

# LIFE AT HOME

Discover what it was like living in Britain during the First World War...

## NEW DANGERS!

Just because you weren't on the Front Line, didn't mean you weren't in the danger zone. Back on the Home Front, Britain was under attack from all sides...



These enormous Zeppelin airships dropped bombs on ordinary people's homes

### DAYTIME TERROR

Large scale bombing raids on British cities were carried out during the day by German biplanes called Gothas.

## Attack from the sky

The First World War was the first time in history that Britain had come under threat from the sky. Gigantic German airships, known as **Zeppelins** (left), carried out 52 bombing raids on Britain during the war — killing more than 500. People were terrified of them! To avoid Zeppelin attacks, no lights could be used after sunset and loud noises were banned, too.

## Threat from the sea

Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby were the first seaside towns to be shelled by the German navy. **Battlecruisers**, ships with huge guns, launched a surprise attack on 16 December 1914 — 137 people were killed and 592 injured that night alone.

But all these attacks on ordinary people only stirred up hatred against the enemy, encouraging more British men to **volunteer** and fight for their country against "The Beast". At the start of the war there were just 350,000 men in the British Army. But by 1917, there were 3.5 million! Mind you, in 1916, **conscription** came in — a rule that said ALL healthy men aged 18–41 had to fight.

## REMEMBER SCARBOROUGH!



ENLIST NOW

The Women's Land Army was made up of 40,000 women. They grew the food that kept people alive!



## WOMEN AND THE WAR

Women weren't allowed to join the army, but the war still completely changed their lives — in some ways, for the better!

### Working life

Before the war, a woman's role was in the **home**. But with the men away at war, help was needed in the **workplace** — and so millions of women went to work in offices, factories, shops, transport and on farms. Many men were horrified by the idea of females working and, even worse, **wearing trousers**! But the women proved that they could do the work of men, and do it just as well. Without the women of Britain growing food and making weapons, the war could not have been won.



Many women worked around the clock in dangerous weapons factories

### After the war

When the war was over and the soldiers came home, women were made to leave their new jobs and go back into the home. But not all of them wanted to do that anymore! Their experiences during the war eventually led to women getting more freedoms and rights — including the **right to vote**!

## KIDS DURING WARTIME!

Children were expected to help with the war effort, too...

### Scouts and guides

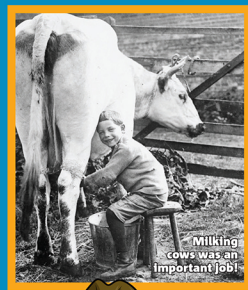
Did you know that **Boy Scouts** and **Girl Guides** had a vital role on the **Home Front**? Girl Guides would make basic **medical equipment** for wounded soldiers, like bandages, swabs and slings. They also worked **growing vegetables** and **delivering milk**. Boy scouts collected eggs for injured troops, protected roads and railway lines, and delivered messages.

Children were even paid to **collect conkers** which could be turned into explosives! They also **wrote letters** to soldiers and helped to **knit socks and scarves** for the troops in the winter months.



Boy scouts played 'All-Clear' signals on bugles following air raids

Some boys **lied about their age** and went off to fight. The youngest of these, **Sidney Lewis**, was just 12 years old when he joined the army. He was sent home at the age of 13 after fighting in the **Battle of the Somme**, one of the war's bloodiest battles.



Milking cows was an important job!

### Small secret agents

Children were also used to carry messages for **MIS**, the **British Secret Service**. The Boy Scouts, who were **MIS's first choice** for this work, apparently found it hard to keep sensitive secrets, so Britain's agents turned to the **Girl Guides**, instead!



## AMAZING ANIMALS

Both on the battlefield and back at home, some incredible creatures helped to transport soldiers and goods — and save lives.

### Soldiers' best friends

Almost a million **horses** were involved in the war. Soldiers on horseback were known as the **Cavalry** and horses also pulled some of the **gigantic guns**, **ambulances** and **supply wagons**. Gas from horse droppings could even be used to power lamps!

British families gave their **pet dogs** to the army so they could carry messages in special tubes on their collars (see above). Dogs were fast, difficult to shoot at, and they also caught rats! **Pet pigeons** were drafted in to carry messages over long distances, often carrying news from the Front Line back to Britain — Germans trained hawks to kill any carrier pigeons they saw. **Goldfish** did their bit too — after gas attacks, the gas masks were washed and rinsed. And if the rinsing water killed a goldfish that was placed in it, that meant the masks still had poison on them!

### Winnie the who?

A young bear cub called **Winnie** was one of the most popular attractions at London Zoo during the First World War. He was a mascot belonging to the **Canadian Army**, who had been left there for safekeeping.

The bear was seen by author **A.A. Milne's son Christopher Robin**, who renamed his own toy bear **Winnie** — and it became the inspiration for his dad's book, **Winnie The Pooh**.



This brave Airedale terrier, called Jim, was trained to spot Zeppelins approaching the Kent coast



Christopher Robin with his toy bear, Winnie!

## NEVER FORGET!

What can you find out about your family's involvement in the First World War? Ask your grandparents whether their parents, aunts or uncles ever talked about life during this time. Do you have any **postcards** or **photographs** from the war? Perhaps there are **campaign medals** belonging to a relative at home? Write in and tell us about it, we'd love to hear your family stories!

The new **First World War Galleries** at the **Imperial War Museum** are open now — find out more about the war, and see objects such as uniforms, equipment, letters, photographs, and films of the time. Head to [iwm.org.uk](http://iwm.org.uk) for more information!