

Teacher's Pack

Bury Boxed Up

First World War

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Introduction

This pack has been created by The Fusilier Museum as a resource for teachers to use in the classroom, either to introduce this topic or as a resource following a visit to the museum.

The pack is aimed at Key Stage One and Two pupils.

The contents of the pack illustrate aspects of the First World War and how the war affected life in Britain. This pack also lays out where these topics meet the needs of the National Curriculum, especially the subjects of History and English.

Sections one to three contain background information for use by teachers and pupils. The pack also includes a list of all the objects in the box and a brief description of each object.

If you are introducing debate and discussion, access to the web would be useful to aid pupils research and would also help to meet the ICT requirements of the History curriculum.

Guidance for Teachers

Teaching pupils about the First World War can raise emotive issues. Topics will deal with a variety of themes that could lead to further discussion about the realities of war and the death of soldiers. These issues can be used to explore the topic in greater depth, bringing the pupils thoughts and feelings to the fore. Such themes can also link to discussions about what is taking place in today's world. Our tips for exploring these issues are to:

- Discuss these issues as a class
- Create a safe environment
- Provide boundaries
- Create opportunities to discuss further around each theme

National Curriculum Links

Key Stage 1

History

- Develop an awareness of the past using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time
- Pupils should be taught about changes within living memory
- Pupils should be taught about significant historical events, people and places within their own locality
- Pupils should understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past

English

- Comprehension and learning of new vocabulary

Key Stage 2

History

- Local history study
- Chronological knowledge

English

- Speaking and listening
- Comprehension and learning of new vocabulary

PSHE and Citizenship

- Reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences
- To think about the lives of other people living in other places and times

The First World War

On 28th June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary visited Bosnia with his wife, to inspect the military. At this time Bosnia was ruled by Austria-Hungary. During their visit, the Archduke and his wife were assassinated by a group of men who wanted a united Balkan state, not ruled by Austria-Hungary any more. Following their deaths, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, which it blamed for the deaths, and other European countries were also drawn into the war because they had formed alliances to protect one another. On one side were the powers of the Triple Entente, Great Britain, France, Japan, Russia and were joined in 1915 by Italy. On the other side were the Central Powers, Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.

Germany attacked Belgium, which is when Britain declared war on Germany and her allies and from this point onwards the battle lines were drawn and soldiers on both sides began to create systems of trenches across France and Belgium. Troops were fighting on three fronts, the Western Front across France and Belgium, the Eastern front along borders between Russia and Austria-Hungary and another front to the south which saw soldiers fighting in North Africa against the Ottoman Empire.

Stalemate was reached in 1915 and 1916 and neither side gained any ground. In 1917 two important things happened which influenced the outcome of the war. America declared war on Germany after German submarines and warships had sunk many American ships in the Atlantic Ocean. Also, the revolution in Russia saw them withdraw from the war.

By 1918, troops on both sides were weary and a serious outbreak of flu was spreading across Europe. Thanks to mutinies within their own armies, the Central Powers began to fall back and as a widespread lack of food led to starvation for the civilians and armies of the Central Powers, one by one the countries surrendered and signed armistice agreements. The final country to do this was Germany when they signed their armistice agreement on 11th November 1918, which to this day is still commemorated as Armistice, or Remembrance Day.

Section One: Life on the Homefront

The Defence of the Realm Act, 1914 (DORA)

The Defence of the Realm Act was passed on 8th August 1914, four days after the outbreak of the First World War. The aim of the act was to help the government to control people's daily lives during this period. With war raging across Europe and other parts of the world, the war started to impact on the lives of those left at home. Conscription was introduced in 1916, ensuring that all single men between the ages of 18 and 40 could be called up to fight. British Summer time was introduced in May 1916 to maximise the number of daylight hours for workers, particularly those working in agriculture. The British people had their first taste of food rationing when it was introduced in 1918. Rationing aimed to ensure that everybody had access to the same amount of food to eat and that the population and the army did not starve.

