorities. Women in Wales were policed under the Defence of the Realm Act, with arrests being made among those who were caught committing 'indecent acts.' Women in Cardiff faced a curfew, and concerned citizens in Swansea took things into their own hands when the Swansea Women's Citizens Union launched a 'Purity Crusade' to 'stem the tide of immorality sweeping over the town'.

North East – The North East was home to the most ambitious, purpose-built munitions factory in the British Isles. At the time, H.M Factory Gretna was the biggest explosives factory in the world. Situated at Gretna Green, across the Scottish and English border, it stretched nine miles from Cumbria to Dumfries and Galloway and employed 30,000 people. The plant produced 800 tonnes of cordite propellant per week and the mostly female workforce lived in the complex, which had its own power station, 125 miles of railway track, a ballroom, a cinema, and kitchens that produced 14,000 meals and 13,000 loaves of bread a day.

North West – As an industrial hub, the North West of England had a significant role to play. Many of the region's companies converted to produce munitions for the war effort, and local working class women were joined by other women from all over the country to learn new skills and work in the factories. An event that was to have a profound impact on the region was the sinking of the cruise liner RMS Lusitania. She was bound for Liverpool and many of the 1,119 people who lost their lives were from the city. Anti-German riots broke out across the country but it was in Liverpool and Wirral where most damage - an estimated £40,000 worth - was caused.

Yorkshire and Humberside – In December 1914, North Yorkshire suffered the first major attack on British soil for over 150 years when German warships fired hundreds of shells at the coastal towns of Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby. Over a hundred people were killed, many of them civilians. The impact of the bombardment was widespread; it sparked public outrage and became a rallying cry for recruitment. This attack on home soil also brought with it the realisation that in modern warfare it was not just the armed forces in harm's way, and the episode gave rise to the expression 'the home front'. Then as now, South Yorkshire was associated particularly with the steel industry. The demands of war led to some unusual additions to the workforce, including an elephant that was leased from a travelling menagerie, and used to haul tons of recycled metal every day, taking it to the city's steel mills to be used again for the war effort.

East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire - The East coast of Britain can be seen as a front line in the war, and the threat of invasion was taken very seriously. Today, it's easy to forget how close this region was to the conflict in France and Belgium, and how the prospect of invasion must have loomed in people's minds. In Skegness instructions were provided on what to do *when* (rather than if) the Germans invaded. *World War One at Home* has revealed real patterns of prejudice in this area. Hull for example saw the most serious anti-German riots in the country, especially after Zeppelin raids on the city in which civilians were killed. Many Jewish people who had settled in East Yorkshire - and had been the subject of anti-semitic prejudice before the war - now also found themselves targeted because of their German-sounding surnames.

West Midlands – The West Midlands is known for its industry, but it contains large rural areas too, which experienced much change as a result of the conflict. For example in the rural Pershore district, known for its food production and particularly good jam, around a thousand men left to fight in the conflict. Jam was extremely important - it was a concentrated source of calories and vitamin C, which kept for months and could be easily transported to the front line - so jam production was put on a war footing. Women stepped in to run the smallholdings, and additional labour was brought in to harvest fruit, including Belgian refugees, Irish women, Birmingham University students, wounded soldiers, and children. Because the West Midlands is so far from the coast, the area was also chosen as a location for camps of conscientious objectors, including the so-called 'absolutists,' who were totally opposed to violence, and so would not do anything to further the war effort.

East Midlands – Nottinghamshire was the location for a vast factory at the heart of the war effort. Many of the heavy shells bound for the front line were filled with ammunition at The National Shell Filling Factory at Chilwell. The work was dangerous, and the factory was also the scene of one of Britain's worst wartime disasters. In July 1918, a devastating explosion in the mixing plant killed 139 and injured 250. Much of the site was flattened, but such was the determination of the factory owners and workers that the factory re-opened just four days later.

East – Many medium-sized market towns in the east developed an industrial base, with countless small businesses adapting their workshops for the war effort – going from making light bulbs to bullets, or bicycle chains to machine gun housings. Entire communities could be turned over to war-related activities - the fishing town of Brightlingsea in Essex was taken over by Australian soldiers, who practised digging in the sand as preparation for the landings at Gallipoli. The large swathes of rural areas also made the region the location of another vitally important aspect of life on the home front: the struggle to keep soldiers and civilians fed. With so many farm workers away fighting, and with imports cut off by the German U-boat blockade, agriculture in the UK was forced to change. In this region - and across Britain - domestic food production was dramatically stepped up. Members of the Women's Land Army kept farms functioning, and conscientious objectors and German POWs were also made to work on the land. Parks, bits of waste ground, and even the gardens of stately homes were turned over to allotments, to grow fruit and vegetables.

London - The experience of Londoners during the conflict was distinctive, partly because of the sheer size of the city. Everything was on a bigger scale - events that were taking place elsewhere in the UK were concentrated and magnified in London. Record numbers of women were working in London's factories, as well as filling some of the more unusual positions left vacant by men in uniform – Maida Vale on the Bakerloo Line, for example, was the first Tube station to be entirely 'manned' by women. The German bombing campaign against the city also made Londoners' war experience distinctive. London was a principal target of the raids and anti-German feeling ran high among the civilian population - many Londoners continued to refuse to buy German products long after the war had ended. Another distinctive feature of London were the volunteer battalions raised from upper middle class professions based in the city, such as the stockbrokers of Lombard Street.

South-East – Being so close to the continent, the South East saw enormous transformation during World War One - but often the transformation was temporary. The inland town of Richborough in Kent for example became the location for a secret port on the river Stour where barges were loaded with ammunition and troops. From 1916 it was the embarkation point for almost all of the hardware that was shipped to France. The demands of the war were a stimulus to innovation: it was at Richborough that roll-on, roll-off ferries were first developed, to speed up the process of loading and unloading. A more permanent transformation was seen on the coast. The war marked the death knell of the Kent fishing fleet, as the Channel was too dangerous for the ships to be put to sea and much of it was moved to Cornwall, and stayed there. Being the part of the UK closest to France and Flanders, Kent was naturally the site of a great deal of activity centred around the movement of troops. The coastal town of Folkestone became the main point of departure for soldiers going to the Western Front. Millions of troops marched down 'the Slope', to the harbour before embarkation for France. The region also saw a great deal of activity around the treatment of wounded soldiers, with many hospitals in the area overwhelmed with the numbers of troops returning from the Western Front.

South – Such was the concentration of warships in Portland harbour in Dorset, that when war began, the Admiralty decided to move them to avoid a pre-emptive German attack. Later in the war Dorset became the focus of the fight against German submarines - the feared U-boats. Southampton was one of the UK's busiest ports during the war, recording seven million troop movements as well as exporting horses, mules, vehicles and millions of tonnes of supplies. It was also an arrival point for Imperial troops from places such as India and Egypt, as well as Belgian refugees and hospital ships bringing many thousands of wounded soldiers back from the battlefields.

West – One hundred years ago, Bristol was a major manufacturing centre, and many people in the region worked at factories where new technologies were being put to military use. The city was also a busy port, with excellent road and rail connections, and it became the place where many wounded servicemen were brought for treatment. A number of new hospitals were established in Bristol, with several being donated by private individuals. In its own way, Bristol Zoo also contributed to the recovery of wounded servicemen - by the end of the war, some 32,000 had attended morale-boosting events there. Elsewhere in the region, the British army's main training ground at Salisbury Plain provided a sense of the truly international nature of the conflict with civilians from all over the Empire being turned into soldiers here. The wide-open spaces lent themselves to large-scale manoevres, and today you can still see traces of the dummy trenches built by the recruits.

South West – Home to so much coastline, it's no surprise that Britain's maritime campaign featured heavily in people's experience of the First World War in the South West. The aim of Germany's submarine blockade was to starve Britain of resources, and Cornwall in particular, was on the front line. Planes from the Royal Naval Air Service struggled to protect convoys, and Airships were also sent out on anti-submarine patrols: they may not have resulted in many German submarines being destroyed, but they did force German U-boats to stay submerged for long enough to allow vital convoys through.

1914 2014

CHAPTER ONE
THE RUSH TO JOIN UP

1918 2018

The *World War One at Home* stories gathered around the theme of recruitment and training reflect the massive scale of the operation required to swell the ranks of a small professional British Army. From all corners of the country, men answered the call to join Lord Kitchener's New Army, and then began the process of training for fighting on the front lines. The early optimism and patriotic fervour is apparent in many of the stories featured in this chapter, which sadly also tell tales of many who would not return.

Recently recruited 'Pals' parade in **Preston Flagged Market, Lancashire.** *IWM (HU 53725)*

The first two years of war saw a massive recruitment drive masterminded by Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener. Starting just days after the declaration of war, he appealed to British men with a powerful propaganda campaign. Recruitment centres, such as this one near **Trafalgar Square in London** (below), were set up across the country, and millions of posters were printed encouraging the men to join up. Tens of thousands rushed to sign up, and on 3 September 1914 more young men joined than on any other day of war - a staggering 33,204 of them.

IWM (440)

This iconic image of Lord Kitchener has become one of the most enduring images of World War One recruitment. But at the time, it was barely used at all. Tap on the poster to find out more.
IWM (Q 48378)

Men were encouraged to join up with friends, colleagues or neighbours so that they would all end up in the same unit or battalion. By the end of 1914, over 50 towns had formed so-called 'Pals battalions' and began training in earnest in camps across Britain. But men who joined together often died together. The 'Pals battalions' suffered huge losses on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. For many, it was their first experience of action on the Front Line. The impact of these losses on communities back home was devastating.

IWM (MGH 4329)

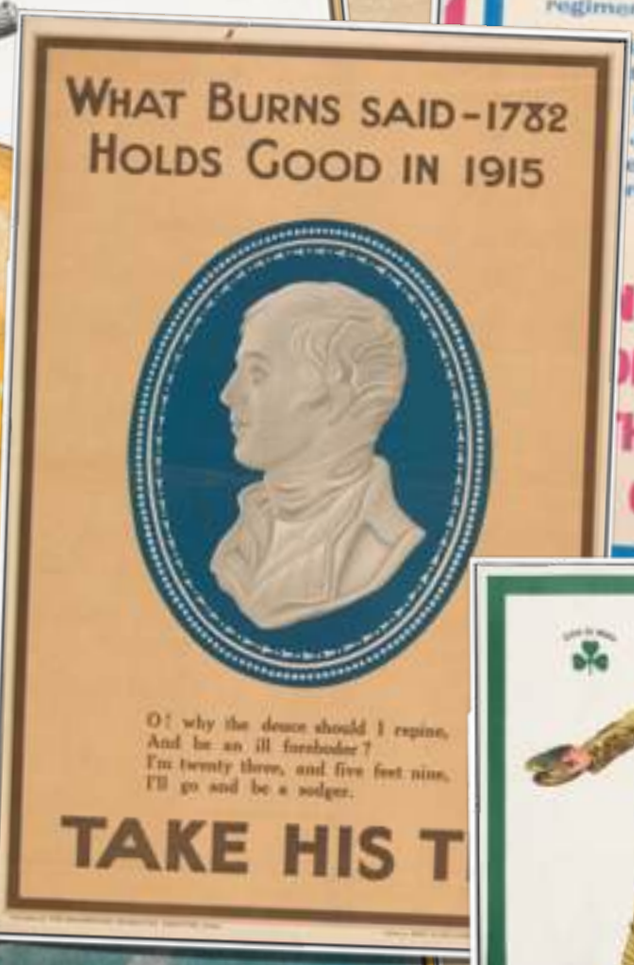
The Grimsby Chums (10th Battalion, The Lincolnshire Regiment) was the only 'Pals battalion' to be known as 'Chums'. They trained at **The Brocklesby Estate in Lincolnshire**; practicing digging trenches and learning military drills together. The battalion lost 502 men on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

> ***"Two years in the making. Ten minutes in the destroying. That was our history."***
>
> *Sheffield Pals survivor, John Harris*

Music Halls were a key place for propaganda campaigns and the renowned performer and male impersonator, Vesta Tilley, played an important role. Originally hailing from **Worcester in the West Midlands**, Tilley performed in theatres across the country. In the guise of characters such as 'Tommy in the Trench,' she sang songs to inspire men to sign up - sometimes even asking them to join the army on stage during the show. Her powers of persuasion earned her the nickname 'England's greatest recruiting sergeant'.

Poster image: IWM (G101)

Millions of recruitment posters were printed urging different groups to join up voluntarily.



Before leaving Britain for battle, recruits spent at least six months training. Volunteer regiment The Artists' Rifles trained officers at a camp in **Gidea Park in Essex**. Recruits included Alfred Leete, the artist behind the famous 'Your Country Wants You' poster, pictured here third from the right. Other Gidea Park recruits included war poets Wilfred Owen and Edward Thomas. *Photo courtesy of the Strube family*.

With hundreds of thousands of new recruits needing training, existing military bases such as Beacon Hill on **Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire** were expanded, and across Britain further swathes of land were given over to the newly formed units. Vast training camps were built in **Staffordshire**, **East Anglia**, **Nottinghamshire** and on the **North Wales Coast**. Accommodated in tents or temporary wooden huts, the soldiers honed skills such as trench warfare, night attacks and firing machine guns.

The training camp at **Lyndhurst in the New Forest** was one of the first places to fully appreciate the scale and the cost of the war. The 7th Division - professional British troops who had been called in from their stations around the empire - gathered to train here in September 1914. Orders for embarkation came in October 1914, but less than a month after going into battle, more than half the men had been killed or wounded. The division became known as 'The Immortal Seventh'.

Troops polishing boots at Lyndhurst in the New Forest in September, 1914. *IWM (Q 57114)*

Clipstone Camp near **Mansfield in Nottinghamshire** was one of the largest purpose-built training camps. The vast complex of wooden huts and tents held around 20-30,000 men at any one time and had its own military hospital and garrison church. Pictures of the camp survive because they were turned into postcards that soldiers sent home to their families.

Photos courtesy of Pauline Marples, Clipstone Camp Collection

As the war continued, demand for officers on the front line was so great that the officer training course at The Royal Military College at **Sandhurst in Berkshire** had to be reduced from 18 months to 3 months. Academic training was cut back, although lessons in international affairs remained, so that the trainees, who were also known as gentlemen cadets, had an understanding of the wider causes of the war.

The average life expectancy for a junior officer at some points of the war was just six weeks.

