

The Home Front in WWI



The First World War didn't just involve soldiers, sailors and airmen. The armed forces may have been the ones who went off to fight the enemy on foreign soil, but the people left at home had their part to play too. Huge numbers of civilians had jobs that were directly involved in producing items for the armed forces, and everyone was affected by the war in some way. Some were even at risk of injury or death. So what impact did the war have on people in Britain on the **home front**?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEwrmeMSeWQ>

What is meant by the terms

- Civilians
- The Home Front



Food and Taxes

Less food and higher taxes

Britain was short of food during the war because German submarines and battleships were sinking the boats that brought food into the country. So the government introduced **rationing** to make sure that the food that was available was equally shared out. Each person was allowed a set amount of butter, sugar, bacon, ham, and so on.

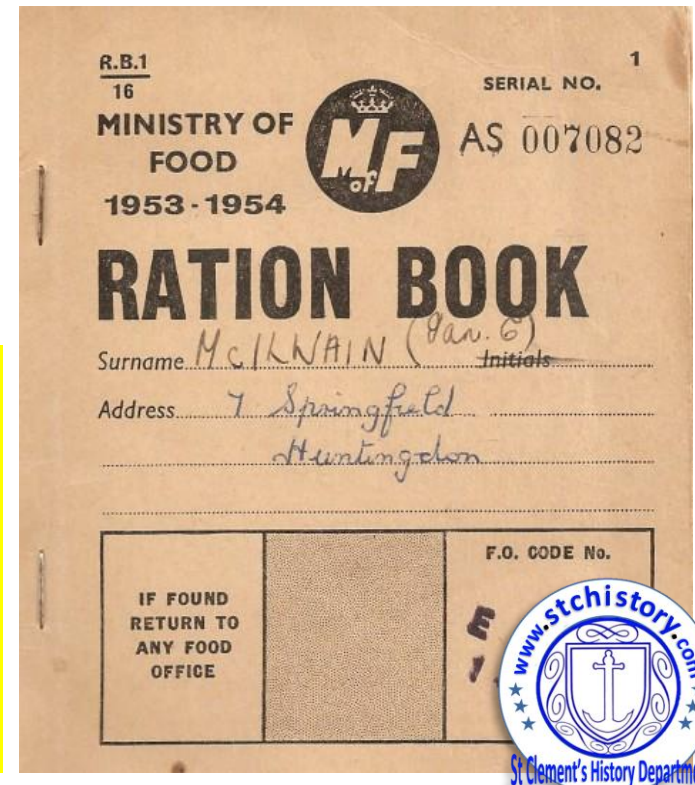
Some goods, such as sugar, flour and meat, were in very short supply – so prices went up. The government also had to borrow millions of pounds from the USA to pay for the war, so taxes went up to pay back the loans.

Questions

What is rationing, and why was rationing needed?

What happened to the prices of goods?

Why would taxes in Britain need to go up after the First World War?