Women and War

During the pre-war period, women's roles had focused on the home and caring for their children. However, women in the workplace were not uncommon. Women did go out to work, many of them working in the textile mills, or in service. Women earned less than their male colleagues and still had to look after the home and any children in their free time. This changed dramatically during the First World War, especially following the munitions crisis of 1915 when the need for shells increased. As so many men had enlisted to fight, women were left to pick up the jobs that men had left behind. These jobs included:

- **Working in Munitions Factories:** This was a relatively well-paid job for women at this time, but it was also dangerous work. Women worked with a poisonous substance called TNT, which could turn their skin yellow. Workers became known as '**Canaries**' after the yellow birds. Work with explosives could also result in accidents, of which there were several in factories across the country during the war
- **Working on the land:** The Women's Land Army was established in 1915 to compensate for the lack of men doing vital agricultural work that would help to feed the nation and its army

- Women became drivers and conductors on public transport, for example on trams
- Women's armed services, which included the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps established in 1916, the Women's Royal Naval Service established in 1917 and the Women's Royal Air Force established in 1918. In total over 100,000 women joined the armed forces during the First World War
- Many women became nurses, serving at military hospitals across Great Britain and behind the front line across France and Belgium, working in dangerous conditions

British society underwent huge changes in this period resulting in post war changes such as votes for women. From 1918 onwards, women who were over 30 years of age and owned property could vote for the first time. Women had experienced what it was like to have paid employment and the freedom that this brought with it. When the men returned from the war, women had to give up their jobs so that men had jobs to return to.



Nurses tending wounded soldiers at Timberhurst Auxiliary Hospital, Bury.

Section Two: The Life of a Soldier

Equipment

All soldiers were sent to the front lines with certain pieces of equipment to help them whilst they were fighting in the trenches. Soldiers were given a bag in which to carry items such as mess tins, which were used for cooking and eating food. Other things carried by the soldiers included tinned food such as boiled mutton or corned beef. Fresh food was in short supply and soldiers relied heavily on tinned foods, which often contained more fat and salt than fresh food, and contained less vitamins and minerals which were needed to keep the soldiers healthy. Each soldier carried a bottle for water as well as a gun and ammunition.

Trench Life

Troops were rotated between periods of fighting on the front line, periods of rest and occasionally leave to go home. This system helped to ensure that soldiers were less likely to suffer from war weariness and low morale, ensuring that the soldiers would carry on fighting. When soldiers were not fighting, they were often given manual roles, such as moving ammunition and food to the front line, and could also include building and maintaining bridges and the trench system. Officers didn't have to do manual labour whilst not at the front, but were expected to do paperwork and attend training courses. Time away from the front also allowed soldiers to get clean, something that wasn't possible in the trenches. Hygiene was a big problem for soldiers and lice were common. Clothing was steamed to get rid of the lice and soldiers were treated to a hot bath, another way of keeping up morale. Whilst away from the front, soldiers could engage in other activities such as a game of football, cricket or cards and many soldiers enjoyed entertainment such as singing popular songs. Some team games were good for raising team morale and sharpening teamwork and tactics.

Soldiers responded differently to the conditions they had to endure in the trenches. Men found that there were periods of boredom, which were punctuated by bombing and attacks, which brought terror to the soldiers' lives. Group panic could easily become a problem during a bombardment, especially when soldiers became exhausted. As soldiers spent more

time under fire, they became more hardened to the reality of life on the front line, paying more attention to what was around them and where they could find cover.