Gentleman cadets in front of New College, Sandhurst
Photo courtesy of the Sandhurst Collection (Crown copyright)

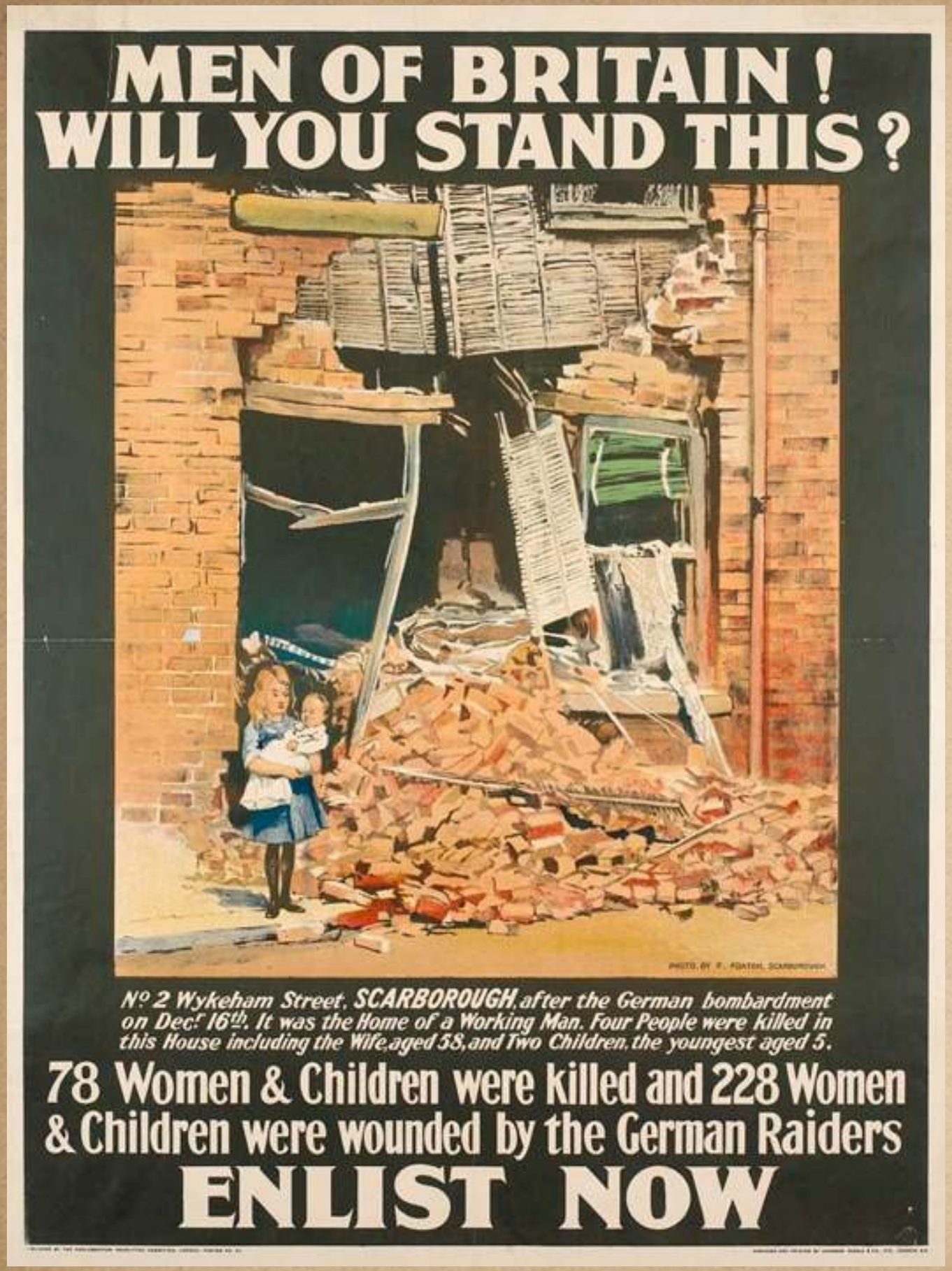
1914 2014

CHAPTER TWO
BRITAIN UNDER ATTACK

1918 2018

It had been over 150 years since civilians had experienced the effects of war. But this changed in December 1914 when Britain was attacked on home shores. Towns on the east coast came under bombardment from a fleet of German warships. Just a month later, Britain was attacked from the sky - the start of a terrifying bombing campaign by airships and aeroplanes that targeted towns and cities across the country. There was danger for civilians out at sea too as British ships found themselves in the line of fire from German submarines. The *World War One at Home* stories in this chapter reflect both the vulnerability and outrage that many felt, on the exposed east coast of Britain, and further inland too.

IWM (Q 58474)



On 16 December 1914, Britain was attacked on home soil. At 8 o'clock, on a still, misty morning, a flotilla of German warships fired at the North East coastal towns of **Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby**. The attack was both unexpected and ferocious, resulting in 137 fatalities and 592 casualties, including babies and young children. Damage to buildings in the seaside towns was extensive, but it was the killing of innocent civilians that caused greatest public outrage.

Four people, including two children, were killed when shells hit **2 Wykeham Street in Scarborough**. This poster depicting the damage, was produced in 1915 and became part of the national recruitment campaign. *IWM (Art. IWM PST 5119)*

The attack from the German warships was terrifying enough, but more was to come. On 19 January 1915 German Zeppelin airships travelled across the North Sea towards Britain. Residents all along the Norfolk coast reported hearing an eerie throbbing sound above them, followed by the sound of explosions. In the space of just a few minutes, the seaside town of **Great Yarmouth in Norfolk** had been hit by ten bombs, killing two people and causing thousands of pounds worth of damage. Shortly afterwards the nearby town of **Kings Lynn** was hit too.

This was the first of more than 50 bombing raids that German airships carried out over Britain.

THEN AND NOW

The top image shows damage in the **St Peter's Plain area** of Yarmouth, where two people were killed. The bottom image shows the house today, with a blue plaque in memory of those who died. *Photo courtesy of Paul Davies*

The Germans gained little military advantage by bombing Britain, but the terror they inflicted on the population was significant. In 1915 many people would not have seen an aeroplane before, much less an airship the size of an ocean liner which was capable of dropping bombs from the sky with no warning.

IWM (665D)

Despite the fear that the airships induced, Britons like these residents of **Southend-on-Sea in Essex** (above) remained stoic and got on with the task of clearing up after the town was bombed in May 1915.

Men of the Norfolk Regiment with part of a German bomb which was dropped on a stable behind 78 Crown Road, **Great Yarmouth in Norfolk**. *IWM (Q 053582)*

The Zeppelins were not very accurate. German pilots travelling across the North Sea at night - often in wind and rain and with poor visibility - frequently failed to hit their mark. Some cities, including **Hull** suffered as an unintended target when airships heading inland missed their original goal. Hull was subject to 8 bomb attacks between 1915 and 1918.

Porter Street, Hull after a raid
Photo courtesy of Paul Gibson

At the start of the war there were few effective weapons to combat the airships. Conventional bullets passed harmlessly through their huge gas cells which were supported by aluminium frames. The tide turned on 2 September 1916 when the first airship was shot down over British soil. Pilot William Leefe Robinson used incendiary bullets to successfully bring down airship SL11, which had been part of a fleet of 16 airships attacking the capital. Robinson fired at the airship from beneath; it burst into flames and crashed in a field behind the Plough Inn at **Cuffley in Hertfordshire**. Thousands of people on the ground had watched the spectacle, and celebrated the fall of the hated airships by cheering, hooting car horns, and singing and dancing in the street.

Captain Leefe Robinson was awarded the Victoria Cross 48 hours after the event. Sadly he died of influenza in 1918, aged just 23. *Photo courtesy of Potters Bar and District Historical Society*

Airship in flames above Hartlepool. *Photo courtesy of Hartlepool Borough Council*

The Times newspaper recorded the fall of the airship SL11 as 'the greatest free show London had ever seen' and the following day became known in the press as 'Zepp Sunday'. Tens of thousands of people (below) made a pilgrimage out from London to the tiny village of **Cuffley in Hertfordshire** to view the wreckage.

IWM (NTB2631)

Once the vulnerability of the airships to explosive and incendiary bullets had been exposed, their danger diminished. Raids continued, but were increasingly hazardous for the German crews, and by 1917 the airships had been largely replaced by aeroplane bombers such as Gothas and Giants. By the end of the war, almost 1,500 British citizens had been killed by the German air raids, and over 3,400 had been injured. This German success was a key factor in the formation of the Royal Air Force in April 1918.

The incident was portrayed in recruitment posters such as this one which was produced in May 1915. *Poster image: IWM (Art. IWM PST 13654)*

British civilians were not only attacked on land; they were targeted at sea too. On 7 May 1915 the British passenger liner RMS Lusitania was returning home to Liverpool from New York when it was struck by a single torpedo, fired without warning from a German U-boat. The luxury liner, which had been carrying almost 2,000 passengers and crew - including 129 children - took just 18 minutes to sink. Many of the lifeboats were unable to launch and 1,201 people lost their lives.

Thomas Woods, a fisherman from **Peel on the Isle of Man**, was fishing near the south coast of Ireland and witnessed the tragedy unravel. Woods and his crew managed to pull 150 people to safety, but couldn't carry any more. Woods later described the ordeal:

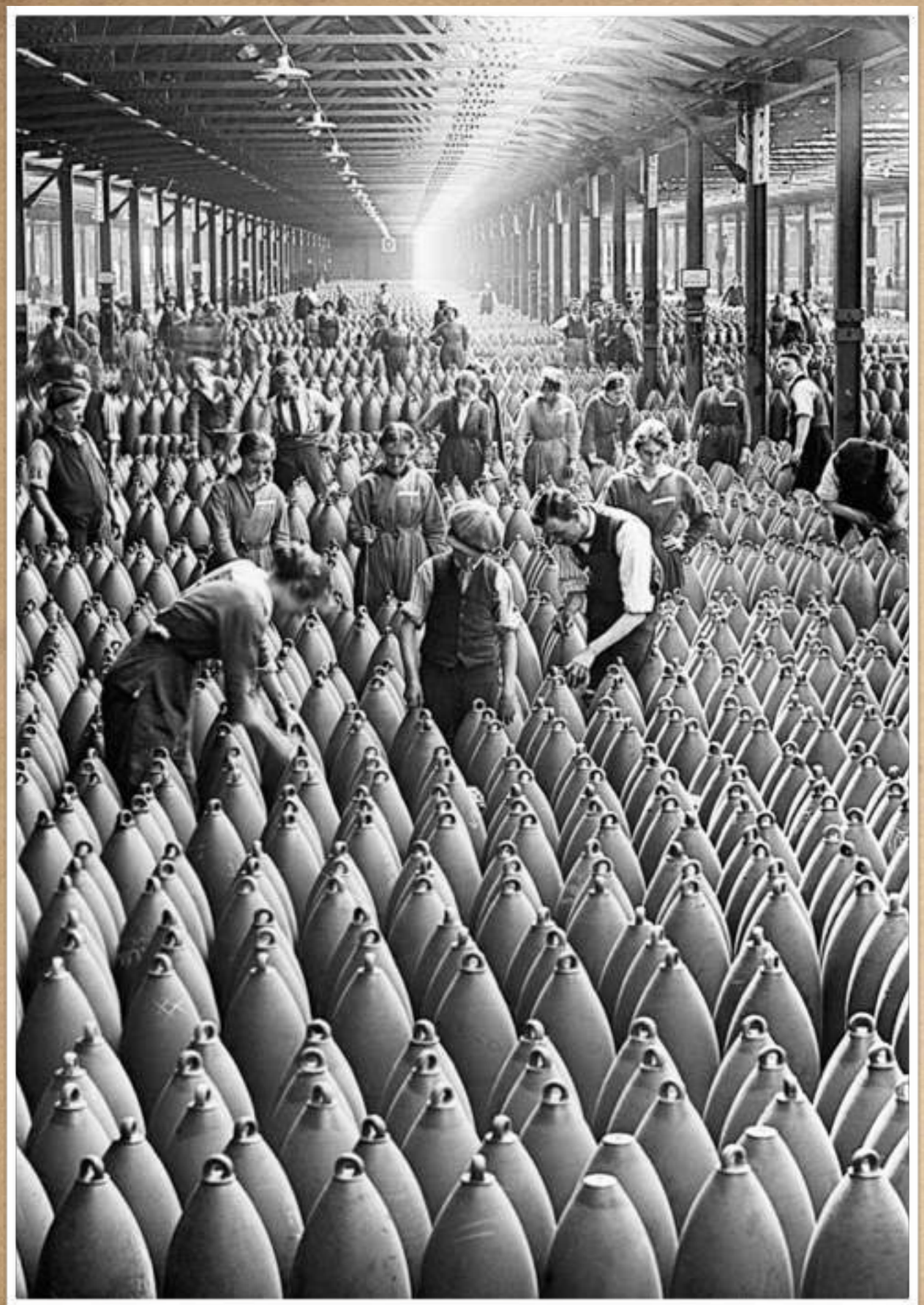
> ***"I never want to see the like again. The saddest sight I ever saw in all my life.***

The Germans justified the attack by arguing that the ship was carrying ammunition, but in the British press it was portrayed as barbarism. Anti-German riots broke out in Britain, with German businesses in **Merseyside, Manchester and London** being targeted. 128 of the fatalities were from America, and this loss was a significant factor in America's later entry into the war.

1914 2014

CHAPTER THREE
AN ARMY OF MUNITIONS WORKERS

1918 2018



By 1915 it was apparent that Britain was not manufacturing enough ammunition to supply the front lines. Too few shells were being produced, and too many of those that were, failed to explode. In response to this 'shell scandal' the Government created a new Ministry of Munitions which increased Government control over weapons production, created 73 new factories and repurposed many others. Hundreds of thousands of new workers rapidly stepped up production. In April 1915, just two million rounds of shells had been sent to France. By the end of the war, that figure stood at 187 million rounds.

The stories gathered in this chapter show how this tremendous rate of productivity transformed life for many on the home front, not least the new, mostly female workforce.

Munition workers in a shell warehouse at National Shell Filling Factory No.6, **Chilwell in Nottinghamshire** in 1917. *IWM (Q 30018)*

Workers at **Chilwell factory in Nottinghamshire** checking and tightening shells. *IWM (Q 30041)*

After the introduction of conscription in March 1916, the government encouraged women to take the place of male employees who were serving at the front. By 1918 nearly one million women were employed in engineering and munitions industries. Known as Munitionettes - these women became the poster girls for the war effort and were frequently photographed and filmed to emphasize the importance of their contribution to the war effort.

IWM (510)

Many of the female workers at the vast shell filling factory in **Chilwell in the suburbs of Nottingham** (above) lived in an industrial complex that was like a small city, with its own power station, 125 miles of railway track, 34 railway engines, giant laundries, a ballroom, a cinema, two purpose-built townships, and kitchens producing 14,000 meals and 13,000 loaves of bread a day.

