

Home Front during WWI (1914-18)



Background: You can divide war into two rough sections. The first being 'business as usual' under P.M Herbert Asquith. Between 1914-16 few gains were made in the war and Britain saw few changes. After David Lloyd George became P.M in 1916, the powers under DORA were maximised and the 'war effort' improved, leading to eventual victory. What was life like for those living in Britain?

What do you need to know?

- Recruitment/ Conscription/ Conscientious Objectors
- Shells, bombs and threats of invasion
- DORA - controlling industry
- DORA - controlling food production and distribution
- DORA—Recruitment
- Women at war (filling the gaps/ recruitment/ running home and family)
- How effective was government propaganda



DEFENCE OF THE REALM ACT

NOTICE.

A stoppage of work has taken place in the West Cumberland Iron Ore Mines. It is suggested that the cause of the strike is that the Government by calling up young Iron Ore Miners born in 1899 have broken an undertaking. It was announced to the men's representatives in January last that in view of the paramount need of men all undertakings with regard to recruitment were cancelled and that this undertaking was cancelled with the rest.

In the circumstances therefore the strike is nothing else than a protest against the calling to the Colours of young men in the highest medical category of fitness and is thus a claim for exceptional treatment which is not made by any other class of citizens.

It is difficult to believe that at any time the Cumberland Iron Ore Miners would strike as a protest against the recruitment of such men. It is impossible to believe that they will persist in striking at this time of all others.

The Government will not recognise any claim for the special treatment of these men and they will not permit the strike to continue. They call therefore upon all loyal citizens to resume work immediately and they give notice that all persons who incite to any stoppage of work on war material or who do any act calculated or likely to restrict the production of such material are guilty of an offence under the Defence of the Realm Regulations the penalty for which is penal servitude for life or such less punishment as may be awarded. If work is not resumed the Government will not hesitate immediately to put this power into operation.

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS OF WAR.

10 10719 701. —(4010) 100 1071 10 10

11. How were civilians affected by WWI? (Part 1)

Volunteers	<p>When war broke out in August 1914 there were 250,000 professional soldiers. Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State, needed at least 1 million. A massive recruitment drive began. Recruitment offices were set up in every town and city, it commissioned posters and pamphlets urging young men to join. Politicians made patriotic speeches. It was so successful barracks were overflowing, football teams and bus depots joined up, they stayed together in 'Pals Battalions'. By March 1916 over 2.5 million men had volunteered to join Kitchener's Army. Many wanted to fight 'the Hun' or 'Fritz'.</p>
Conscription (Military Services Acts)	<p>SEE DORA P2 for more detail. As casualties increased, dead and wounded soldiers had to be replaced and volunteers could not make up the losses, as the rate of volunteering was slowing down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derby Scheme was introduced in Autumn 1915. In January 1916, Parliament passed the first Conscription Act. Military service was now compulsory for all single men ages 18-41. In April 1916, this was expanded to include ALL men aged 18-41. Between 1916 and 1918 1 in 3 men were conscripted into the armed forces.
Conscientious objectors (conchies)	<p>There were approximately 16,000 men (conchies) who, for religious or humanitarian reasons, did not want to join the war. Despite pressure from the Suffragettes (and other men and women), who gave these men white feathers (to suggest they were cowards), many continued to avoid war. Over 90% of conscientious objectors ended up contributing to the war in non-combat roles such as ambulance drivers (Bernard Lawson), logistics and other jobs. Approximately 1500 conchies refused to get involved on any level and these guys were known as absolutists. These men could be trialled in court and could have been shot, however, although there was little sympathy for these men the government chose to imprison these men for up to 10 years to avoid any negative media attention. Thomas Atlee is an example of an absolutist who was imprisoned with a long sentence, but released after the war ended in 1918, as he wasn't considered a threat to society (as he was a conchie!)</p>



Shells, bombs and threats of invasion

Shelling from the sea	Zeppelins	Gotha and Giant Bombers
<p>In December 1914 German battleships shelled towns along the north-east coast of Britain. They shelled Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool, 119 men, women and children were killed.</p>	<p>In January 1915 German airships began bombing raids on Britain. Starting with Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn on the east coast, Zeppelins made a total of 57 raids on British towns, killing 564 people and injuring 1370.</p>	<p>In May 1917, German Gotha bombers raided Folkestone and killed 95 people. The following month, bombers raided London, killing 162 people. Germany made 27 bomber raids on British towns, causing a total of 835 deaths and 1990 injuries.</p>

12. How was Britain organised for war? (DORA) - Part 1

DORA (Defence Of the Realm Act) was introduced on 8th August 1914. This gave the government powers to change any aspect of people's lives during war time. The P.M (Herbert Asquith) promoted the idea of 'business as usual' in Britain and encouraged people to carry on as normal whilst the war was being fought. As WWI dragged on, a lot of opposition developed to this idea and, **in 1916, when David Lloyd George became Prime Minister, he used the powers of DORA to make some BIG changes** which many Historians believe were pivotal in Britain winning WWI.



www.alamy.com - E5GH2M



Mining: To make sure that there was a steady supply of coal for war, the government took control of the coal industry and **promised them fixed profits (in line with 1913).** This meant that the government could supply themselves cheaply and, if the company sold a lot more coal, the government took the extra profits. There were **National wage agreements** put in place to make sure that miners everywhere got paid fairly and got paid the same.

