HAMPshire Record Office
Archive Education Service

The First World War
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Introduction

Hampshire's role in the defence of the realm during wartime dates back to the thirteenth century when French troops landed in the county, laying siege to Odiham Castle. The county's coast was subsequently protected by fortresses like Southsea and Hurst Castles and the ring of Palmerston Forts. From Portsmouth and Southampton the Royal Navy with military support disembarked for campaigns around the world. During the First World War, Hampshire once again played its part in supplying troops to help the war effort.

The impact of the war on people and families in Hampshire is the focus of this resource pack which is based on an exhibition produced by Hampshire Archives for the 90th Anniversary of the end of the First World War. Using archive material including letters, postcards, diaries and photographs, the topics covered include recruitment, trench warfare, care for the casualties of war, women's war work and remembrance celebrations.

To help you plan your lessons we have selected some websites containing material on the First World War (Please note Hampshire Record Office is not responsible for the content nor availability of the following websites which were ‘active’ in Autumn 2009). In the event of any problems please contact the site’s web-keeper

Commonwealth War Graves Commission
http://www.cwgc.org/
SchoolHistory – impact of war
http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/lessons/impactofwar/start.htm
Schools History
http://www.schoolshistory.com/gcsehistory/britaininthefirstworldwar.htm
First World War.Com
http://www.firstworldwar.com/
The Great War – battlefields
http://www.greatwar.co.uk/index.htm
The Long, Long Trail
http://www.1914-1918.net/
First World War digital poetry
http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/
Experiences of war
http://www.nls.uk/experiencesofwar/index.html

Then there are the biggies like the **BBC, the Imperial War Museum and Channel4**. You can find these at the following:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/#the_human_experienc...e
www.iwm.org.uk
http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/F/firstworldwar/

Some ideas for class reading:

- **Private Peaceful** by Michael Morpurgo
  A stunning novel of World War 1. It is so absorbing and atmospheric that you will want to keep reading to the end. Told through the voice of a young soldier it captures in 24 hours the memories of his life - with the harsh realisation that he is also facing an unknown future!
  Reading level: 10-12   Interest age: 10-14

- **War Horse** by Michael Morpurgo
  This book recounts the adventures of a horse as he moves from life on a farm into the battles of World War 1, the story of a friendship lasting through the toughest of tests.
  Reading level: 8-10   Interest age: 8-13
  ISBN-10: 1405215879
Some suggested activities

1. Split the class into groups and give each group the task of finding out about one of the following aspects of the First World War and report back to the whole class:
   - Recruitment
   - Trench Warfare
   - Women’s Land Army
   - Women munition workers
   - Military hospitals and V.A.D.s
   - Remembrance ceremonies and memorials
Use information from this pack as well as websites, CD ROMs, DVDs and videos, and library books.

2. Research your own locality (fieldwork) for clues about the First World War checking the following:
   - Local library (local history section)
   - Local museum for artefacts, posters etc.
   - War memorials, including those in churches
   - Talking to local people about their family’s wartime experiences

3. Ask pupils to write one of the following:
   - A short diary
   - A letter
   - A postcard
   These could be written from a choice of perspectives such as a young soldier writing to their parents; a land girl writing to her parents or friends; someone in a VAD unit writing home from the Front; a woman war worker etc.

4. Design a war memorial. See the section on Remembrance.

5. Organise a debate on the purpose or merits of war using contemporary issues and historical examples.
Recruitment

On 6th August 1914, Secretary of State for War Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener, issued a call for 100,000 volunteers to increase the size of the army. It was claimed that the men would only have to enlist ‘for the duration of the war’, which it was said would all be over by Christmas. In towns and villages across the country men queued to ‘sign up’ for Pals Regiments and County Regiments.

After the willing recruits filled in their forms and underwent an examination the process was concluded by the recruit ‘taking the King's Shilling’ and the recruiting Sergeant taking his sixpence per man. The recruit then went home, usually receiving his joining instructions and travel warrant a day or two later.