Long shifts were commonplace in the factories and there are reports of women passing out after working 12 hours continuously, without eating.

Above - A sight rarely seen before the war - women in boiler suits at **Chilwell in Nottinghamshire**. Boiler suits were practical; long skirts ran a greater risk of getting caught up in equipment. *IWM (HU 96426)*

Factory work was monotonous and women like these (right) at the shell filling factory in **Chilwell in Nottinghamshire** often found themselves doing jobs that had been simplified into a series of unskilled tasks. *IWM (Q 30032)*

Women made up a third of the 80,000 strong workforce at The Royal Arsenal in **Woolwich in London** (left). Although employment was generally regarded as well paid, female workers did not receive the same wages and benefits as their male counterparts. *IWM (Q 27853)*

Where are the girls of Arsenal?
Working night and day,
Wearing the roses off their cheeks
For precious little pay.
Some people style them 'canaries',
We're working for the lads across the sea.
If it were not for the munition lasses,
Where would the Empire be?

Lyrics to factory workers' song, Anonymous

Women workers assembling fuses in the fuse shop, Royal Arsenal, **Woolwich in London**, May 1918 *IWM (Q 27862)*

Work in the factories was hazardous. Employees handled explosives and noxious substances known to cause a range of medical disorders, from skin complaints to bone disintegration. Manufacturing mustard and other gases was particularly perilous; sickness rates were so high at HM Factory in **Chittening Road in Bristol** that workers were entitled to one week of holiday for every 20 days worked.

Women working at HM Factory in **Gretna in the Scottish borders** (above) produced nearly a thousand tonnes of the explosive, cordite, per week. They used their bare hands to mix concentrated acid with cotton and solvent to make what became known as 'the devil's porridge'. *IWM (HU 82182)*

A female munitions worker wears a respirator whilst carrying out her duties with explosives at **Chilwell, in Nottinghamshire**. *IWM (Q 30020)*

Fatalities in the factories were not uncommon, and the filling factories where workers assembled the metal and explosive components of shells, were particularly vulnerable. An estimated 600 people were killed by accidental explosions during the course of the war.

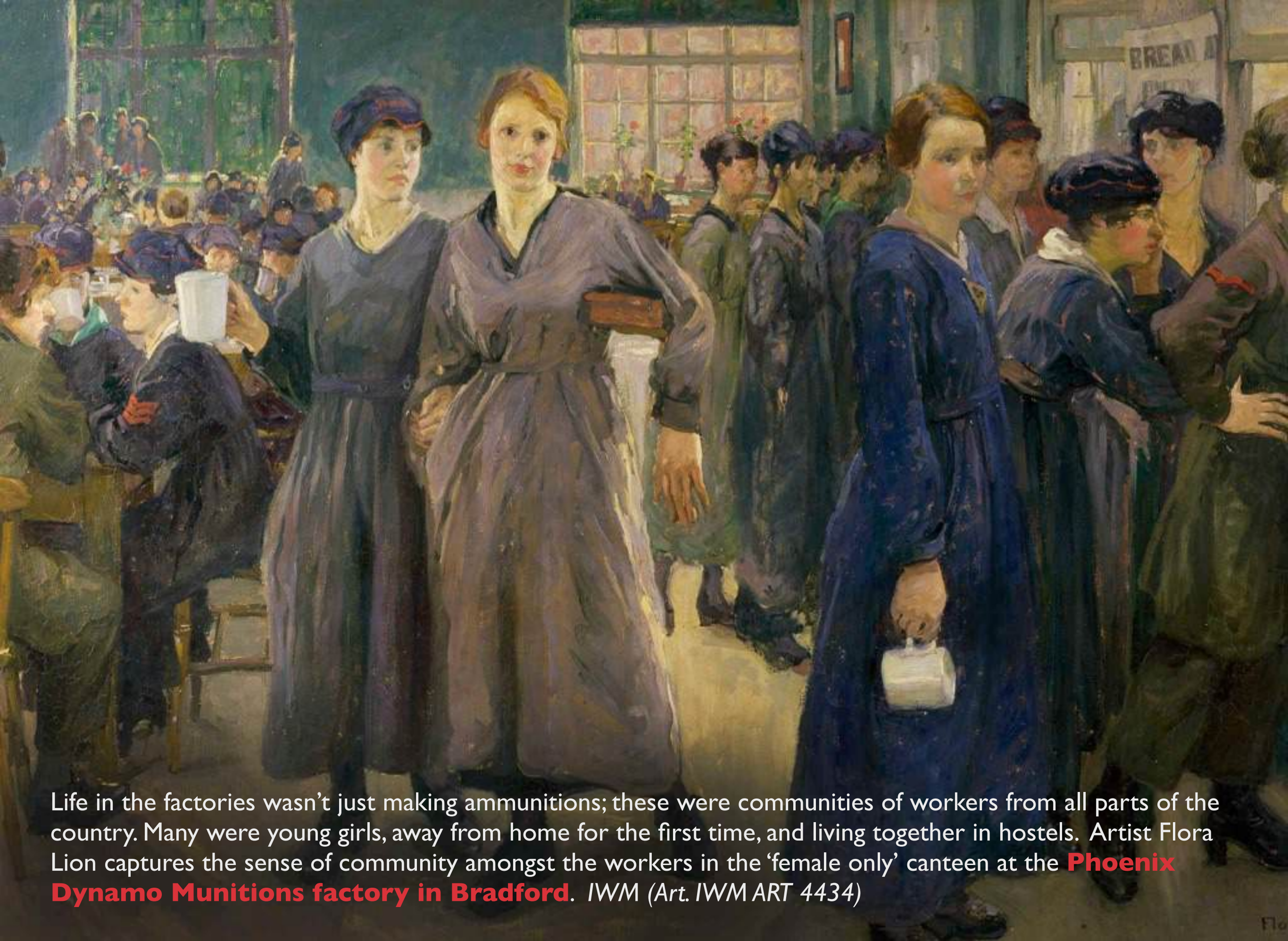
IWM (Q 108454)

A rare photograph (above) from July 1917 documents the funeral of two female workers, 18 year-old Mildred Owen and 19 year-old Mary Watson from **Pembrey Munitions Factory in Llanelli**. The girls were mourned by their fellow munitions workers, some of whom wore their working uniform. One worker composed a poem commemorating the women, concluding...

'...Their memory shall live for aye
And Wales shall honour it, and sing
The praise of those who gave their lives
For England's fighters and their king'

The greatest loss of life occurred in July 1918 following an enormous explosion in the mixing house at the National Shell Filling Station at **Chilwell in Nottinghamshire**. 134 people lost their lives and hundreds more were injured. Despite extensive damage (pictured below), the factory was back up and running within 4 days.

IWM (HU 096415)



Life in the factories wasn't just making ammunitions; these were communities of workers from all parts of the country. Many were young girls, away from home for the first time, and living together in hostels. Artist Flora Lion captures the sense of community amongst the workers in the 'female only' canteen at the **Phoenix Dynamo Munitions factory in Bradford**. *IWM (Art. IWM ART 4434)*

Sport, especially football, was encouraged among the new female workforce, and many munitions factories established their own ladies' football teams. In 1918, knock-out competition the Munitionettes' Cup attracted 30 teams; matches drew crowds of tens of thousands of spectators and raised large sums of money for the war effort. Despite their popularity, in 1921 the FA banned women's football matches at their grounds, and this ban was only lifted in 1971.

Teams such as the Cumbria Munitionettes (left) from **Lonsdale in Cumbria** used the matches to raise money for the war effort and for wounded soldiers. *Photo courtesy of Ashley Kendal.*

The popularity of St Helen's Ladies (above) from **St Helens in Merseyside** continued after the war. A crowd of 53,000 turned out to watch them take on the Dick, Kerr Ladies at Goodison Park in 1920, with another 14,000 locked outside. *Photo courtesy of St Helens Local History and Archive Library*

Munitionettes' Cup winners, Blyth Spartans from **Croft Park in Newcastle** (right). The team beat steelworkers Bolckow Vaughan 5-0 in a match which attracted a crowd of 22,000. *Photo courtesy Yvonne Crawford.*

1914 2014

CHAPTER FOUR
BRITISH INVENTIONS

1918 2018

The stories gathered in this chapter showcase how technology changed the nature of war forever. The dawning realisation that this was not to be a traditional war, nor a short one, challenged the most creative scientists, designers and manufacturers to devise and develop machines that could lead the country to victory. Developed and tested in secrecy, often at great personal cost to those who invented them, their mastery demanded ingenuity, courage and skill.

Flotation experiments with a Mark IX Tank at the Welsh Harp Reservoir, in **Dollis Hill in London.** *IWM (Q 14625)*

A small agricultural company, William Foster and Co. in Lincoln, was chosen for a secret project which aimed to resolve the stalemate of the battlefield. Winston Churchill, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, wanted to create a war machine that could force a path through barbed wire and penetrate the thick mud of the trenches. The design of this 'land-ship' was hammered out in a room at **The White Hart Hotel in Lincoln** and in late 1915, a prototype was ready. In order to conceal their true purpose, the first models were described as 'water carriers for Mesopotamia'. Workers referred to them as 'water tanks' or simply 'tanks', and the name stuck.

Once production had taken off, residents of **Lincoln** became used to seeing the machines rolling down their streets. These images show a tank in the Cornhill Quarter of the city, and then the same area as it is today.

Photo courtesy of Lincolnshire County Council

Tank production was hot, heavy, dangerous work that now included women, working in heavy industry for the first time. They worked 12-hour shifts, taking over from each other to ensure 24-hour cover, even eating their sandwiches at their machines in the factory.

IWM (1191)

Tanks were tested all over the country. The very first machine, nicknamed 'Little Willie' had track frames 12 feet long, weighed 14 tons and could carry a crew of three.

> ***"We didn't get many holidays, it was work, work, work...***

Tank girls, including Florence Bonnet (middle), from William Foster and Co. *Photo courtesy of Irene Crosby*

The tanks were tested at several secret locations. On the **Elveden estate in West Suffolk**, 200 acres of farm land were given the cover name of The Elveden Explosives Area. There, the men of the Heavy Section Machine Gun Corps were trained to crew the tanks; commanding, driving and firing the guns. Local people were warned that they would be shot should they stray into the restricted area. They had their own theory about what was going on – they thought a tunnel was being dug from Suffolk to Germany.

Extra land was bought at **Bovington near Wareham in Dorset**. The new Heavy Section Machine Gun Corps moved to what remains their home today. It's also the location of The Tank Museum, one of the world's largest collections of tanks.

Secret experimental grounds were also opened in 1916 at **Dollis Hill in north west London**. Occupying an area around what is now known as Tankridge Road, many experiments were carried out including the use of amphibious vehicles at the nearby Welsh Harp Reservoir.

Flotation experiments with a Mark IX Tank at the Welsh Harp, **Dollis Hill, London.** *IWM (Q 14626)*

The first use of tanks on the battlefield was in September 1916, at the battle of the Somme. Many machines broke down before they reached enemy lines, but those that did caused mayhem. When working properly, tanks could cross trenches as wide as 9 feet and smash through barbed wire, and their steel armour protected against small arms fire and fragments from high explosives. The fear that tanks sparked amongst German soldiers became known as 'tank panic'. The first tanks moved at an excruciatingly slow pace of 3 miles per hour. The 'Whippet' tank was first produced in 1917 and named because it could reach speeds of up to 8 miles per hour.

Paintings by William Bernard Adeney depicts a Whippet tank (left) at **Dollis Hill in London** and a Mark V (right) practising manoeuvres at **Bovington in Dorset**. *IWM (Art. IWM ART 2487) & (Art. IWM ART 2489)*

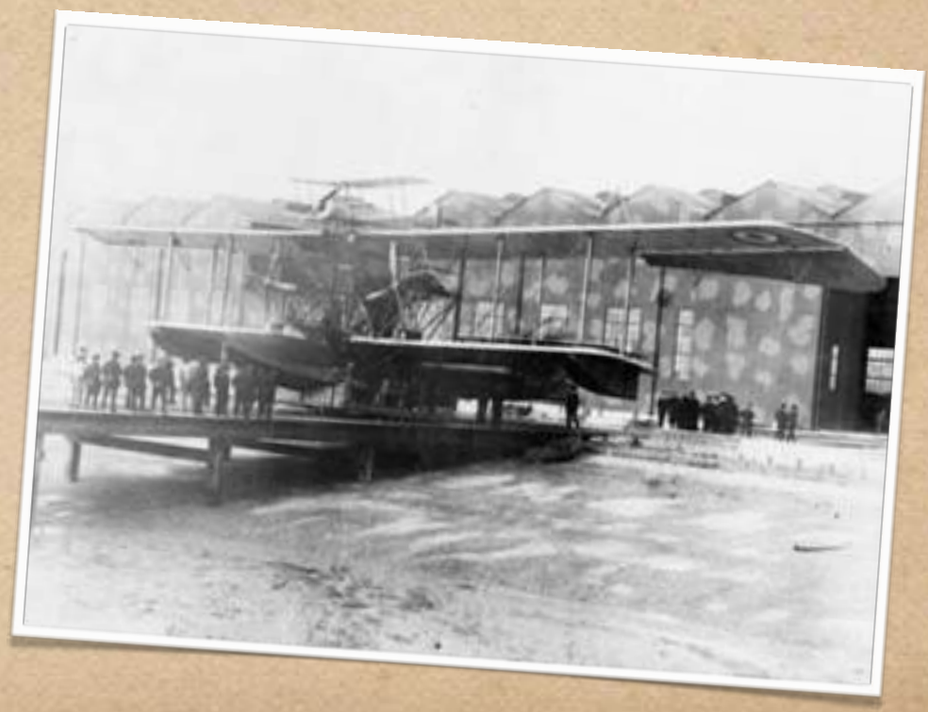
The First World War saw aviation grow from little more than a gentleman's sport to a vital part of the war effort. In 1914 the Royal Flying Corps was a branch of the British Army with only 150 aircraft, and the Royal Naval Air Service had just 93 planes. Britain's brightest brains worked to improve the safety of aircraft that would go on to prove their worth in reconnaissance and aerial photography, as well as carrying weapons. By November 1918, the newly formed RAF boasted 22,000 aeroplanes and nearly 300,000 personnel.

The Sopwith Camel (above) had a maximum speed of 115mph and was named after the hump-shaped protective covering over its machine guns. *IWM (Q 073399)*

The Sopwith Camel was probably the best known and most successful British aeroplane of World War One, having shot down more enemy aircraft than any other Allied fighter plane. The Sopwith Aviation Company was set up in 1912 by a young entrepreneur, Tommy Sopwith, who had taught himself to fly. Many of the Sopwith models were designed on the floor of an old skating rink on Canbury Park Road, in **Kingston Upon Thames**. There was no airfield in Kingston, so testing took place at **Brooklands in Surrey**. Two years after the war the company went into liquidation, but undaunted, Sopwith started a new company, HG Hawker Engineering, which would go on to produce the Hawker Hurricane. He was knighted in 1953.