Munitions: During 1915 the Daily Mail published an article about a shortage of weapons and ammo on the front line. This became known as a munitions crisis or shell crisis. The ammo was not being produced as fast as it was being used. In response the government set up the **Ministry of Munitions.** New **National Shell Factories** were set up. By mid-1916, the government owned over **20,000 munitions factories** and employed all of the workers within them. (see issue 13 for more detail)

Railways: These were controlled by the government during War and all the companies who owned different rail networks were forced to work together as one. **As with coal, profits were guaranteed at 1913 levels by the government.** Rail travel improved in reliability and speed.

Shipping: When Lloyd George took over as PM in 1916, he set up the **Ministry of Shipping** to increase boat production, shipping levels and reduce attacks by German U-boats (submarines). **After 3.7 million tonnes of British goods were sunk in the Spring of 1917,** the Ministry of Shipping made supply boats travel in **convoys,** with protection from battleships armed with torpedoes. The number of attacks was reduced significantly.

12. How was Britain organised for war? (DORA) -

Part 2

F O O D	<p>Before WWI started in 1914, Britain had to import 40% of its meat, 80% of its wheat, over 50% of its milk, veg, fruit, as well as 100% of its sugar. In the early days of war the supplies were still able to get through from other countries, but during 1916, the German navy began to produce more U-boats. This caused a desperate situation, with 1 in 4 British supply ships being sunk in the year 1917. By April, the situation had become so bad that Britain was down to 9 weeks supply of wheat and 4 days of sugar. Shops closed by the early afternoon because food supplies were short. David Lloyd George tackled the problem in 3 ways after setting up the Ministry of food (see right)</p>	<p><u>Supply:</u> Set up local food committees to persuade farmers to turn their fields (pastures) into farming land (arable) to grow veg etc. The following year (1918) Britain produced 1 million tonnes more wheat and 1.5 million tonnes more of potatoes. Over 3 million acres of land had been converted to farming.</p>
		<p><u>Demand:</u> The government subsidised (paid for) part of the cost of bread. The 'ninepenny loaf' meant that all families could afford to eat bread as a basic foodstuff. The subsidy kept the price down and bread was never rationed.</p>
		<p><u>Rationing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1917, local food committees were encouraged to introduce voluntary rationing in their areas. The royal family helped by reducing their bread and flour used in the kitchens. Propaganda posters saying 'Eat Less Bread' were also used. In 1918, compulsory rationing of sugar, butter, jam, meat and margarine were all introduced. This was until after the end of the war. Meat came off ration in November 1919, butter in early 1920 and sugar in November 1920.

DEFENCE OF THE REALM. E.P. 8.

MINISTRY OF FOOD.

BREACHES OF THE RATIONING ORDER

The undermentioned convictions have been recently obtained:-

Court	Date	Nature of Offence	Result
HENDON - -	29th Aug., 1918	Unlawfully obtaining and using ration books -	3 Months' Imprisonment
WEST HAM -	29th Aug., 1918	Being a retailer & failing to detach proper number of coupons	Fined £20
SMETHWICK -	22nd July, 1918	Obtaining meat in excess quantities - - -	Fined £50 & £5 5s. costs
OLD STREET -	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer selling to unregistered customer	Fined £72 & £5 5s. costs
OLD STREET -	4th Sept., 1918	Not detaching sufficient coupons for meat sold -	Fined £25 & £2 2s. costs
CHESTER-LE-STREET	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer returning number of registered customers in excess of counterfoils deposited - - -	Fined £50 & £5 5s. costs
HIGH WYCOMBE	7th Sept., 1918	Making false statement on application for and using Ration Books unlawfully - - - - -	Fined £40 & £6 4s. costs

Enforcement Branch, Local Authorities Division,
MINISTRY OF FOOD, September, 1918.



