

The First World War was the first 'total war' - the whole nation had to be mobilised to fight. Men joined the army; while women took over their jobs

The population at home - the basics

People in Britain were affected by six main ways:

1. **Recruitment** - there was a huge poster campaign to get people to join up, and the government had to introduce conscription in 1916. Conscientious Objector could be imprisoned. Women were recruited into the armed forces as nurses, drivers, cooks and telephonists.
2. **The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA)** - this was passed in August 1914. DORA allowed the government to take over the coal mines, railways and shipping. Lloyd George became Minister of Munitions and set up state-run munitions factories. The government worked with the trade unions to prevent strikes.
3. **Reduced workforce** - there were fewer workers because so many men left to join the army.
4. **Rationing** - a fixed allowance for sugar, meat, butter, jam and tea was introduced in 1918. British Summer Time was also introduced to give more daylight working hours.
5. **Propaganda** - newspaper and soldiers' letters were censored and lies were made up about German atrocities. Posters encouraged morale. The film "The Somme" was a semi-successful attempt at using film for propaganda because the graphic nature of actually seeing the men die upset many viewers.
6. **Civilian casualties** - 57 zeppelin bombing raids after 1915, and the German navy shelled English cities (harbour towns).

Propaganda - what did it do?

Propaganda was not just about finding recruits; it was designed to make people believe in certain ideas and viewpoints and to think in certain ways. The posters shown below are examples of propaganda used by the government to encourage men to join the army.



How did women help the war effort?

1. **Recruitment** - women were recruited as nurses into the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) or First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY), and as drivers, cooks and telephonists.
2. DORA - many women 'munitionettes' worked in the government's munitions factories.
3. **Reduced workforce** - women took on traditional men's jobs and became firemen, coalmen and bus conductors.
4. **Rationing** - the main burden of coping fell on mothers. The Women's Land Army helped with agricultural production.

After the war, **men took back their jobs** and most women returned to the family. However, the War did bring about political and social changes:

- **Political** - women over 30 years old got the vote in 1918. Women over 21 years old got the vote in 1928. Women were also allowed to **stand for election** as MPs, but there were only eight women MPs in 1923.
- **Social** - women became more liberated. Short skirts and short hair became fashionable and many women smoked in public.