Even before the outbreak of the war, sea planes were in development at **Felixstowe on the coast of Suffolk**. Churchill visited to take flight in one of the first sea planes, a Borel, but it crashed into the water leaving the First Lord of the Admiralty in need of a change of clothes and a warm meal. Later airborne launch experiments attempted to increase the offensive range on anti-Zeppelin patrols.

Launching seaplanes by catapult method from on board HMS Slinger in 1917. *IWM (1166)*



A Scout C on the upper wing of the Porte Baby flying boat at Felixstowe. *IWM (Q 63768)*

As engineers raced to improve aeroplane design, the training of pilots became a priority. Flying schools were set up around the country and in 1916, the Royal Flying Corps introduced measures to regulate training standards. Even so, the life of a pilot remained fraught with danger, and casualties rose sharply. An estimated 14,000 British and Commonwealth pilots were killed during the war, and of these, 8,000 were killed in training.

Pilots at Montrose Air Station. *Photo courtesy of Montrose Air Station Heritage*

The first operational military air station in the UK was set up before the outbreak of the war in **Montrose in Scotland** and the first Royal Flying Corps squadron to be based there was Number 2 squadron. The men of No 2 squadron left Montrose 3 August 1914 and were the first pilots to land in France after war was declared. The base expanded in 1915 so that new pilots could be trained. Over the course of the war many other stations were set up across Britain including **Shawbury in Shropshire** and **Stow Maries in Essex**. Part of **Port Meadow in Oxfordshire** was transformed into a military aerodrome, but as it was an ancient grazing area, the livestock had to be moved away each morning before planes could take off and land safely.

Throughout the war years, scientists and engineers on the home front were hard at work developing a whole range of products that would help gain advantage on the battlefield.

The iconic 'Tommies' Tin Helmet' was introduced in 1916. It was also know as the 'Brodie helmet' after **London** entrepreneur, John Leopold Brodie who helped design the hat using a single piece of steel.
IWM (UNI12601)

The Livens Projector was a deadly flame thrower that could launch canisters of boiling oil and poison gas into the German trenches. It was devised by a British Army officer from **Lincoln**.
IWM (Q 14940)

The first mass produced gas mask was developed by the British chemist Lieutenant Colonel Edward Harrison from **London** towards the end of 1916. It is credited with saving thousands of lives.
IWM (EQU 003915)

This airship, landing at Bentra Golf Course in **Whitehead in Northern Ireland**, was among many that were developed in Britain to help protect shipping from German U-boats.
Photo courtesy of Guy Warner

1914 2014

CHAPTER FIVE
LIFE ON THE LAND

1918 2018

The war years brought with them sweeping changes to the production of food. There was an army to feed, and many of the skilled farm workers had joined up. By 1915 German U-boats were blockading the British coastline, preventing the import of food and threatening to starve the country, which prior to the war, had relied heavily on food from abroad. These stories show how everyone – from the Women's Land Army to scouts and schoolboys - mucked in, utilising every corner of the land to 'grow for Britain'.

A member of the Women's Land Army operating a single-furrow plough on a British farm during the First World War. *IWM (Q 54607)*

Women were a vital part of the drive to increase productivity on the land. From the start of the war women from all social classes responded to the need for help and volunteered to work on farms. As the war progressed, recruitment was formalised, and in 1917 the Women's Land Army was established. Women were given four weeks training and sent off to farms around the country. By 1918, up to 260,000 women are reported to have worked as farm labourers, with over 16,000 working directly for the Land Army.

Members of the Women's Land Army in training at Seale Hayne, near **Newton Abbot in Devon**. *Photo courtesy of The Seale-Haynians (alumni) Club archives*

Not everybody welcomed women onto the land. Some felt it wasn't ladylike, and others believed women were simply not up to the job. For example, Devon farmers were particularly resistant to 'strange' women who were not family members working on their farms. In 1916 over 2,000 women were registered as available for farm work in Devon, but only 835 were employed on the county's farms. Local newspapers report the farmers' unwillingness to pay women reasonable rates, and their assertions that 'a boy of 12 was worth two women'.

In response, Calmady Hamlyn from the local Women's War Service Committee set up Great Bidlake Farm in **Bridestowe in Devon**. It was run entirely by women which at the time was a radical and daring concept. Farm work started in 1917 and the following summer, crops were reported to be flourishing.

Above - 1917 recruitment poster for the Women's Land Army
IWM (Art .IWM PST 5996)

Members of the Women's Land Army wore a distinctive uniform consisting of a tunic, breeches, boots and a felt cloche hat. They were expected to go wherever they were needed and they were paid 18 shillings a week for milking, taking care of livestock and general farm duties. This rose to 20 shillings when they passed an efficiency test.

In woodland areas including Flaxley Woods in the **Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire**, women took on the role of felling trees and cutting logs, and became known as 'Lumber Jills'. In this image, members of the Women's Forestry Corps grind an axe.

IWM (Q 30719)

A female farm worker pulling flax on a farm in **Yeovil, Somerset**. *IWM (Q 30886)*

Women also worked to harvest crops such as flax which was used for cloth coverings for aircraft construction. For ten weeks of the year, hundreds of pickers descended on farms in the area around **Yeovil in Somerset** for the flax season. Women workers camped in tents or slept in the open air, attracting the attention of local townsfolk who would walk or cycle past to catch a glimpse of them. Picking flax by hand was far from easy and often left the women with festering hand sores.

Films like this, filmed at the **Royal Farm in Sandringham in Norfolk**, were produced to show that women could perform the same hard labour as men. *IWM (NBT274-1)*

It wasn't just women working on established farms. Students, Irish or Portuguese workers, POWs and children helped too, and every spare pocket of land was exploited. Across the country there was a huge expansion in the number of allotments, to around 1,500,000 plots by the end of the war. Demand was high; in **Cardiff**, a thousand applications for allotments were made, but there was only space for 370 plots. In **Stoke-on-Trent** the council ran courses and used a demonstration plot to teach people how to grow food.

Schoolboys from Eton College in **Windsor in Berkshire** dug up the school playing fields to grow potatoes and root vegetables. *IWM (Q 30855)*

Potatoes were grown in the grounds of the military hospital in **Bagthorpe in Nottingham**, pictured here in 1916. By 1917 there were more than a thousand allotments in the city. *Photo courtesy of L.Cripwell and Picture the Past*

Established just seven years earlier by Sir Robert Baden Powell, newly formed groups of Scouts in areas including **Belfast, Liverpool and Lancashire**, lent a helping hand.

IWM (Q 30597)

The cost of food more than doubled during the war years, and as the fighting dragged on, fresh fruit, vegetables and meat got harder to find. The Ministry of Food was established in December 1916 and measures to control food supplies were introduced, such as fines for wasting bread, making white flour instead of whole wheat, or for letting rats invade the wheat stores. The pressure was on to make the most of all that was produced.

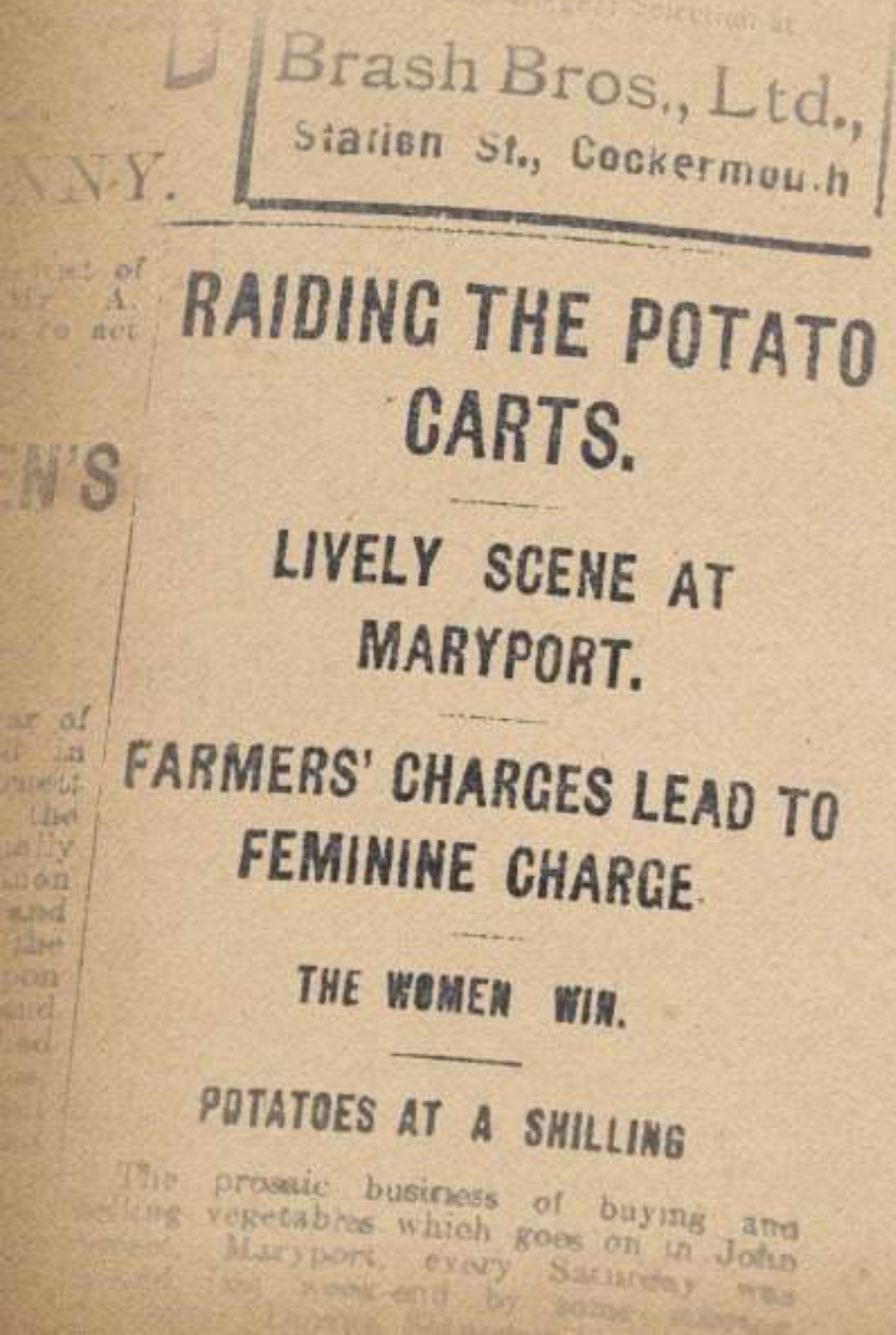
Potato pickers in 1914. *Photograph courtesy of Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading*

The Ministry of Food published a leaflet with ideas for making pastry, cakes and buns from potatoes. School records in the small island community of **Jersey in the Channel Islands** show absences around potato planting and harvest time, as the children stayed at home to help.

Bakers like those at **Rowlands Bakery in Stafford** (below) were encouraged to keep bread back for a number of hours so it wasn't sold at its freshest point – effectively selling stale bread so people ate less of it.

Photo courtesy Staffordshire Museum Service

The later years of the war saw increasing pressure on food supplies. The harvest of 1916 was poor in many parts of the country, and the resumption by Germans of unrestricted submarine warfare in January 1917 resulted in prices rising at alarming rates. Although the food shortages were not as severe as elsewhere on the continent, growing food queues and the endless pressure to save and preserve food began to take their toll.



Brash Bros., Ltd.,
Station St., Cockermouth

RAIDING THE POTATO CARTS.

LIVELY SCENE AT MARYPORT.

FARMERS' CHARGES LEAD TO FEMININE CHARGE.

THE WOMEN WIN.

POTATOES AT A SHILLING

The prosaic business of buying and selling vegetables which goes on in John Maryport, every Saturday was

In many parts of the country women grouped together to form housewives' committees, and used their power as consumers to combat the soaring prices. In **Rugby in Warwickshire**, the housewives' committee undertook 'muddling strikes' where the women would all buy the usual amount of a particular produce one day, but the following day they would not purchase anything. The retailers were left with food they could not sell, and the women were in a strong position to bargain the price down.

Unrest and riots broke out in **Maryport in West Cumbria** in early 1917 when farmers increased the price of potatoes fourfold. Outraged by such a large price hike of a staple food, the women of the town, known as the Maryport miners' wives, organised a boycott of the traders and farmers. Farmers were run out of town, barrows overturned and nighttime raids made on the potato fields. The protest spread as far as **Keswick** and **Carlisle** and was only brought under control when the authorities cracked down on the thieves and brought in price control.