R E C R U I T M E N T	<p><u>National Registration Act (July 1915):</u> To make sure the Government knew what type of men and women who were available to help the war effort they put together a National Register. It contained a list of all men and women between the ages of 18-65 and gave details such as age, occupation, special skills and marital status. This meant men could later be targeted to 'join up'</p>
	<p><u>The Derby Scheme (October 1915):</u> This called for men to sign a document/contract promising that they would fight if they were asked to. It said that unmarried men would be called up first and those with a good reason would not be asked to fight. However, less than half of fighting age men made the promise.</p>
	<p><u>Military Services Acts - Conscription (1916):</u> The government brought in conscription (meaning men had to fight by law or be put in prison) in January 1916, first for unmarried men, but then in April for all men between ages 18-41. Not all men had to join up. For example, those essential workers such as miners and railway workers were not called up.</p>

13. Women at war (Part 1)

Filling the gaps: By the summer of 1915 industry was short of workers. The answer was obvious - recruit women to fill the gaps. However male trade unions were opposed to this, they did not want women taking men's jobs as women were paid less and the unions were afraid when the men came back they would not have jobs left. **Eventually trade unions agreed women could work so long as the men had their jobs when they returned.** DON'T over-exaggerate the changes though, **in July 1914 nearly 5 million women were in jobs, by the 1918 this was just over 6 million (less domestic work and more munitions and other jobs).**

Recruiting women to the work place: In August 1915 all men and women aged 16-65 had to register details so the Government knew who was available to work.

Munitions: Many women became munitionettes. Working in this kind of factory was extremely dangerous, as exposure to chemicals in **TNT** and others like Sulphur could have terrible consequences. Inhaling these fumes over time could lead to liver or kidney failure over time. Many women in the early stages of this process were nicknamed **'Canary girls'** because their skin was stained yellow, and due to problems filtering toxins in their bodies, the toxins tried to escape through the skin, altering the colours of their faces.

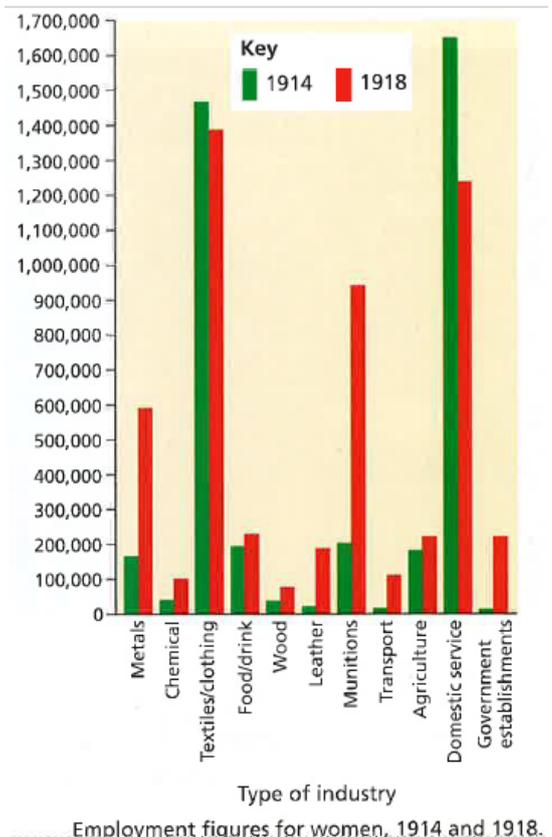
Military: As war went on there was a direct government persuasion to encourage women to join the armed services in non-combat roles as nurses, cooks, mechanics and drivers. They joined the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (**WAAC**), Women's Royal Naval Service (**WRNS**) and the emerging Women's Royal Air Force (**WRAF**), in non-flying roles. They also worked as nurses in the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (**FANY**) and the Voluntary Aid Detachment (**VAD**).

Non-military: Women outside of the military soon went into work as lab assistants, blacksmiths, nurses, dentists, road sweepers, postwomen, office workers, accountants, delivery drivers and the Women's Land Army (**WLA**). The WLA were established to make sure that enough food was produced, but **only 16,000 women joined.** Most of the work on the farms was done by women already living in rural villages.

Social Freedoms: Women were more financially independent during the war than ever before. Women went out by themselves; they smoked in public and wore shorter skirts. The spread of STD's was a big problem - many towns put up curfews for women so they could not stay out late with soldiers and sailors. The government finally issued **Regulation 40D** which said if a women infected a serviceman with an STD she would be imprisoned. Men would not be prosecuted if he infected a woman.