However, by early 1915 it had become clear that voluntary recruitment was not going to provide the numbers of men required for the Front. The Government passed the National Registration Act on 15 July 1915 and conscription followed in January 1916.

HPP31/096 (Left) Camp of the 7th Division mustering near Lyndhurst prior to marching to Southampton for embarkation to France in 1914. The 7th Division was formed during September and very early October 1914, by the bringing together of regular army units from various points around the British Empire.
HPP15/073 (Left) A recruiting Sergeant outside the Cabbage Inn, Whitchurch, complete with recruiting posters.

105M93/1/30 (Right) Recruiting outside the Wilts and Dorset Bank, Brockenhurst, New Forest, 1914.

105M93/1/29 (Left) An Indian soldier proudly poses for a photo outside Mr J W Martin's chemist shop, Brockenhurst, 1914.

A training camp had been established for Indian soldiers at Ashurst in the New Forest around October 1914. Many Indian and Nepalese (Ghurkha) soldiers also recuperated from the effects of the war at convalescent camps and hospitals across the south of Hampshire.
42M86/PZ4 (Left) Many young men rushed forward to volunteer including those from Mrs Hayman’s Boys Bible Class in Bournemouth. Many of the young men were to send photographs of themselves in uniform to Mrs Hayman which she kept in an album.

This photograph shows a group of young un-named soldiers from the Bible Class.

92M91/5/36 (Right) Photograph of Miss R Backhouse and possibly her brothers posing for a joint photograph in their uniforms. Miss Backhouse was a nurse in a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) during the War.

73M83 Many humorous postcards were sent to and from the Front in the early years of the War, such as the one (Left), sent by Frank Jeffreys to his family from France. Some French postcards (Right) included sentimentalised images. In later years the humour and subjects of postcards would become much darker.
One of Frank Jeffrey’s postcards contained the following message to his Mother:

“Dear Mother, have arrived at the place shown on that card I sent you for a few days for a rest. It’s about five mile from the trenches, marched it in the afternoon. I was never so knocked up in my life, the sun was scorching. Feet are much better, back to the trenches about Friday or Saturday. Am quite well now. Hope you are all the same. Love to all, Frank”.

92M91/5/16 (Left) Letter from Frank Jeffreys to his mother writing about his Army training. Frank reveals that his current position with a transport unit caring for horses is not as demanding as his previous company. He complains that:

“on the transport they have no drills whatever, they don’t know how to use a rifle and knows nothing about defending simply feeding and exercise horses every day, they have no restrictions over smoking and I have been smoking three packets a day. So I thought if I go back into the Company I shall learn how to drill and use my rifle properly and also smarten myself up and also stop me smoking so much and do meself more good”.

36A01/B3 (Right) Not everyone, however, believed in going to war. This card to ‘Max’ relates one persons determination to remain a pacifist and not enter the War, whatever the consequences.
The War in the trenches

Although most of us think primarily of World War One in terms of life and death in the trenches, only a relatively small proportion of the army actually served there. The trenches were the front lines, the most dangerous places. But behind them was a mass of supply lines, headquarters and all the other essential mechanisms of war, in which the majority of troops were employed.

The trenches were mainly the province of the infantry, along with mortar teams, machine-gunners, engineers and artillery observers. In the major offensives between 1915 and 1917 many trench positions were only held for a few days at a time before the next advance moved them on into what had been no man's land or the enemy’s position. These early trenches were often no more than deep, hastily dug, furrows hacked out by soldiers with their entrenching tools.

A general pattern for trench routine was four days in the front line, then four days in close reserve and finally four at rest, although this varied considerably depending on weather conditions and the availability of enough reserve troops to be able to rotate them in this way. For most men days in the trenches involved periods of intense fear when being shelled or ‘going over the top’ to the next set of trenches and often longer periods of boredom where nothing happened.