Image courtesy of Carlisle Library

Food queue in **Reading in Berkshire**.
IWM (Q 56276)

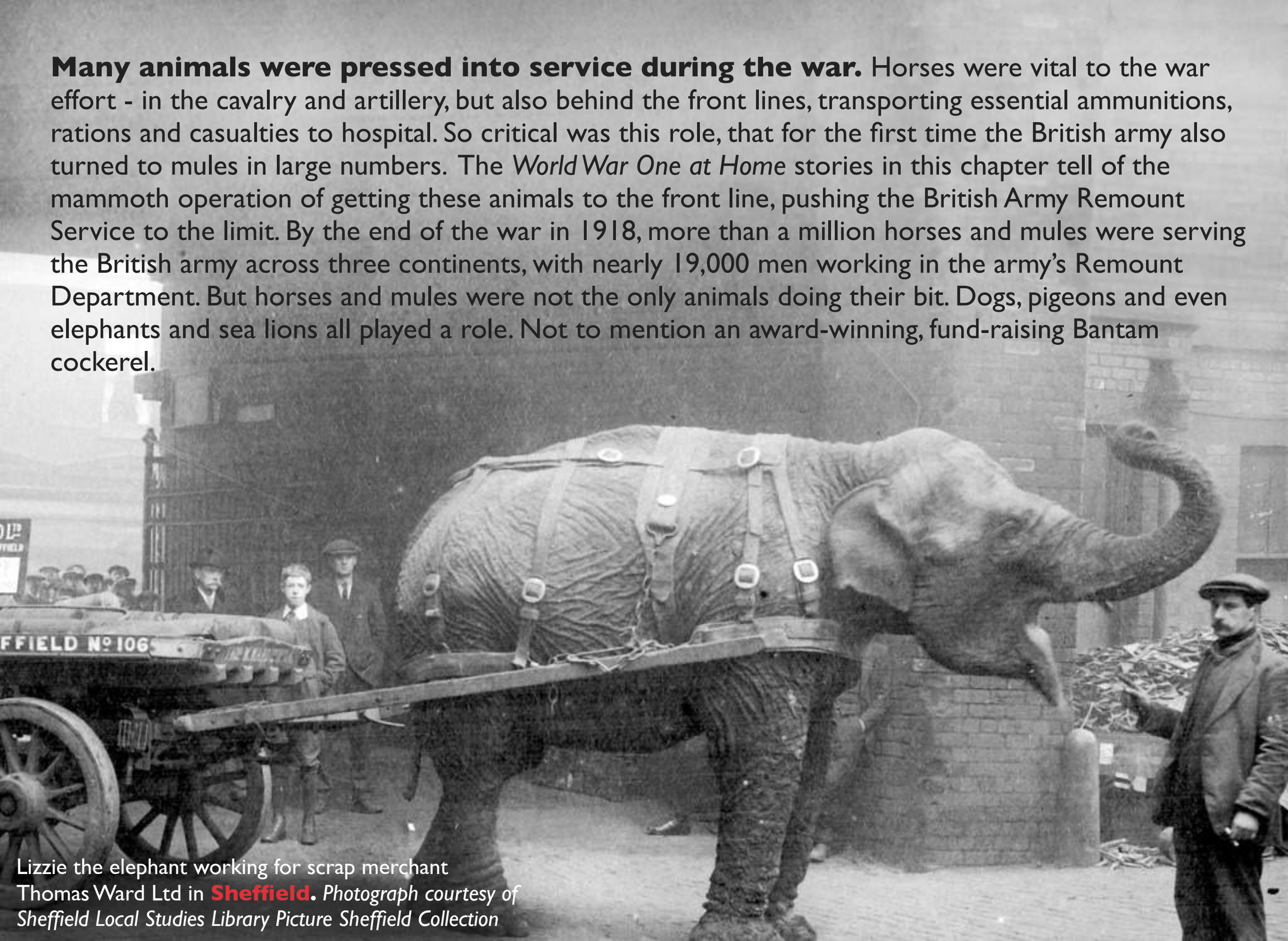
Rationing of sugar, meat, flour, margarine and milk was introduced in early 1918. Rationing was intended to prevent food hoarding and food queues and ensure a fairer distribution of food; even King George and Queen Mary had ration books. Official figures show that calorie intake almost kept up to pre-war levels.

1914 2014

CHAPTER SIX
ANIMALS ON THE HOME FRONT

1918 2018

Many animals were pressed into service during the war. Horses were vital to the war effort - in the cavalry and artillery, but also behind the front lines, transporting essential ammunitions, rations and casualties to hospital. So critical was this role, that for the first time the British army also turned to mules in large numbers. The *World War One at Home* stories in this chapter tell of the mammoth operation of getting these animals to the front line, pushing the British Army Remount Service to the limit. By the end of the war in 1918, more than a million horses and mules were serving the British army across three continents, with nearly 19,000 men working in the army's Remount Department. But horses and mules were not the only animals doing their bit. Dogs, pigeons and even elephants and sea lions all played a role. Not to mention an award-winning, fund-raising Bantam cockerel.



Lizzie the elephant working for scrap merchant Thomas Ward Ltd in **Sheffield.** *Photograph courtesy of Sheffield Local Studies Library Picture Sheffield Collection*

At the start of the war some senior army officers believed that the traditional cavalry charge would be the most effective way to break through enemy lines, and battalions were trained in anticipation of this. But the deadlock of the trenches, defended by machine guns, wire and artillery, meant that mounted cavalry were rarely used in a combat role on the western front. However, on other fronts, notably in Palestine, cavalry shouldered a greater share of the fighting.

At the outset of war in 1914, the Berkshire Yeomanry already had a substantial number of men ready to mobilise. New recruits were trained at the riding school in Yeomanry House in **Reading in Berkshire**. They were taught to ride and care for their horses, as well as how to use cavalry weapons such as the sword and the lance. Arthur Budgett, on whom Michael Morpurgo based the character of Captain Nicholls in his book *War Horse*, was an officer with the Berkshire Yeomanry.

The Scottish Horse Regiment trained in the Black Isle area around **Blair Atholl in Perthshire in Scotland**. The first regiment was sent by boat to Egypt, but before they arrived, plans were changed. The cavalry regiment was told to divert to Gallipoli, where the men would become an infantry battalion. Their horses, travelling on a different ship, continued on to Egypt where they joined the Warwickshire Yeomanry.

Champion Regimental Jumping Section, Berkshire Yeomanry 1912.
Photo courtesy of Berkshire Yeomanry Museum

While the role of horses in combat was greatly reduced, they were still critical to success on the battlefield. Tough and resilient shire horses pulled ambulances and hauled artillery - which could weigh more than a London black cab - and faster breeds were used for communication and reconnaissance work. The British Army needed many more than the 25,000 horses they already had in service, so requisitioned animals from farms and businesses back home. For many businesses dependent on horse power, this was a bitter loss.

The family home in St George where *The Marquis of Worcester* operated.
Photographs courtesy of Mary King

Like many households across the country, the Weymouth family from **St George in Bristol** were devastated. They owned *The Marquis of Worcester*, a family run pub, bakery and stables, and relied heavily on their horses. The business had already suffered a blow when the head of the family, Edward Weymouth, left to fight. His wife, Alice, who had taken over as landlady, did not take the news of losing the animals well. Alice regarded the offer of 40 gold sovereigns for her horses as 'blood money' and in anger, she threw the coins across the garden. Over the years her children and grandchildren were encouraged to search for the lost coins.

As well as requisitioning animals from owners in the UK, horses and mules were imported from overseas. The equivalent of more than £36 million was spent on buying these equines, and the United States was the main source of supply. Every couple of days between 500 and 1,000 horses and mules left US ports bound for Europe. Once in Britain they were taken to be trained and prepared for military service at Remount Depots, the largest of which were located near **Bristol, Liverpool** and **Southampton**.

The veterinary hospital. Today, Avonmouth Primary School stands on this site. *Photo courtesy of the Official Legion of Frontiersmen archives, and Peel Special Collections Library, University of Alberta*

A parade through Romsey marketplace in 1916. *Photo courtesy of the Lower Test Valley Archaeological Study Group*

Shirehampton and Avonmouth in Bristol was one of the largest Remount Depots with over 300,000 horses passing through. A large veterinary hospital treated animals with diseases or who had become ill on the long journey.

Romsey Remount Depot in **Pauncefoot Hill in Hampshire** prepared more than 120,000 horses for war. The horses arrived by train at Romsey station and were led through the town to a vast military village spanning more than 500 acres.

The Russley remount girls from Lady Birkbeck's Remount Depot at **Russley Park near Baydon in Wiltshire**. Russley was unusual because it was staffed entirely by women who worked with the finest warhorses - those destined to be officers' mounts. *IWM (Q10582)*

The coastal town of **Minehead in Somerset** was one of main depots for mules that had travelled across the Atlantic from Argentina and the Southern States of America. The well-to-do seaside resort was ideal because it was within easy reach by rail of Avonmouth Docks. After arriving at the railway station in Minehead, thousands of mules were herded in packs through the centre of town, creating quite a spectacle for local onlookers.

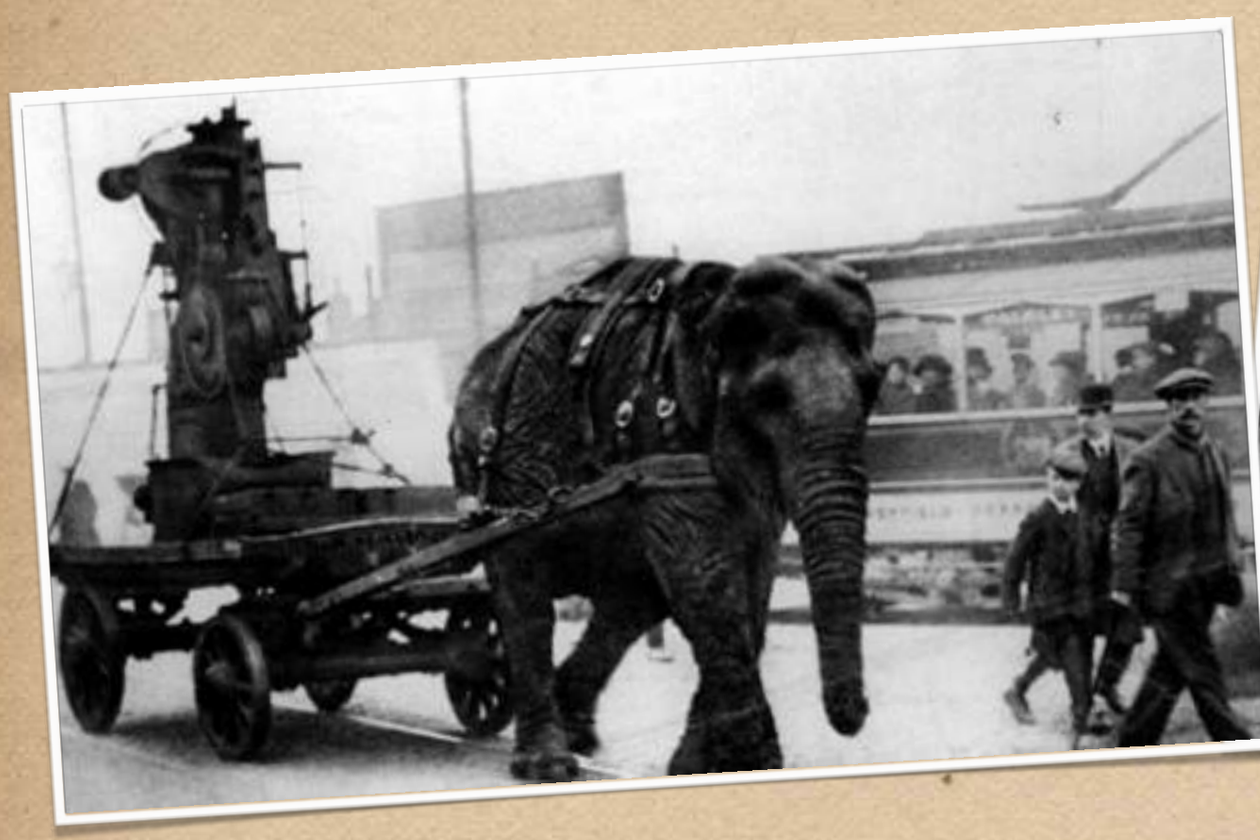
American mules arriving at Minehead Railway Station
Photo courtesy of Ms Daphne McCutcheon

Minehead Station in 2014

THEN AND NOW

The surrounding Exmoor countryside provided suitable fields and farms for the animals to rest and recuperate after their long transatlantic journey, as well as undergo training before being moved to the front line. Once trained, these robust animals were efficient and largely docile - and cheaper to run than horses because they could go further on less food.

With the loss of many horses to the war, other animals were drafted in to take their place and the home front saw some extraordinary sights. In Sheffield an Indian elephant called Lizzie hauled heavy loads of steel and machinery for scrap merchant Thomas Ward Ltd, based in **Attercliffe in Sheffield**. Lizzie, leased from Sedgewick's travelling menagerie, which was unable to operate during the war, became a valuable employee and was able to do the work of 3 horses. Indian elephants from Lord John Sanger's circus also toiled in **Outwood in Surrey**. Annie, Ida, Jenny and Tiny ploughed fields and moved heavy machinery.



Photographs courtesy of Sheffield Local Studies Library Picture Sheffield Collection

Lizzie was a common sight on the streets of Sheffield, much to the amazement of local children. She wore leather shoes to protect her feet from scraps of metal. Anecdotes about Lizzie include her eating a schoolboy's cap and pinching food through a kitchen window using her trunk.

1914 2014

CHAPTER SEVEN
CARING FOR THE WOUNDED

1918 2018

British nurse and ambulance driver, Elsie Knocker, rolling bandages at her window, August 1917 *IWM (Q 2674)*

Within weeks of the start of the War, the home front saw unprecedented numbers of casualties returning home for treatment. By the end of 1914, 73,000 sick and wounded men had been brought back to England, filling up the existing military and voluntary hospitals.

The stories gathered for *World War One at Home* reflect some of the ways that Britain's medical services adapted to meet the demand for increasing numbers of staff and beds. Many thousands of women worked in Voluntary Aid Detachments, public buildings were requisitioned, and the owners of some of the country's finest stately homes volunteered them as convalescent hospitals.

The stories also show how treatment of the sick and injured soldiers led to significant medical breakthroughs.

Casualties in France wait to be loaded onto the Princess Christian Hospital train. *IWM (C 0915)*

This ingenious three-tier cot system was able to accommodate both seated and lying patients at the same time. It was the brainchild of Frank Marillier, who worked for the Great Western Railway in **Swindon in Wiltshire**. *Photo Courtesy STEAM - Museum of the GWR*

Thousands of wounded soldiers travelled from France in convoys of hospital trains and ships.

The hospital trains were specially adapted from existing stock so that nurses and medical officers could care for their patients as they journeyed to hospital. The vast numbers of casualties during the big battles meant that conditions were often cramped and over-crowded. Injured soldier and poet Robert Graves described his five-day journey on a hospital train as a 'nightmare'. Historians agree, however, that the adapted trains were a vital part of the evacuation effort and without them, many more lives would have been lost.

The trains were destined for hospitals around Britain. These quickly filled up, with some admitting as many as 600 patients a day.

The Endell Street Military Hospital in **Covent Garden in London** was the only all-female run military hospital. Opened in May 1915 by suffragists Dr Flora Murray and Dr Louisa Garrett Anderson, the hospital became a specialist centre for head injuries and broken limbs, and even published clinical research. When it closed in August 1919, staff had treated 24,000 patients and carried out more than 7,000 operations.

The all-female staff proved what many had before doubted – that women could manage the medical and administrative needs of a hospital just as well as men. In 1917 both Murray and Garrett Anderson received CBEs in recognition of their accomplishments, but career prospects for women in medicine after the war changed little.