Lancashire Fusiliers

The Lancashire Fusiliers recruited men from across Lancashire to serve in the regiment and focused their recruitment on three main towns: Bury, Rochdale and Salford. Even today these towns have a strong connection to the regiment. You can find war memorials to the soldiers of the Lancashire Fusiliers in each of these towns. Pals battalions were the idea of Lord Derby who recognised that more men would enlist in the army if they could guarantee that they would be serving with their friends, colleagues and neighbours. Unfortunately, this also meant that when Pals battalions suffered heavy casualties, this impacted directly on their communities at home. This is exactly what happened in 1916, during the Battle of the Somme, when heavy casualties meant that many soldiers from Salford were killed in action and did not return home.

13,642 Lancashire Fusiliers died during the First World War. The regiment suffered heavy losses at the Battle of the Somme and during the Gallipoli campaign, where six soldiers from the regiment were awarded Victoria Crosses. In total the regiment was awarded 18 Victoria Crosses during the First World War, which was more than any other regiment.

The Gallipoli Campaign, February 1915 – January 1916

Gallipoli is a peninsular in Turkey, surrounded by an important stretch of water called the Dardanelles. Having control of this stretch of water and land, meant that ships could sail easily between the Mediterranean and North Africa. A joint offensive between British, French, Australian and New Zealand troops was planned, the aim was to force their way along the Dardanelles and capture Constantinople (now called Istanbul). This would help to relieve pressure on their Russian allies on the Eastern Front as they were fighting Turkish and German troops on different borders. Landings were made around the coast of the peninsular, but ground was taken with difficulty and no real gains were made. The operation was a success in that it succeeded in moving Turkish attention away from the Russian army. In all other respects the operation failed and all troops were withdrawn from the area by January 1916.



British staff officers interrogating Turkish officers in the field at the third battle of Krithia, 4th June 1915 © IWM (Q 13252)

The Battle of the Somme, July - November 1916

The Battle of the Somme was the first major battle that involved British soldiers who had volunteered to fight in 1914 and 1915. After a year's training, they were sent off to the Front Lines and many found themselves fighting at the Battle of the Somme. At the beginning of the battle, the British army bombed the German lines for a week, with the aim of making it easier for the British army to advance. However, the German soldiers had prepared their defences well and were ready for the battle. The British bombardment didn't work and the German defences remained in place. As neither side had an advantage stale-mate set in, where neither side could move forwards. In September 1916, tanks were used for the first time to bring about a change in the course of the battle. Although British tanks were useful, they did not help to bring the Battle of the Somme to an end. As Winter approached and the weather got worse, the battle came to an end in November 1916, with no clear winner. The British army had managed to advance by a total of six miles. Each side suffered heavy casualties and a total of one million soldiers, from both sides, were injured or killed during the battle.



Battle of the Somme, September 1916, © IWM (CO 802)

Section Three: Communication

Postcards and letters were the only way of communicating with family during the war, and became important keepsakes for many families. Soldiers could send and receive more delicately embroidered postcards. Embroidered postcards, like the ones that you can find in the loans box, were embroidered by hand either by family members to send to the soldiers or by the women of France and Belgium who sold them to the soldiers. Part of the beauty of these post cards is the sentiments that are sent with them to their loved ones.



Soldiers were restricted in how they could communicate with their families during the war. Letters and postcards were heavily censored to avoid any important information from falling into enemy hands, should the letters be intercepted by the German army. As all letters and postcards had to go through censors, there were often delays in post getting to its destination. To speed up the process Field Postcards were introduced, providing a quick way for soldiers to send a message to their families without giving away important information. By deleting the parts of the post card that were not relevant to them, soldiers could let their families know that they were safe and well. From 'somewhere in France' became a standard message from soldiers to their families as they were not allowed to tell their families exactly where they were.