Soldiers were still expected to keep their kit clean whilst in the trenches, otherwise their time could be spent reading or writing letters home. Soldiers were encouraged to write letters to friends and family in Britain, but most decided it was better to leave out the horrors of the trench warfare. 12.5 million letters were sent to the Western Front every week with letters taking only two or three days to arrive from Britain.

During the First World War, the total number of reported prisoners of war from the British Empire was 191,652. From December 1914 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegates obtained permission from the different belligerent States to visit Prisoner Of War camps. These visits allowed the ICRC to check on conditions of detention and to let the prisoners know that they had not been forgotten by the outside world.
105M93/1/35 (Above) Indian soldiers at New Milton railway station returning to the Front after convalescing at Barton-on-Sea military hospital, 1915.

73M83/4/139 (Above) Postcard showing the Rifle Brigade under heavy fire.
92M91/5/16  
(Right) Postcard showing the devastation around Neuve Chapelle after intense fighting.

92M91/5/16  (left) Humorous postcard depicting men unprepared for the war.

92M91/5/30 (Right) Sketches entitled ‘The Watchers’ drawn in 1915 by a Sapper in the Royal Engineers recovering at a VAD unit for the scrapbook of a VAD nurse.
73M83/3 (Left) Postcard with a poignant reminder that letters were always welcome at the Front.

92M91/19 (Right) Letter from Private R Read to his mother (right). He asks her not to “send any fags as I can get 10 for 11/2d and we get three packets a week”. He goes on to mention pretty French girls and the awfully hot weather.

Other letters, such as one sent to Bill Ogilvy from R Soffe in London January 1916, indicate the need for fresh supplies of items such as stockings, cap, muffler, pencil and scissors needed to be sent in parcels to the Front.

92M91/5/32 (Left) Field Service postcard from Arthur Ayland serving in 138th Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps, to his mother April 1917. These printed cards were sent from the Front and were often the first communication received by those at home waiting anxiously for news. However, as with this one, they often reported relatives having been wounded and taken to hospital.
92M91/5/88 (Right) Cartoon drawing (right) of a German doing ‘The Berlin Sprint’ drawn by a soldier in the RFA June 1917 for the scrapbook of a VAD nurse.

108M91/11/3 (Left) Hand-drawn postcard (left) sent to soldiers serving with the 4th Corps in France at Christmas 1914.

6A08 (Right) Postcard from 11th Division at Christmas 1917. The message reads “Very best wishes for Xmas & New Year. Now we are fairly rushing on again in the longest day. I’m content to be in a nice quiet spot well out of shell fire for Xmas, which will be pleasant after rather a long sojourn in deep dugouts”.
42M86/PZ4/31 (Above) Postcard to Mrs Hayman at Bournemouth from one of the boys who attended her Bible class, Private W Hall, a prisoner of war in Germany requesting books to read.

46M89/27/1 (Right) Letter from Private A Weston of the South Lancashire Regiment, a prisoner of war in Germany, sent to T B Allnutt, Mayor of Basingstoke, 1916. Private Weston was requesting food, particularly bread, to be sent to him in captivity in Germany.
Casualties of war

What happened to the wounded? Front-line units, such as infantry battalions, were able to provide only the most basic medical care for wounded soldiers. A wounded man would either make his own way or be carried by stretcher bearers or comrades to their Regimental Aid Posts which were located near the front line. These were attended by the Battalion Medical Officer and his orderlies and stretcher bearers.

The facilities there were crude and limited to carrying out light first aid, providing casualties with a drink, or just pass them down the line to the Advanced Dressing Station by hand carriage or wheeled stretchers.

The Casualty Clearing Station was the first large, well-equipped medical facility that a wounded man would visit. It's role was to retain all serious cases that were unfit for further travel, treat and return slight cases, and evacuate all others. It was usually a tented camp, although the accommodation would sometimes be in huts. These were often grouped into clusters of two or three in a small area, usually a few miles behind the lines and on a railway line.