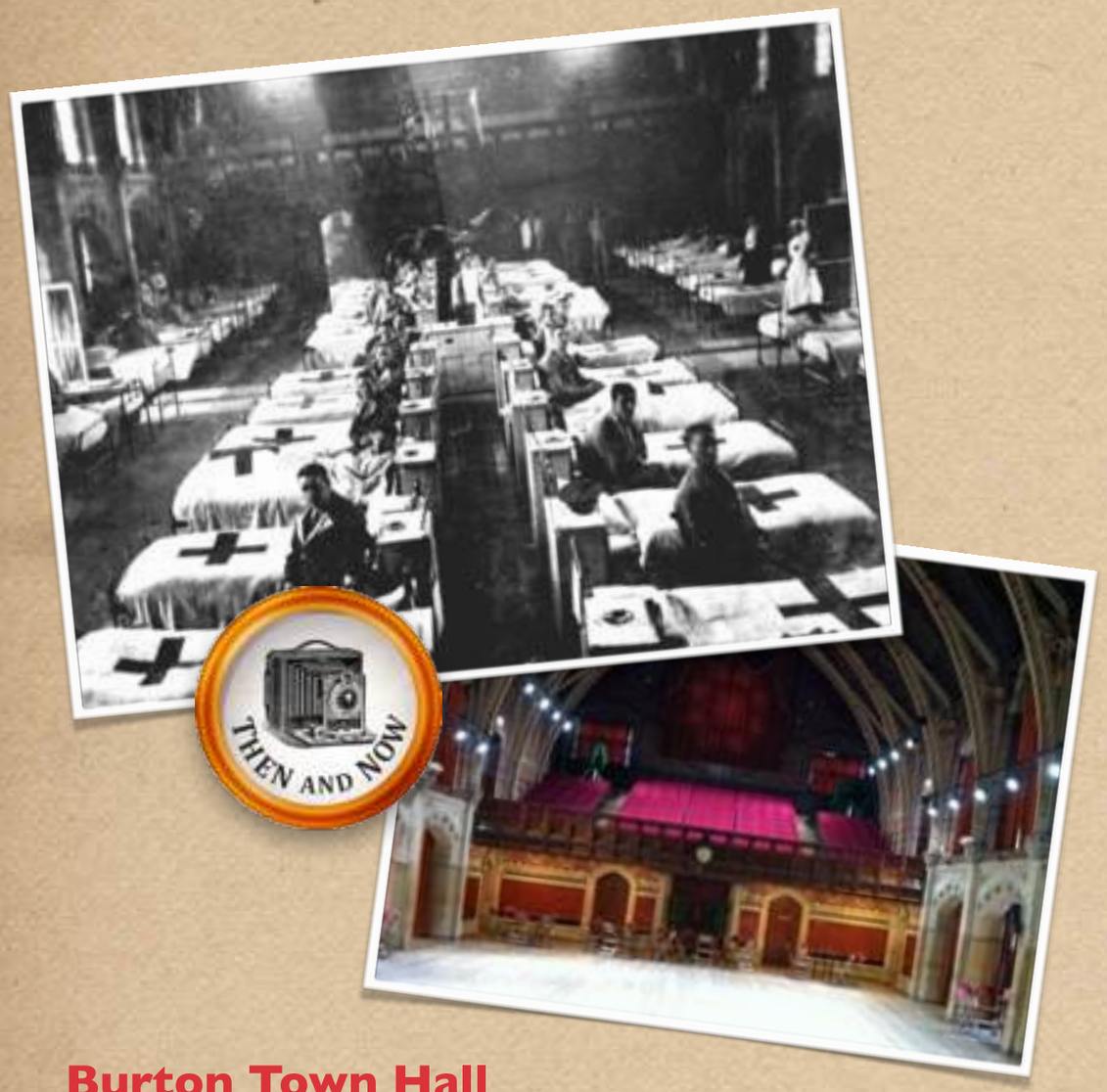
Artist Francis Dodd captures female surgeons and anaesthetist attending a male patient at **Endell Street Military Hospital.**
IWM (Art. IWM ART 4084)

Many troops were treated by VADs, short for Voluntary Aid Detachment, or as the troops fondly called them, 'Very Adaptable Dames' since they did almost every job. They needed to be adaptable, as the casualties were often complicated to nurse and it was very demanding work. An estimated 90,000 VADs attended to the wounded, with most coming from the middle and upper classes.

A nurse and two orderlies dressing patients' wounds at **Endell Street Military Hospital**. *Photo courtesy of Cook-Dickerman Collection, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site*

Crime novelist Agatha Christie worked as a VAD in the Red Cross Hospital in **Torquay Town Hall in Devon**. Her role included preparing and dispensing medicines - thus giving her valuable insight into which drugs could be dangerous in the wrong doses. Her first novel, written in 1916, featured a poisoning, and over the course of her writing career she went on to pen the murder of a further 81 victims in this way.

As well as pre-existing hospitals, the wounded were cared for in a whole range of private and public buildings, which had been taken over as part of the war effort - from schools and universities to stately homes, hotels and town halls.



Burton Town Hall in Staffordshire was transformed from a meeting and function space to an area for beds and nursing stations. The site proved useful when the area was targeted by Zeppelin raids in 1916 as casualties from the bombardment were treated here. *Photo courtesy of Burton Civic Society*

Recovering soldiers at The Palace Hotel in **Southend-on-Sea in Essex** enjoyed sea views from the balconies, and attracted crowds who gathered to pass tobacco, sweets and flowers up to the patients. Today, guests at the Park Inn Palace hotel enjoy the same views from the hotel restaurant.
Photo courtesy of Ken Crowe

Injured soldiers at Walden Place in **Saffron Walden in Essex**. *Photo courtesy of Miriam Hardwick*

Many recuperating soldiers spent time in the stately surroundings of some of Britain's most magnificent private homes. These makeshift hospitals were often run by the lady of the house, and staffed by volunteers from the middle and upper classes. For the 'Tommies' - the rank and file working class soldiers - the luxurious surroundings and nursing care from aristocratic women would have been a novel experience.

Stately homes across the country were transformed into makeshift hospitals.

At **Highclere Castle in Hampshire**, patients were treated like house guests, with the highest quality care and a taste of luxury.
Photo courtesy of Highclere Castle

Bishop's Knoll in Bristol was used to treat Australian soldiers. The main aim was a speedy recovery - the sooner the soldiers got better, the sooner they were able to return to the front line.
Photo courtesy of Patrick Casey

Patients at **Brooksby Hall in Leicestershire** enjoyed games of football with Matron. Brooksby Hall was the home of Earl Beatty, the Admiral credited with masterminding Britain's anti-submarine strategy. His wife Lady Beatty ran the convalescent hospital at their home, caring for men who had served under her husband.
IWM (277-2)

From the autumn and winter of 1914, increasing numbers of servicemen returned home from the battlefields with mysterious complaints that were given the general label 'shell shock'. The scale of this psychiatric trauma was unprecedented and the condition little understood. A common military view was that 'shell shock' was a sign of weak character, and that sufferers were malingering or making excuses for desertion.

Left: Shell shock patients at Seale Hayne Hospital undertake rehabilitation activities. *Photo courtesy of The Seale-Haynians (alumni) Club archives*

Right: Staff and patients at Craiglockhart Military Hospital, March 1917. *Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Napier University*

The term 'shell shock' was first used by soldiers as a way to describe themselves when they were under artillery bombardment and unable to cope. It wasn't until May 1915 that the the term was used officially in medical literature. **University of Cambridge** psychologist and Army medical officer, Charles Myers carried out pioneering fieldwork with soldiers affected by shell blasts and identified a mental rather than physical cause. He published his findings in *The Lancet*.

The treatment of shell shock sufferers varied greatly. Officers who suffered with shell shock were sent to Craiglockhart Military Hospital in **Edinburgh, Scotland**, and patients included the poet Wilfred Owen. By the end of the war, 80,000 cases of 'war neuroses' passed through British Army Medical facilities.

Physician, Major Arthur Hurst, chose the quiet location of Seale Hayne near **Newton Abbot in Devon** to treat shell shock soldiers of all ranks. In this idyll, far from the conflict, patients toiled on the farm and were encouraged to use their creative energies by basket-weaving, woodworking and making pottery. They also recreated battles that they had fought on the front. At the time, Hurst's rehabilitation techniques were considered revolutionary. Hurst was knighted in 1937. *Photo courtesy of The Seale-Haynians (alumni) Club archives*

Dealing with the devastating physical injuries that trench warfare could bring presented a new challenge for doctors. Specialist units made huge advances in the treatment of those who had been maimed and disfigured by shrapnel injuries or burnt from the flash fires of shells going off.

Plastic surgeon Harold Gillies pioneered facial surgery at Queen's College Hospital in **Sidcup in Kent**. One of his early patients was Walter Yeo (pictured right), a sailor who had been disfigured by the effects of high explosives or burns during the battle of Jutland in May 1916. In a series of operations, Gillies transferred skin from undamaged areas of Yeo's body to the area around his eyes which had been badly burnt. The radical surgery carried a high risk of infection, but after a year, Yeo was declared fit for service. Gillies and his colleagues carried out over 11,000 operations on 5,000 soldiers and the hospital quickly became the army's main centre for reconstructive surgery. His techniques revolutionised plastic surgery and gave injured servicemen like Yeo a second chance at life. Harold Gillies was knighted in 1930.


INJURIES IN THE REGION OF THE EYES 361

This page from Gillies' seminal textbook, *Plastic Surgery of the Face* (1920), shows Walter Yeo pictured soon after admission, and then after surgery.

For those whose faces could not be repaired by the surgeon's scalpel, sculptor Francis Derwent-Wood (left) offered an artistic solution. Working at the Third General Hospital in **Wandsworth in South London**, he created bespoke metal masks with the exact profile of his patients' faces. These masks were painstakingly painted with as close as possible a depiction of the patients' original features. They gave patients a renewed self-confidence, although many also complained that they were hot and itchy.
IWM (Q 30457)

1914 2014

CHAPTER EIGHT
HOME FROM HOME

1918 2018

In pre-war Britain simply hearing a different regional accent in many towns was unusual, but after August 1914 the world was on the move. In Britain, the home front saw an unprecedented movement of people, both from within the country, and from abroad in huge numbers. The *World War One at Home* stories gathered in this chapter include those of the Belgian refugees arriving in Britain from their invaded homeland, soldiers who had travelled from across the Empire to fight, and many injured troops who found themselves recovering in Britain's hospitals and convalescent homes.

Wounded Indian troops at a hospital in **Brighton in Sussex** *IWM (Q 53887)*

Belgian refugees arrive at **Victoria Station in London**. *IWM (Q 53305)*

The outbreak of World War One saw a huge influx of Belgian refugees into Britain. Tens of thousands fled their homes following Germany's invasion of Belgium in August 1914, and an estimated 250,000 sought a safe haven in Britain during the course of the war. Many came through ports such as **Folkestone**, **Tilbury, Margate, Harwich, Dover, Hull** and **Grimsby**, and large processing encampments were set up in **London** to coordinate the dispersal of the Belgians across the British Isles. 'Plucky little Belgium' was widely admired in Britain for resistance against the German invasion, and across the country a huge effort was made to find jobs and homes for the refugees.

Left: Elisabethville street. *Photo courtesy Beamish Museum.*
Middle: a Belgian soldier and his family in their house in 1918 *IWM (Q 27745).*
Right: Identity card for Elisabethville resident. *Courtesy of Beamish Museum*

Thousands of Belgians moved to **Birtley in Tyne and Wear** to work in the nearby armaments factory which made casings for shells. Six thousand workers were housed in a purpose-built village called Elisabethville, after Elisabeth the Queen of Belgium. It was known locally as Little Belgium; French and Flemish were spoken and no one was allowed in or out of the gated and self-contained community without a special pass inspected by gendarmes. Houses were neatly laid out in rows and there were shops, a church, a school and a cemetery.

After the war, most of the Belgians returned home, although a few families did stay in the North East. Elisabethville was used as housing for local families but it gradually fell into disrepair and was mostly demolished in the 1930s. Today, there are only two buildings from Elisabethville still standing.

In 1914 the size of the British Empire meant that young men from every corner of the world were recruited to fight for King and Country. Many of these soldiers passed through the British Isles on their way to the front, or spent time here in training camps. As the war progressed, many more found themselves recovering from injuries in hospitals in Britain.

Left: Canadian troops line up in Plymouth. *Photo courtesy of Plymouth City Council Arts and Heritage (c/o Private Collection)*
Right: Canadian soldiers with local girls in Matlock Bath in Derbyshire. *Photo courtesy of Mrs Gina Clarke*

Over 620,000 Canadians served during the war and the first contingent from this British dominion arrived at **Plymouth Hoe in Devon** in October 1914. The fleet of 32 ships carried 31,200 troops and over 7,000 horses and had been destined for Southampton, but German submarine activity in the English Channel caused them to be directed to Plymouth. News of the Canadians' unexpected arrival spread through the town, and large crowds gathered to cheer the soldiers. Disembarking the fleet took 9 days, and as well as the more predictable war paraphernalia, an orphaned black bear cub named Winnie was brought ashore. Winnie - named after Winnipeg in Canada - eventually made her way to **London Zoo** where she was spotted by a visitor called A. A. Milne who went on to write his famous Winnie the Pooh stories.