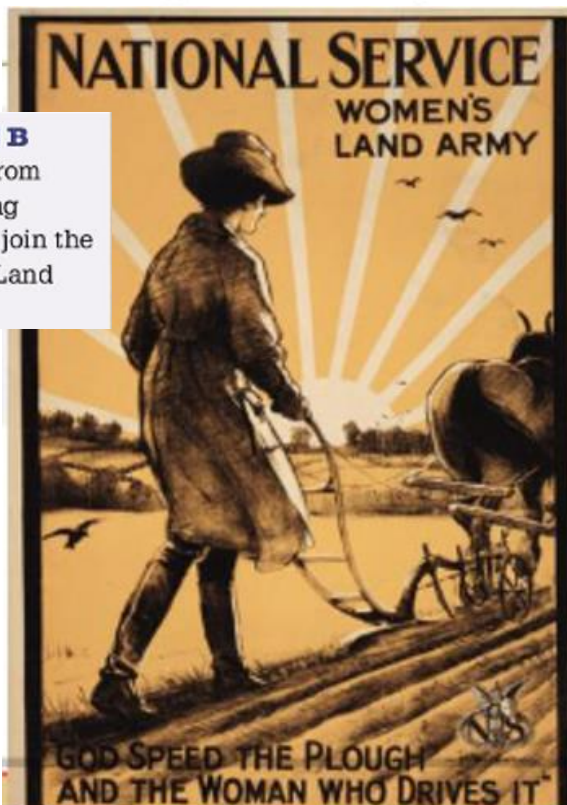
The effect of the war on women

Women in the war

With so many men away fighting, women were needed to do men's jobs. Before long, there were lots of female bus drivers, chimney sweeps and steel makers. Thousands of women found work in shipyards, in weapons factories and with the ambulance, police and fire service. In 1915, a Women's Land Army was created so women (known as Land Girls) could work in farming, replacing men called up to the military.

► SOURCE B

A poster from 1917 urging women to join the Women's Land Army.



Fact ✓

In 1917, Helen Gwynne-Vaughan helped to form the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp (WAAC), which supported the war effort through non-combat roles such as mechanical and office work. She went on to manage female workers in the air force, and was later made a Dame of the British Empire in recognition of her work.

▼ SOURCE C Female aircraft engineers at work during the war.



Question

Using all the information on the previous slide explain the ways that women contributed to the war effort.

Make sure that you include the terms

- Women's Land Army
- Women's Army Auxiliary Force.
- Female Engineers

DORA

A new law

When war broke out the government introduced a new law called the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). It gave the government the power to do whatever it felt was necessary to win the war. It could take over mines, railways and shipyards, and control what was published and said in newspapers and on the radio. To limit drunken behaviour, for example, it introduced strict pub opening hours... and even allowed beer to be watered down!

Questions

- What was DORA?
- Why do you think that the government thought that DORA was needed?
- What do you think would be the most difficult rule for you to keep, and why?

Extension

Why do you think that many people including politicians would not like DORA and think it is against British values?

▼ **SOURCE D** Some rules set by the DORA. The rules were designed to protect sensitive information, improve production and preserve vital supplies.

It is forbidden to:

- talk about military matters in public
- spread rumours about military matters
- buy binoculars
- melt down gold or silver
- trespass on railway lines or bridges or loiter near bridges and tunnels
- whistle for a London taxi in case it is mistaken for an air raid warning
- give bread to horses or chickens
- keep homing pigeons without a permit
- buy drinks for other people in a pub

Losing a generation

Around 70 million men around the world fought in the First World War. Over eight million fought for Britain and its empire, and almost one million of these men were killed. Around two million were injured, some with injuries that changed their lives forever. By the end of the war, it was estimated that there were only 12 towns or villages in Britain that hadn't lost a man in the fighting. Some communities lost nearly a whole generation of men entirely.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYWiAr2JKeM>



How did WWI come to an end after 4 horrific years of fighting?



As World War I went on, two significant events took place that could have changed the war decisively.

1. In 1917, the Russian Revolution took place where the people of Russia rebelled against their leader killing the whole Royal Family, meaning our biggest ally withdrew from the war.
2. However following the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915, where the German U-Boats sank an American passenger ship, the Americans joined the war on the side of the allies!



Germany was also facing a severe crisis on their own Home front. Ordinary German citizens had reached breaking point! British battleships had blockaded Germany meaning food and vital supplies couldn't get through leading to 500,000 people dying of starvation. There were riots all over Germany, particularly due to the rationing of bread.

Despite this, the German leader, **Kaiser Willhelm II** launched one final attack known as the Spring Offensive. Unfortunately this attack failed and to make matters worse, the sailors mutinied, known as the Kiel Mutiny. Germany's allies all began to surrender from September 1918 onwards, meaning the Kaiser had little choice but to give up as well.

Kaiser Willhelm was forced to **ABDICATE** on the 9th November 1918 leading to the **ARMISTICE** at 11am on the 11th November 1918

Answer in full sentences

- Why did Germany lose the war?
- What does the word abdicate mean?
- What does the word armistice mean?



Remembrance Day



The END of WWI

Armistice Day – 11th November at 11am

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkN01F45mUs>