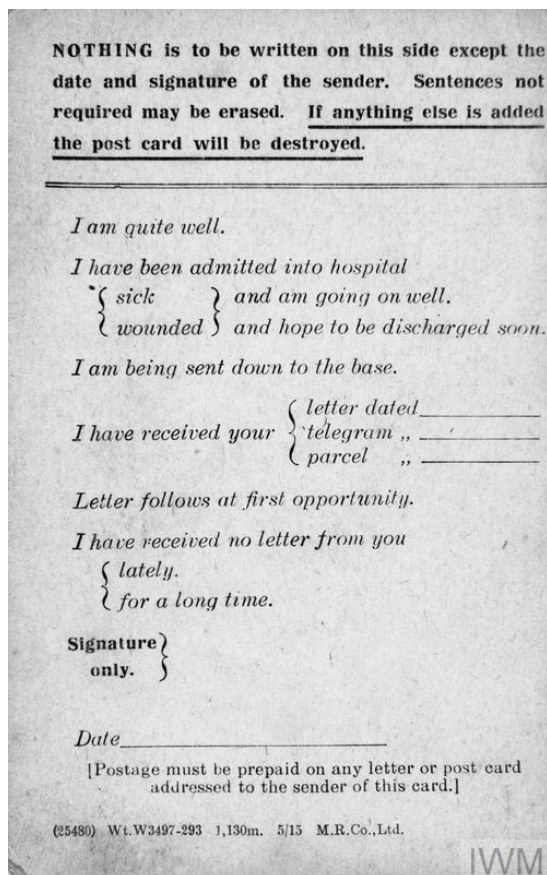


Image shows a standard Field Postcard© IWM (Q 71268)

There is a copy of a letter in the loans box, taken from the Museum's Archive, which was sent by a soldier called Charlie Hunter and is written to his sister Annie, who is at home in Bury. The letter gives much more detail about the conditions in the trenches and what Charlie, and many other soldiers like him, experienced during the war.

Many soldiers also kept a diary or wrote poetry about their experiences. Some of the most famous war poets, including Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen and Rupert Brooke used their poetry to describe what life was like in the trenches.

Suggested Activities

- Split the group in two and ask them to debate the role of women during the First World War. Did the work that women do during the war mean that they deserved to be given the vote? Should women have been given the vote anyway?
- Soldiers created their own words for things that they had not seen or used before. Create your own language to describe things that you can see or use in your own life
- Research songs sung during the First World War. Learn some of these songs and have a concert for the rest of the school
- Visit your local war memorial and look at the names on the memorial
- Soldiers had to take equipment and food to the front lines with them. In 1914, at the beginning of the war, soldiers thought that going off to war was a big adventure. If you were going on an adventure, what would you take with you?
- Soldiers wrote postcards and letters home to their loved ones. Create your own postcard and imagine you're a soldier. Write a message home and remember not to give away any important details about where you are!
- Find out about the war poets and read some of their work. Write your own war poem inspired by their work
- Make your own medal and award it to someone special. You could make a Victoria Cross

Further Information

Websites

The Imperial War Museum has a range of resources available on their website

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/first-world-war>

Books

You could read the following books:

War Horse, Michael Morpurgo

The Christmas Truce, Carol Ann Duffy

Over the Line, Tom Parker

Simpson and his Donkey, Mark Greenwood

Archie's War, Marcia Williams

Horrible Histories, Frightful First World War

Listen and Watch

You can find, film, images and sound clips of what life was like in the trenches during the First World War. Try YouTube for similar content.

Puttees (These are a replica and are child's size)



Puttees were long strips of cloth, literally 'bandages' woven tightly around the calves and ankles, all the way to the knees. They were designed to provide some waterproofing in the boggy and potholed terrain of the front line, but in practice they made little impact as the conditions were so dire. As a result, thousands of soldiers developed 'trench foot', a condition which caused swelling and sores to the feet and in severe cases, gangrene.

Uniform Protector



Brass button protectors were used by soldiers to keep their uniform clean when polishing the brass buttons on their uniforms. The protector was carried in the soldier's personal kit, so that it was easy to find whenever the soldier needed it. You can see where the top of the protector will fit around a button and the rest of the brass metal protects the uniform whilst the buttons are being polished.