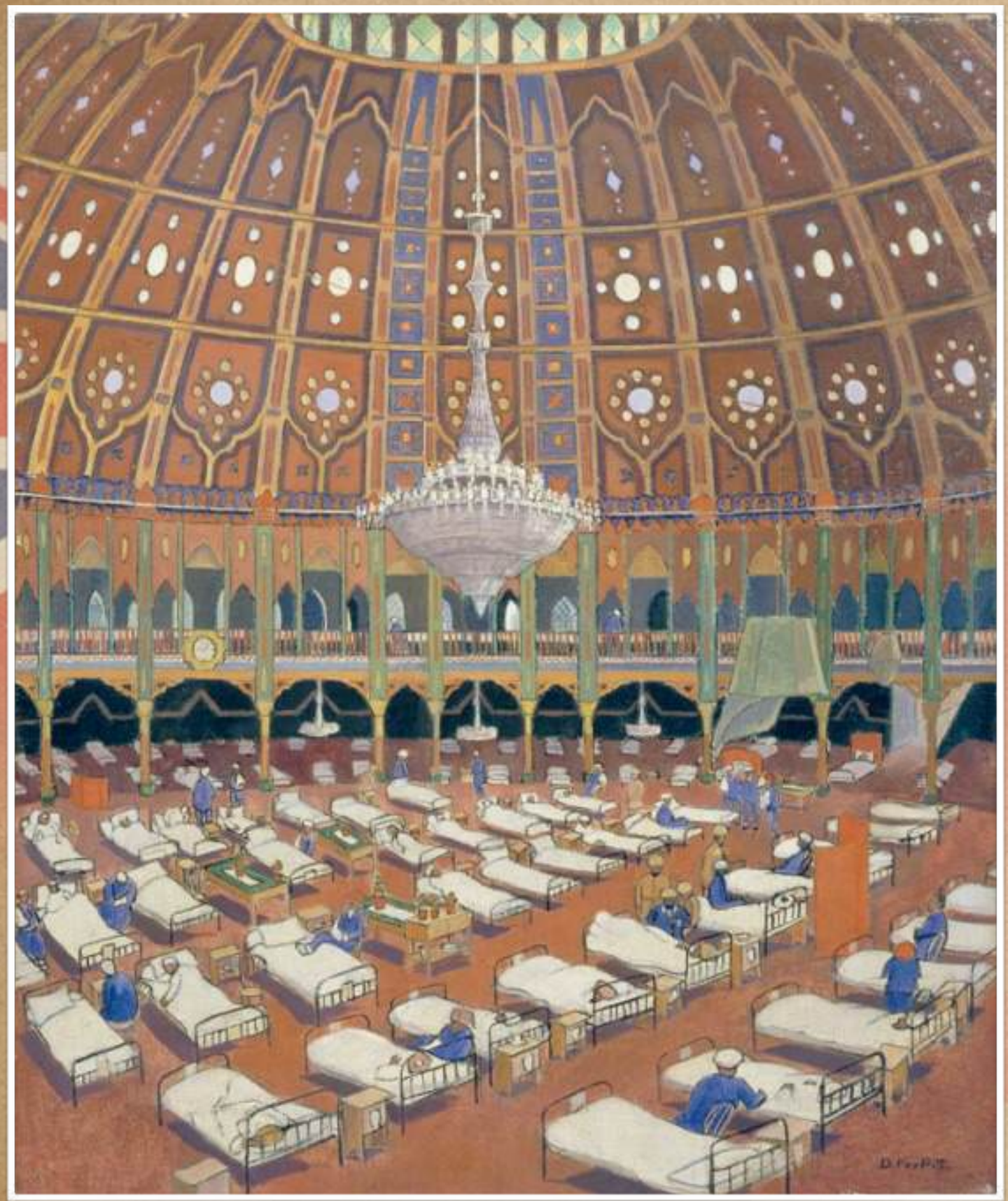
Soldiers from the Australian and New Zealand forces were known as ANZACs. Many arrived in Britain as casualties following the disastrous Gallipoli campaign which had begun in April 1915. The fighting at Gallipoli, which is now in Turkey, lasted for 8 months. The Allies suffered an estimated 140,000 casualties, with almost 40,000 of these being ANZACs.

Left: ANZAC troops marching over Weymouth town bridge on Armistice Day, November 1918.
Photo courtesy of Somerset and Dorset History Society
Right: Australian Imperial Forces on Weymouth Beach. *Photo courtesy of the New South Wales State Library, Sydney*

In June 1915, 200 wounded ANZAC soldiers arrived at an army camp near the village of **Chickerell in Weymouth in Dorset**. These were soldiers who needed long term convalescence, and Weymouth was chosen for its warm sea breeze and relaxing surroundings. The ANZACs were welcomed by local people who organised a huge strawberries and cream tea. By the end of the war, over 105,000 ANZACs had stayed and recuperated in the area, and in a town of less than 40,000, these soldiers had a huge impact. The young women of Weymouth found the Australians particularly appealing as they were generally bigger, fitter and much better paid than British troops. Fifty weddings eventually followed as a result of 'fraternizing with the locals'. On 25 April each year, Weymouth observes ANZAC Day with a service at the ANZAC memorial along the esplanade.

Following the US entry in World War One in April 1917, an American servicemen's centre known as The Eagle Hut was set up in **Aldwych in London**. Here American troops could stay, relax and enjoy the comforts of home in the heart of the capital. Set up and run by the American Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the temporary wooden buildings spread over 35,000 square feet and were equipped with a barber's shop, a concert hall, a billiards room, a lounge, kit room and 420 beds for off-duty soldiers. On any given day, the canteen served as many as 5,000 meals which included American favourites such as pancakes and hash browns.

The Eagle Hut in 1918. Bush House, the former home of the BBC World Service, stands on the site today. *IWM (Q 28745)*

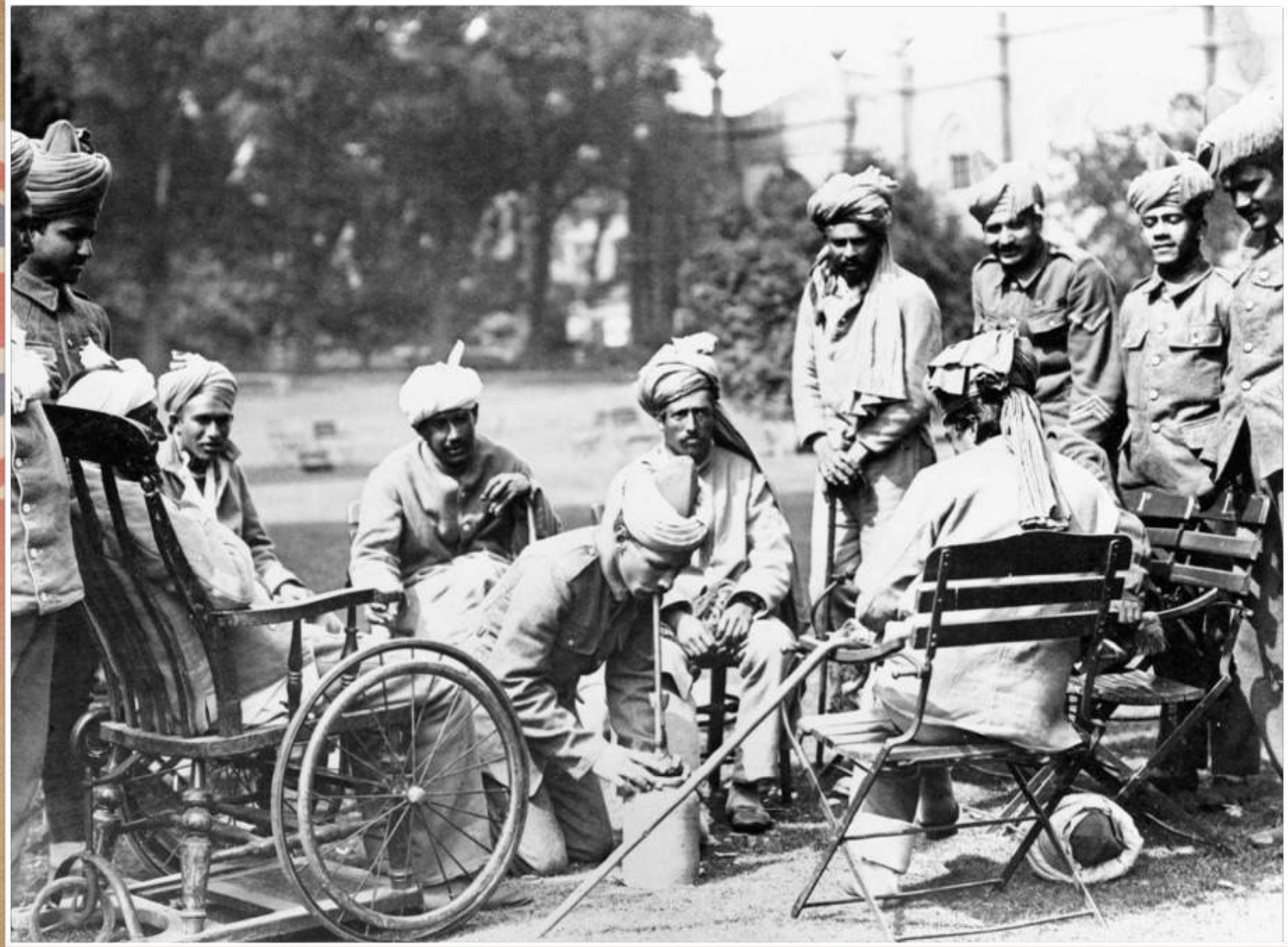


Inside Brighton Pavilion *IWM (Art. IWM ART 323)*

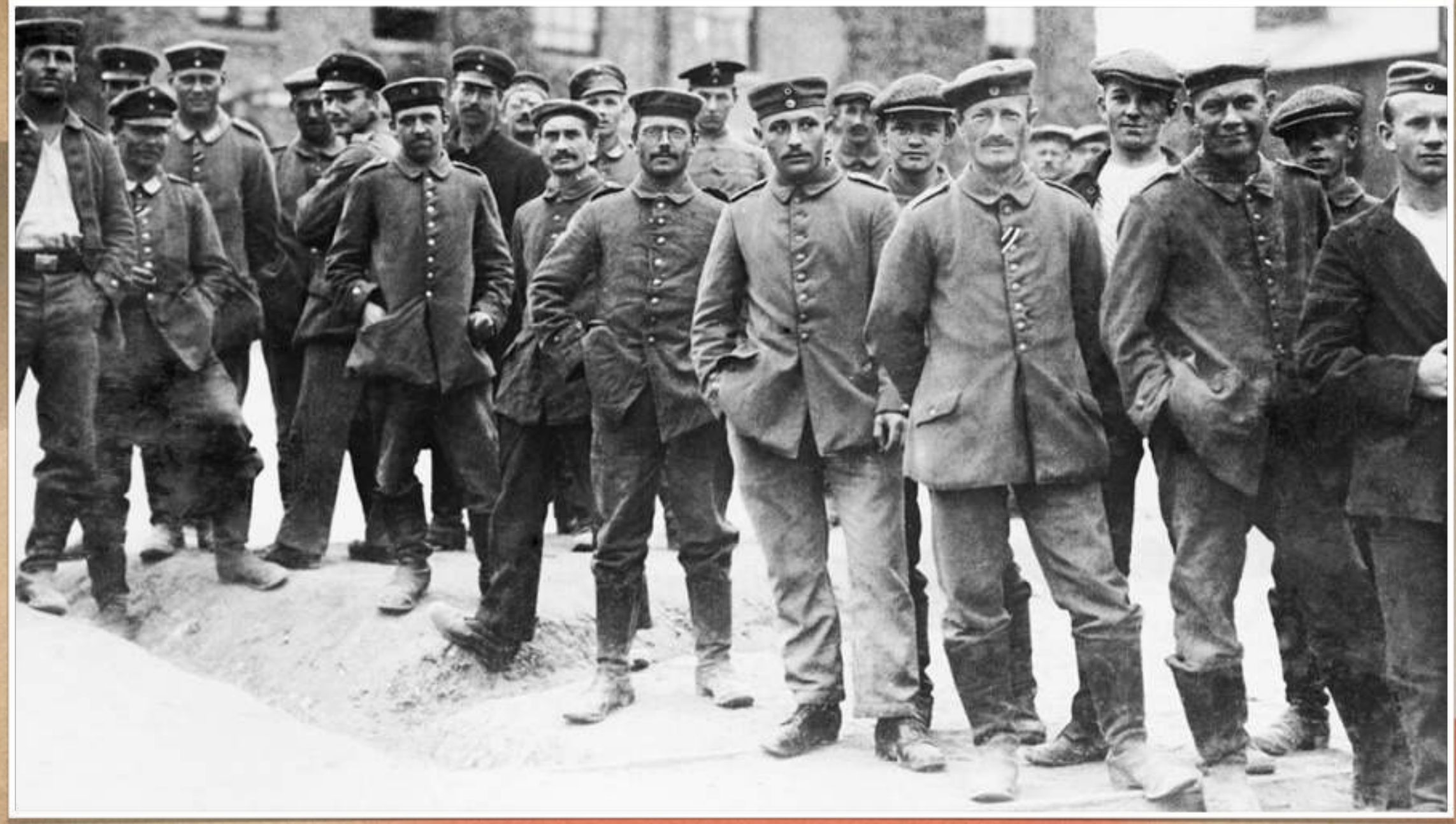
Among the various colonies of the British empire, India contributed the largest number of men, with approximately 1.5 million recruited during the war up to December 1919.

Many wounded soldiers from the Indian army were treated in the seaside town of **Brighton in Sussex** where the prestigious Royal Pavilion estate was used as a military hospital. Seven hundred and twenty four beds were made available and more than 4,000 patients were treated here.

Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were all cared for, with special arrangements being made for religious observances and the different caste systems. Newspapers from the time report cheering crowds on the arrival of the first soldiers, who were seen as romantic figures. However, there was also concern expressed at the racial integration and friendships between white women and Indian soldiers, and eventually interaction with local people was restricted.



Wounded Indian soldiers using a jam jar as a hookah pipe. **Brighton in Sussex**, August 1915 *IWM (Q 53886)*



IWM (HU 53371)

The home front saw an influx of Germans during the war years. Over 100,000 German Prisoners of War were held captive in camps across Britain. The first to arrive, on 10 August 1914, were taken to the **Dorchester Camp in Dorset** where huge crowds turned out to see them. At its height, the camp housed 4,500 men - equivalent to almost half of the town's resident population. A good relationship developed between the people of Dorchester and the German prisoners, who swept the streets and worked in borough gardens. Local resident, the author and poet Thomas Hardy, even recruited a POW to work on his garden at Max Gate.

1914 2014

CHAPTER NINE
KEEPING THE HOME FIRES BURNING

1918 2018

The home front in Britain during the war was a place of massive social change and upheaval. Just days after the war started, the Defense of the Realm Act was passed, increasing the government's powers over the population, and affecting almost every aspect of life in Britain. The *World War One at Home* stories in this chapter reflect just some of this change; from the hundreds of thousands of women stepping in to traditionally male jobs in factories, shops and offices, to the introduction of stringent drinking regulations, and the vast surge of voluntary activity from those donating their time and resources to the war effort. As the war dragged on and losses on the battlefields increased, few at home remained untouched by personal tragedy, and had to adjust to a life that had changed forever.

'Little Khaki George'
Photo courtesy of The Bankfield Museum, Halifax

As men left their homes and jobs to go and fight, women took on new roles in the workplace. Between 1914 and 1918, an estimated two million women replaced men in employment, resulting in an increase in the proportion of women in total employment from 24 percent in July 1914, to 37 percent by November 1918.

By the end of the war, the Post Office employed 35,000 women workers.
IWM (521)

Nearly 100,000 railway men left their jobs in Britain to fight in the trenches.
IWM (521)

Women also delivered coal, swept the streets and became window cleaners.
IWM (521)

In **Thetford in Norfolk**, Florrie Clarke (pictured) took on one of the more unusual jobs. She became the town crier when her father John went to fight. As well as announcing news of everything that was going on in the town - such as the rising costs of ale or bread - she posted notices at the crossroads outside *The Bell Hotel* for the townsfolk to read.