Once admitted to a Hospital, the soldier stood a fair chance of survival. More than half were evacuated back to Britain from a General or Stationary Hospital for further treatment or convalescence.

Following the outbreak of war in August 1914, the British Red Cross and the Order of St John formed the Joint War Committee to pool monetary and human resources. Members of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John were organised into Voluntary Aid Detachments (the term VAD later came to be used for an individual member as well as a detachment). All members were trained in first aid and others trained in nursing, cookery and hygiene and sanitation. Prior to the start of the First World War around 2,500 women were registered VADs working in hospitals. At the start of the war over 46,000 women registered to become VADs and there were approximately 90,000 registered as VADs at the end of the War.

Many VADs came from middle and upper-class families; they could pay for training and had enough time and money to work for free. VAD Nurses often used their social networks to get themselves to the conflicts in France to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers. Some demonstrated remarkable abilities to work, organise and survive in the most dreadful situations serving in France, Serbia, Corsica, Salonika, Romania, Russia and Malta.
V.A.Ds were some of the most important women in the War due to the fact that they were working not only in hospitals but also on the front-lines. The women were also important because they were directly connected to the soldier and were often the last person soldiers saw before they died of battle wounds.

40M95W/J7 (Left) Photograph of the Hospital ship Czar on which Miss Maude Ella le Blanc, VAD Nursing Officer, served.

40M95W/J7 (Right) Photograph of Miss Maude Ella le Blanc, VAD Nursing Officer, British Red Cross, who served in Salonika during the War. Her nickname was ‘Sunshine’

17A08/1 (Left) An illustration from an autograph album kept by Kate Eileen Harris, containing poems, messages, watercolour and ink drawings, and pencil sketches and cartoons. Most of the entries were made by soldiers who were patients at Northbrook House convalescent home during the First World War.
105M93/1/72 (Right) Her Majesty Queen Mary visiting wounded Indian soldiers, Brockenhurst, 17 November 1914. The hospital had been set up around September 1914 and named the Lady Hardinge Hospital in remembrance of the many hospitals she had founded on the Indian sub-continent. Her husband, Sir Charles Hardinge, was Viceroy of India from 1910 to 1916. In the summer of 1916 the Indian hospital was transferred to Brighton.

92M91/5/16 & 32 Needlework postcards created by Frank Jeffreys and Arthur Ayland whilst patients at Netley Military Hospital. Creating these may have formed part of the patient’s rehabilitation during their stay at Netley.

92M91/2/18 (Left) Wounded Indian soldiers at Netley Hospital.
92M91/2/20 (Left) Group photograph of Japanese nurses who worked at Netley Hospital during the War. The Japanese were allies during the war.

92M91/5/22 (Right) Photograph of wounded soldiers at Netley Hospital. Including James Allum in front row with his arm on shoulders of a Black soldier. James Allum was wounded in 1916. He met his wife at Netley Hospital and later became a physiotherapist there working in D block.

92M91/5/30 (Left) A cartoon drawn by a soldier for Nurse Taylor's autograph book, Southsea Hospital c1916
29M86W/40 (Left) Telegram sent to Clifford Bellairs informing him that his cousin Harry had been wounded and was being shipped back to England.

29M86W/40 (Right) Letter embossed Research Hospital Cambridge from Harry Bellairs to Blanche Bellairs November 1916. Harry had been gassed during the Battle of the Somme.

92M91/5/35 (above) Photograph of a very young looking Private Alfred S T Rose along with his discharge papers. Private Rose was wounded towards the end of the War in 1918.
Women’s work in the First World War

Due to a labour shortage during the First World War, trades unions agreed to let women do men’s jobs, but only for the duration of the war. This agreement was known as ‘Dilution’ and all women who had jobs covered by the dilution agreement lost them at the end of War.

Thousands of women worked in munitions factories, offices and larger hangers used to build aircraft. They drove trams, knitted socks and did hampers for the soldiers on the front, as well as other voluntary work including farm work. Many had to work because it was paid employment and because their husbands were away fighting and their families needed a steady income. At this time it is believed that 400,000 domestic servants left their jobs for the more popular, better paid, factory work.