Running the home and family:

<p>Food Problems: The price of basic food doubled and some food became very scarce. The Government therefore set up a string of national kitchens where women could buy meals and taken them away.</p>	<p>Rent Strikes: Many landlords put rent up, women resisted through demonstrations and rent strikes. The Government passed the Rent Restriction Act, which kept rents at the 1913 level.</p>
<p>Separation allowance: The government paid a weekly sum to wives and dependants of all servicemen. If the man was killed it turned into a pension.</p>	<p>Motherhood: Towards the end of the war motherhood was encouraged. In 1916 Mother's Day was introduced, The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child was founded - a sign attitudes toward illegitimacy were changing.</p>



14. How effective was government propoganda in WWI?

PROPAGANDA TYPE	KEY FACTS	EFFECTIVENESS + WHY
Newspaper re-ports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newspaper correspondents weren't allowed to the front line Before May 1915, no bad news or casualty lists published War language used to cover up the horror <p>'Baptism of fire' (heavy losses) 'wastage' (death) 'broken heroes' (shell shock victims)</p>	<p>This strategy in the early war had some impact on improving morale, but at time went on and the horror of war grew, people began to see through this language and resented being lied to. The censorship of the newspapers reduced when DLG became P.M in 1916.</p>
Official photographs and paintings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Britain had only 4 government approved war photographers (France had 35 ish and Germany 50 ish) Heavily censored: Only positive images of war put in papers before 1916 (DLG takes over as PM) Lord Beaverbrook took over Ministry of Information in 1917 and wanted accurate accounts, so reduced censorship for photographers 	<p>The soldier's accounts of war were a complete mismatch to the photographs before 1916. This led the British public to question not only the photographs, but other information as well. This is why Lord Beaverbrook changed the Ministry of Information's strategy in 1917.</p>
Posters, post-cards and cartoons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-5 million copies of 110 different posters published and put all over Britain. Aimed at increasing recruitment (used guilt, fear and patriotic emotions), combating war weariness (positive emotions) and creating hatred towards 'The Hun' (anger, fear, resentment) Set of official postcards called 'Telling the Story' were released. They depicted the life of a soldier from when they left until their return. 	<p>Soldiers mocked these posters, as the reality was COMPLETELY different to the emotions provoked in the posters or the story told in the 'Telling the Story' series.</p> <p>Think about the difference between a U rated film and an 18 rated film. Other examples could include today's adverts about become a teacher or soldier—the reality is much more dangerous on the ground.</p>
Official WWI films (approved by government)	<p>There were many propoganda political cartoons made and shown at cinema, aiming to persuade people to contribute to the war effort by mocking the Germans. The best known film was 'The Battle of the Somme', shown to Britain and to soldiers on the Home Front. The real Battle of the Somme began on 1st July 1916 - Nov 1916.</p>	<p>The film was released before the end of the battle and showed Britain winning, even though in reality the Germans are thought to have won. Many saw this as an outrageous lie after the outcome of the battle was known.</p>

Conclusion: In 1914-15 the government wanted to maintain morale, encourage people to support the war effort and develop hatred for the enemy. To do this they censored a lot of details and manipulated the truth (under Asquith at PM), which reduced public trust. From 1916 onwards, under David Lloyd George, the strategy became more open and censorship was reduced. From 1917, when Lord Beaverbrook took over the Ministry of Information, the focus of war reporting was focused on documenting and accuracy, however, the propoganda continued.



Home Front: TOP 20 QUIZ

1. Who was secretary of State for War in 1914?

Lord Bedroom Lord Kitchener Lord Living Room

2. How many men had joined the army by March 1916?

1.5 million 3.5 million 2.5 million

3. When was the first Conscription Act passed, making military service compulsory?

January 1916 April 1916 October 1916

4. How many men were conscripted into the army between 1916-1918?

1 in 3 1 in 4 1 in 5

5. What nickname were conscientious objectors given?

Convicts Obbies Conchies

6. When did German battleships shell North East Britain (including Scarborough and Whitby)

October 1914 November 1914 December 1914

7. When did German zeppelins begin bombing Britain, killing 564 people?

January 1915 February 1915 April 1915

8. When was the first Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) passed?

21st April 1914 8th August 1914 1st December 1914

9. Which newspaper uncovered a national munitions crisis in 1915?

Daily Mirror Daily Mail Daily Telegraph

10. How many tonnes of British shipping did German U boats sink in spring 1917?

1.1 4.5 3.7

11. Which basic food was in high demand due to a lack of shortage?

Peas Bread Rice

Home Front: TOP 20 QUIZ

12. When was compulsory rationing introduced for sugar, meat, butter, jam and margarine?

1915 1918 1919

13. Which of these did David Lloyd George not cancel?

The Football League Gut Fawkes Night Christmas Day

14. How many women were at work by the end of the war?

Just over 4 million Just over 5 million Just over 6 million

15. When were casualties lists first published in British newspapers?

April 1915 May 1915 June 1915

16. Who became Minister of Information in 1917?

Lord Beaverbrook Lord Otterbrook Lord Barrybrook

17. When did the real Battle of the Somme take place?

July - Nov 1916 June - Dec 1916 August - Oct 1916

18. What did women give Conscientious Objectors?

Kisses white feathers Chewing Gum

19. What were groups of men who joined the army together nicknamed?

Friends Battalions Pals Battalions Mates Battalions

20. When did David Lloyd George become Prime Minister?

1914 1916 1918