IWM (31025)

The war saw many industries expand in order to meet the needs of the war effort. The delivery of post was considered vital for the troops' morale, and in December 1914 a gigantic sorting office called Home Depot was built in **London's Regent's Park**. The wooden hut covered several acres and was the largest structure of its kind in the world. 2,500 staff sorted post, ensuring that letters and gifts reached troops in as little as 2 days. *Photo courtesy of the British Postal Museum and Archive*

Letters from the troops abroad helped to keep up morale back home, and like many towns and villages across Britain, the job of delivering mail in **Kenilworth in Warwickshire** was taken on by local girls. Alice Reeve, Beatrice Peck and Edith Aitken (pictured below) delivered letters, messages and mementoes to families desperate for news of their loved ones.

One notable message arriving in Kenilworth from a soldier on the front line was written on a paper napkin following an exchange of Christmas cake with the Germans during the famous Christmas Day truce of 1914.

> ***We had not been in the trenches very long on Christmas Eve before we were shouting and wishing one another a merry Christmas. Then we invited them to come over, so they shouted 'No shoot' and we said the same. We met halfway. We were able to bury our dead, some of whom had been lying there for six weeks or more.***

From top left: Edwin Hassall, the chocolate wrapper. *Images courtesy of The Vigrass Family.* Bottom right: A young Joan Burbidge. *Photo courtesy Jane Adams*

A touching exchange of letters began when six year-old Joan Burbidge from **Wadebridge in Cornwall** asked her father to write a message in the box of chocolates she was sending to British troops in France. The stray chocolate wrapper was eventually picked up by Bombadier Edwin Hassall who wrote back to 'Little Joan' by way of thanks. Joan's father continued the correspondence throughout the war years, and the letters between Joan and her 'Chocolate Soldier' remain a valuable record of life both at home and in the trenches.

From August 1915, female volunteers provided a free buffet for soldiers and sailors passing through Preston station. *Photo courtesy of Preston City Council and Lancashire City Council*

The demands of war prompted a huge wave of voluntary activity, with many Britons donating their time and resources to charitable causes. Nearly 18,000 charities were established during the four years of war with causes including 'comforts' for troops and medical services.

The Shamrock League was based in **Limerick in Ireland** and organised the collection and packing of shamrocks into decorated boxes. The filled boxes were sold to raise money before being sent to the soldiers abroad to boost morale. *Photo courtesy of Limerick Museum*

Three year-old George Bentley (left) from **Halifax in Yorkshire** raised more than £100 when he dressed in a miniature khaki uniform and took to the streets of Halifax to collect money. He became something of a local celebrity and his father gave him the name 'Little Khaki George'. *Photo courtesy of Bankfield Museum, Halifax*

Volunteers across the country manned over 2,000 National Egg Collection points, collecting donations of fresh eggs for the wounded troops in France. Over the course of four years, ladies like this group (above) from **Much Wenlock in Shropshire**, collected in excess of 20 million eggs. *Photo courtesy of Ina Taylor*

Girls studying at Cheltenham Ladies College in **Cheltenham in Gloucestershire** learned skills such as how to make straw mattresses (pictured right). Once they left the College, they were expected to use these skills on the battlefield. *Photo courtesy of Cheltenham Ladies' College*

The First World War saw a number of changes to rules and regulations of daily life, including the introduction of Britain's first female police officers. Women campaigners had pushed for the creation of a patrol to tackle widespread fears of prostitution and 'Khaki Fever' - young girls succumbing to the lure of men in uniform.

Two competing organisations were established. The moderate Voluntary Women Patrols were middle class churchgoers who patrolled the capital and saw themselves as aides to the existing police force. The more radical Women's Police Service was led by former suffragette, Margaret Damer Dawson. Volunteers trained at Little George Street in **Westminster in London** and by 1917 there were 2,000 women patrolling the country.

The first female officer to be given powers of arrest was Edith Smith who was sent to work in **Grantham in Lincolnshire**. Smith's report card gives a flavour of her duties: *"Forty foolish girls warned, 20 prostitutes sent out of Grantham, two fallen girls helped, five bad women cautioned"*. But she was highly unusual - the majority of female officers were not granted the power of arrest until 1923.

Commandant Margaret Damer Dawson (top) *IWM (Q108495)* and Edith Smith (bottom). *Photo courtesy of Lincolnshire Police*

Evelyn Miles (left) was the first woman constable to join **Birmingham City Police** in 1917, at the age of 50. *Photo courtesy of West Midlands Police Museum*

Escapism and light relief was an important feature of life on the home front and popular music hall traditions thrived during the war years. One of the most iconic songs of the time was *Pack Up Your Troubles* which was written by two brothers, George and Felix Powell, from **St Asaph in Denbighshire in Wales**. The catchy tune was easy to play, and the lyrics familiar, making it a favourite both on the western front and back home too. Today, 100 years after it was written, it remains an enduring legacy of the era.

One of the best loved music hall stars was Gertie Gitana from **Hanley in Stoke on Trent**. Often described as the Vera Lynn of World War One, Gertie Gitana entertained in music halls across the country as well as in hospitals for injured soldiers. Many of the songs she recorded during the war were appropriated and altered by soldiers. The street she grew up in has been renamed Gitana street, and she is also remembered in Cockney rhyming slang, where Gertie is the name used for a banana.

Images courtesy of John Booth

As war progressed, receiving news of the dead and wounded became increasingly familiar for those at home. Localised recruiting at the start of the war meant that men from the same towns and villages would fight together, and many would be killed together too. Twenty seven men from the **Beeston Boys Brigade in Nottingham** (pictured) joined up in 1914, but only 16 returned home. *Photo courtesy Boys Brigade, Nottingham*

By the end of the war, 9 percent of all British men under the age of 45 had died, and over 500,000 children had been left without their father. Barely a community in Britain remained untouched by the heartbreak of loss.

"It was no sacrifice Ma'am. I did not give them willingly.

Mother Amy Beechey from **Avondale Street in Lincoln** suffered more than most as five of her eight sons did not return home from the front. Few families in Britain suffered so much loss and Mrs Beechey was presented to George V and Queen Mary when they visited Lincoln in 1918. When Queen Mary thanked her for her immense sacrifice she replied "It was no sacrifice Ma'am. I did not give them willingly."

1914 2014

CHAPTER TEN
TROUBLE ON THE HOME FRONT

1918 2018

Postcard image of a conscientious objector in prison. *IWM (Q 103094)*

Contrary to popular belief, life on the home front was not always about pulling together for the greater good of the war effort. *World War One at Home* gathered stories from around the country that reflect some of the tensions and divisions that were a feature of life at home during the war.

In some parts of the country, increasingly difficult living and working conditions were the trigger for mass protest. Elsewhere, emotions ran high with anti-German sentiments, which led to riots breaking out throughout the duration of the conflict. The threat of German espionage was a source of real anxiety, and spies who were caught were executed at the Tower of London.

In Ireland, the debate over Home Rule erupted in the Easter Rising. In other parts of Britain, opponents of the war clashed with 'patriotic' crowds and conscientious objectors (COs) defied conscription.

From the earliest days of the war, life became very difficult for the 50,000 or so German immigrants living in Britain. Germans living in the country became categorised as 'enemy aliens' and were removed from government jobs and driven from many private businesses. Germans were also banned from certain shops, restaurants and public buildings. The mayor of **Coventry** and founder of 'The Triumph Motorcycle Company', Siegfried Bettman, resigned from public life, and Joseph Jonas, a German born businessman who had settled in **Sheffield**, was stripped of his knighthood. At a number of points during the war this anti-German feeling erupted into full-blown riots.

Crowd of rioters breaking the windows of a German-owned shop in **East London**, following the sinking of the liner RMS Lusitania on 7 May 1915.
IWM (HU 52451)

The sinking of passenger liner RMS Lusitania in May 1915 (also see p.23) sparked some of the biggest riots. Over one thousand civilian passengers and crew lost their lives in the tragedy, and the outraged British public took to the streets in towns across the country. In **Dumfries in Scotland** a crowd of a thousand gathered to smash the windows of a local hairdresser. But it was in **Merseyside,** where the loss of local lives was felt most keenly, that the rioting was most intense, and lasted several days. An estimated 200 businesses were targeted and £40,000 worth of damage inflicted. The crowds turned from being anti-German to 'anti-alien' and Scandinavian, Italian, Chinese and Russian businesses were also targeted.

Other triggers for anti-German riots included the bombing raids by Zeppelin airships and the German invasion of Belgium. By the end of the war every single London police district had experienced rioting against German citizens.

In **Peterborough in Cambridgeshire**, butcher Frederick Frank's shop was attacked in August 1914 following rumours that he had spoken unjust words against the King. Police broke up crowds who gathered and threw stones, and the German-born Frank fled the city. In October 1914, he was sent to an internment camp in York.

Like Frank, many other Germans working and living in the UK were rounded up and sent to internment camps around the country. The largest of these was in **Knockaloe on the Isle of Man**, and an estimated 20,000 Germans were detained here.

Top - Frederick Frank outside his butcher's shop. *Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Frank.*
Bottom - Damage to Frank's shop following the riots. *Photo courtesy of Stephen Perry*

Conscription was introduced in 1916 compelling men of military age to join up. However, a 'conscience clause' in the Military Service Acts allowed men with 'conscientious objections' to appeal for exemption from military service. Tribunals to judge these appeals met in every part of the country. More than 16,500 men are known to have been COs. Very few of them were allowed absolute exemption from service and faced the prospect of joining up or being arrested. Some took non-combatant roles in the army or worked on the land. Others refused to take any part in the war machine. They were known as 'absolutists' and spent most of their war in prison.

Wakefield Prison in Yorkshire became a holding jail for around 600 COs during the war. Millworker Arthur Gardiner, from Huddersfield, and most of the other inmates pictured above, refused to fight on political grounds. For him the war was a fight for empires and foreign markets, and nothing to do with the working man. *Photo courtesy of Cyril Pearce*

Some COs were imprisoned at **Richmond Castle in North Yorkshire.** A group of them, known as the Richmond Sixteen, were part of a group of thirty-five sent to France in May 1916, court-martialled and sentenced to death for disobedience - later reprieved. The graffiti of religious pictures and political slogans drawn by them, and other COs, on their cell walls is still preserved today. *Photo courtesy of English Heritage, Richmond Castle*

Many conscientious objectors were held at **Winchester Prison in Hampshire**. Conditions were harsh. Inmates were not allowed to converse with the wardens, and were often subjected to long periods of solitary confinement. To combat the many hours spent alone, absolutist CO Harold Bing started a secret newspaper, *The Winchester Whisperer,* which contained articles and drawings. It was written on toilet paper, stitched to pieces of mail sack and passed furtively between inmates.

The Winchester Whisperer.
Image courtesy of Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

The most common ground for objection was religious. For example, many Quakers refused to fight, since pacifism is intrinsic to Quaker philosophy. Others, including Christian fundamentalists, took the Bible at its word: 'Thou shalt not kill'. In **St Helier on Jersey**, however, the parish church took a hard line against conscientious objectors. The Dean, Revd. Samuel Falle, successfully argued that Jersey law should be changed so that objections on the grounds of 'conscience' were not recognised. Objectors were simply enlisted and sent with other conscripts to the mainland, where they would have to argue their case.

The war years saw a number of protests against living and working conditions. As in many cities, the population of **Glasgow, Scotland** expanded rapidly as workers moved to the city to work in the munitions industry. This led to an increased demand for housing, and some unscrupulous landlords exploited the situation by raising their rents. In some areas the hikes were 23 percent up on pre-war levels.

Thousands gathered in Glasgow city centre to protest against the injustice of rent rises while the country was at war. *Photo courtesy of Glasgow Museums*

A working class woman from the district of **Govan in Glasgow** called Mary Barbour led some of the most successful resistance to rent increases. Barbour set up tenants' committees and organised rent strikes in which her supporters, known as 'Mrs Barbour's Army', worked as a team. Women were posted as sentries to watch out for the Sheriff's officers coming to evict families who had fallen into rent arrears. A bell or the sound of a football rattle would then summon a larger crowd who would form a scrum to prevent officers gaining entry to houses, often pelting them with flour or rotting food. By November there were twenty thousand tenants on strike and on 17 November 1915, a crowd of thousands of women, along with engineers and ship workers, gathered at Glasgow Sheriff Court and the City Chambers in protest.

A month after the November 1915 demonstration Parliament passed into law the Rent Restrictions Act, setting rents for the remainder of the war at pre-war levels.

Ireland in 1914 was deeply divided between Nationalists and Unionists, and these considerations played an important part in how events unfolded on the home front. Over 200,000 Irishmen fought in the war - from both political sides. Unionists saw themselves as part of the United Kingdom and so felt a clearer case to join up. The Nationalists were committed to the war effort by their leader, John Redmond, in the belief that it would help Ireland to achieve Home Rule peacefully once the fighting was over.

But not all Nationalists followed their leader's call to go to war. A small minority, known as the Irish Volunteers, chose to remain in Ireland. This minority, along with elements of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, took advantage of the relatively small British force in Ireland, and in April 1916, 1,600 Volunteers and others seized buildings including the **General Post Office in Dublin**, proclaiming an Irish republic.

British troops barricading streets in Dublin against the insurgents. Many believed that the Irishmen they were fighting were acting with the help of the Germans by receiving arms from them. *IWM (Q 82356)*

In what became known as the Easter Rising of 1916, the rebels held the city centre for six days and the fighting was bloody. Much of **central Dublin** was destroyed by British artillery and more than 450 people, most of them civilians, were killed. The government's response was to execute the leaders, sparking widespread public revulsion and a growing alienation from British administration in Ireland, which paved the way for the Irish War of Independence in 1919.

The British blamed the republican separatist movement Sinn Féin for the rebellion, and even though they played no part, members were arrested and held accountable. Perhaps paradoxically, this led Sinn Féin to emerge as the largest political force in Ireland.

The possibility of spies on British shores was a source of much anxiety and paranoia. From the earliest days of the conflict, the home front was rife with stories of the Kaiser's agents stalking the streets of Britain. German espionage was largely unsuccessful however, and eleven agents of different nationalities including German, Swedish, Uruguayan and Brazilian, were captured and shot by firing squad at the **Tower of London**. These were the first executions to have taken place there for 170 years.

The first spy to be executed was a retired German naval officer called Carl Lody. Travelling under the alias Charles Inglis, Lody spent time near to the naval bases in the **Firth of Forth area in Scotland**. He later headed to **Ireland** where he was caught red-handed posing as an American tourist sketching dockyards and warships. He was executed by firing squad at the **Tower of London** on 6 November 1914.

Lody used methods such as this cut out magazine (left) to conceal his secrets. It is thought that the hidden items inside this magazine are pills, which when diluted in water, produced invisible ink.

IWM (EPH 10060)

1914 2014

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1918 2018

World War One at Home stories were originally produced by BBC Radio stations across the country. All these stories can be found, in full, at www.bbc.co.uk/ww1

More about the men and women who lived, fought and served during the First World War can be found at www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org

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