There were many important jobs carried out by women during the First World War as the list bellows shows.

- 113,000 women joined the Land Army
- Around 950,000 women worked in the munitions industry
- 38,000 Voluntary Aid Detachment staff were women and girls
- Over 57,000 women served in the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps
- First Aid Nursing Yeomanry won 17 Military Medals, 1 Legion d'Honneur and 27 Croix de Guerre
- 9,000 women were recruited into the Women's Royal Air Force
- Over 5,000 women served in the Women’s Royal Naval Service
- Nearly 200,000 women were employed in government departments

The concept of the Women’s Land Army was started during the First World War and introduced again in 1939. Known as ‘land girls’, many women went to work on farms and large estates throughout Britain. Work on these farms was often very hard involving long hours, especially during harvest-time. The Government carried out a large-scale recruitment programme to encourage women to work on the land. Many farmers were, however, against female workers believing that they were not strong enough to undertake ploughing and other heavy tasks.
Posters encouraging women to sign up for National Service W/C1/5/594.

HPP54-009 Basingstoke area: women land-workers outside greenhouses.

HPP54-002 Basingstoke area: women land-workers (with a small boy) baling hay with the aid of a Ruston mechanical hay-baler.
77M94/3/4 (Left) Women at work in Royal Aircraft Establishment workshops, Famborough, c1918.


After the war

At the end of the war efforts were made to persuade women to return to their traditional roles, not least because there were on average two men returning from the war for every job previously undertaken by a woman. The women workers knew the work was temporary. However, for the first time many had managed their own household budget and had made decisions for themselves. They had acquired many new skills and some had won the right to vote.

Traditional roles were changing for some women, especially those single women from the upper and middle classes, who were reluctant to give up their new found independence from their parents without a fight. For these women there were growing opportunities, in theory at least, to enter male dominated professions such as banking, law and engineering.
Remembrance

The first Remembrance Day was conducted in 1919 throughout Britain and the Commonwealth and was originally called Armistice Day. Services of Remembrance are held at war memorials and cenotaphs throughout Britain and the Commonwealth nations. On the Sunday nearest to 11 November at 11am each year, a Remembrance Service is held at these memorials to commemorate British and Commonwealth servicemen and women who died in the two World Wars and later conflicts. At 11am on each Remembrance Sunday a two minute silence is observed as a tribute to those who lost their lives fighting for their country.

Memorials can take many forms such as cenotaphs, plaques, books or gardens. A cenotaph - which literally means Empty Tomb in Greek - is a tomb or monument erected to honour a person or group of persons whose remains are elsewhere. There are estimated to be over 100,000 war memorials in the UK. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's online database lists the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died during the two world wars and the 23,000 cemeteries, memorials and other locations worldwide where they are commemorated.

A CD ROM entitled ‘War Memorials of Hampshire’ has been produced by Steve Jarvis which contains details on war memorials from around 260 places across the county and 18,000 individual names. There are photographs of the memorials and many names are hyperlinked with additional details about the individual. Copies can be bought from Hampshire Record Office.
HPP38/1/18 The unveiling of Basingstoke war memorial 24 May 1923. The memorial now sits between Council offices just outside the Memorial Park.

56M71/481 Farnborough memorial fountain, 1919, which is now situated on a roundabout at a very busy road junction. The Wavell School campus is today on a site behind the trees shown in the photograph.
126M90/20/3 Ampfield war memorials with Second World War bench behind the First World War obelisk. Ampfield Primary School can be seen behind.

Memorial to Indian soldiers at Barton-on-Sea who convalesced at the military hospital there during the First World War.
HPP19/059 Romsey War memorial Park c1950.

21M65/70/F6 and 21M65/302/F1 drawings on tracing paper of designs for memorial stained glass windows relating to the First World War at Breamore and St Cuthbert's, Portsmouth, churches.