Respirator Pad and Bag



Small respirators were introduced in August 1916 and were issued to all soldiers by the spring of 1917. The respirator consisted of a face pad which was tied around the mouth and nose. The pads were made from cotton wool covered in cotton, with cotton straps to tie the pad in place. The pads were designed to try and protect the lungs of the soldiers from poisonous gas attacks by the German army. It was thought that the cotton wool pad would soak up any poisonous gas so that the soldiers didn't breathe the gas in.

Soldiers had to carry a respirator pad at all times, so a bag was made to make it easier for soldiers to carry the pad, and instructions on how to use it, with them.

Stretcher Bearer Arm Band



The letters SB stand for Stretcher Bearer and their job was to go into No Man's Land to find injured soldiers. Using a stretcher, the Stretcher Bearer would then carry the injured soldiers to safety behind the front lines, to a field hospital where the soldiers could be treated by doctors and nurses. As the war went on and many stretcher bearers were injured themselves whilst trying to help others, this job was often given to any soldier who had a basic knowledge of first aid and was strong enough to carry a stretcher across uneven ground to find medical help.

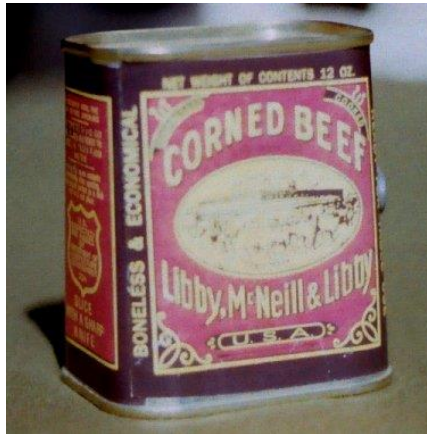
Mess Tin



Mess tins were carried by all soldiers and were used as an alternative to a plate or bowl, to eat meals from. The mess tins could also be placed over a fire to warm the food inside them.

It was difficult to transport fresh food such as meat and vegetables to the soldiers on the front lines. Supplies of food often came in tins, which were easier to transport to mainland Europe and lasted much longer than fresh goods. The downside to this was that most tinned items such as corned beef, were high in salt and fat, so not a particularly healthy option.

Boiled Mutton



At the start of the war soldiers were allowed just over one pound of meat, one pound of bread and eight ounces of vegetables each day. Initially they were given fresh food as and when it was available as part of their rations, but by 1917 the official ration for the average British soldier was much smaller and fresh meat was getting harder to come by. The ration was reduced to just 6 ounces of 'bully beef' (which we call corned beef today). The meat was mostly fat and along with the lack of fresh food, this could cause a lot of soldiers to suffer from upset stomachs and other health problems caused by a poor diet.

Families sometimes sent packages to the soldiers including tins of food as well as chocolate, tobacco and cake.

Field Postcard

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]

I am quite well.

I have been admitted into hospital
 { sick } and am going on well.
 { wounded } and hope to be discharged soon.

I am being sent down to the base.

(letter dated _____)

I have received your telegram " _____
 parcel " _____

Letter follows at first opportunity.

I have received no letter from you
 { lately
 { for a long time.

Signature }
 only }

Date _____

W.L.W. 85—P.P. 413. 8000m. 5-13. C. & Co., Grange Mills, B.W.

Field postcards were used to reassure families and friends at home that their loved one was alive and well. The postcards also relayed these messages quickly, as they would by-pass the censor who usually read all letters and postcards home and removed any information that they considered to be sensitive. This included where the soldiers were serving and how many soldiers there were. This was done to avoid any important information being given away to the enemy if the letters and postcards fell into the hands of the German army. Some soldiers found creative ways around this, for example, they might arrange a code, writing their full name if they were in the front line but only their initials if they were in reserve lines or at rest.

Embroidered Postcards



The embroidered postcards were very popular with British soldiers who often sent them home. They were sold in thin paper envelopes but were seldom sent through the post in them. They were too fragile and, more particularly, they represented quite an investment because they were not cheap souvenirs to buy. Usually these postcards were posted along with other letters to protect them from damage in the post. For this reason, they are often unwritten, with no marks on the back, any message having been sent in an accompanying letter. The hand-embroidery is thought to have been carried out in domestic houses as 'out-work' by civilians in France and Belgium, and in the UK by refugees. The designs were repeatedly embroidered on rolls of silk and then made into postcards to be sold.

The designs on the postcards often reflected patriotic sentiments and many are embroidered in the colours of the national flags of Great Britain and her allied countries.

Hard Tak Biscuit



Hard tack biscuits have been a staple in soldiers' diet since the ancient times. The Royal Navy were the first to mass produce these biscuits as early as the 1660s. They were made using salt, water and wheat flour (which is rich in protein, vitamins and calories). The secret to making the biscuits last so long was to draw out the moisture. Slabs of hardtack were baked and re-baked as many as four separate times. Once in storage, the biscuits would keep for a long time, as long as they were kept dry. At meal times, soldiers and sailors would soak or boil the biscuits in coffee, beer, salt water or any other liquid to make the biscuits edible. They could also be crushed with rifle butts and boiled into porridge, fried in a pan, or even just sucked on raw during a long watch. They could easily become infested with weevil larvae or maggots. Soldiers would remove any parasites by submerging the biscuits in coffee or water and then skimming the bugs off when they floated to the surface.

Trench Cap



A British Army trench cap was issued to British soldiers from 1915. The trench cap was designed to be more practical for soldiers serving in the trenches who could put these caps in their pockets when wearing a metal helmet. Before 1915, soldiers were issued with a dress hat with a stiff peak that made it hard for the soldiers to store these hats when wearing a helmet.

Victoria Cross (Replica)



The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest medal awarded for bravery in the British and Commonwealth Armed Forces and was created in January 1856, during the Crimean War (1853-1856).

The first 62 VCs were awarded by Queen Victoria in 1857 at a public event in Hyde Park, in front of 50,000 people. Queen Victoria gave as many awards as possible in person during her reign, a tradition continued by British monarchs to this day.

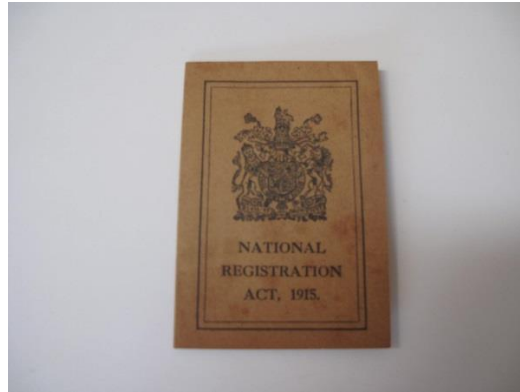
Since 1856 the Victoria Cross has been awarded 1,358 times. During the First World War (1914-1918) the Lancashire Fusiliers were awarded 18 Victoria Crosses, more than any other British infantry regiment.

Iron Cross (Replica)



The Iron Cross is a German medal first awarded in 1813 for bravery whilst fighting in the Prussian War of Liberation. The medal was also awarded during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, and then again during the First World War. The Iron Cross had three different levels: second class, first class and the Grand Cross, which was awarded only nineteen times during the First World War. A special class, the Grand Cross on a Radiant Star, was created especially for Field Marshal G.L. Blücher after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. It was awarded only once more, to Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg in 1918. From the time of its creation in 1813, until the end of the First World War, 5,719,300 Iron Crosses first and second class were awarded.

National Registration Act, 1915



On 15 July 1915 the National Registration Act 1915 was passed. This act required that all men and women, between the ages of 15 and 65 years of age, had to register so that the government could get an up to date list of the men and women who they thought might be useful to the war effort. From this list, the government could see who could be called up for military service and who might be employed better on the home front.