

The Great War

When Victoria died, her son Edward VII came to the throne of Britain and later her grandson *George V*.

During *George V's* reign *World War I* broke out. It lasted from 1914 to 1918 and the king was obliged to change his German surname from Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to the English surname *Windsor* because of the anti-German campaign of Great Britain and its colonies.

The war was between two opposing alliances: the *Triple Entente* made up of the alliance of France, the British Empire and the Russian Empire and the *Central Powers* that was made up of the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. Britain declared war on Germany in 1914 after it invaded Belgium.

The war ended with the victory of the *Allied Forces* and peace was declared on 28th June 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.



The First World War was characterized by the use of trenches. Soldiers dug holes in the ground to protect themselves against machine guns and giant guns that fired shells. These powerful weapons were being used for the first time in a war and explains why more than 400,000 British soldiers lost their lives.



Aspects of World War I

Soldiers from the empire

In 1914, the British army was too small to fight alone. Volunteers came to help them from all over the vast empire. There was a variety of skin colours, cultures and religions fighting under the British flag. A quarter of those who died for Britain were not British.

Women

During the war women had to do all the work because the men were away fighting. They had jobs on the land and in factories, where they made **ammunition** and other things to help the war effort. They were paid less than male workers and when the war finished they lost their jobs. Often the men in the family didn't return from war and there was nobody to support the women and their children. This situation forced society to think about women's rights [→ p. 118].

Trench warfare

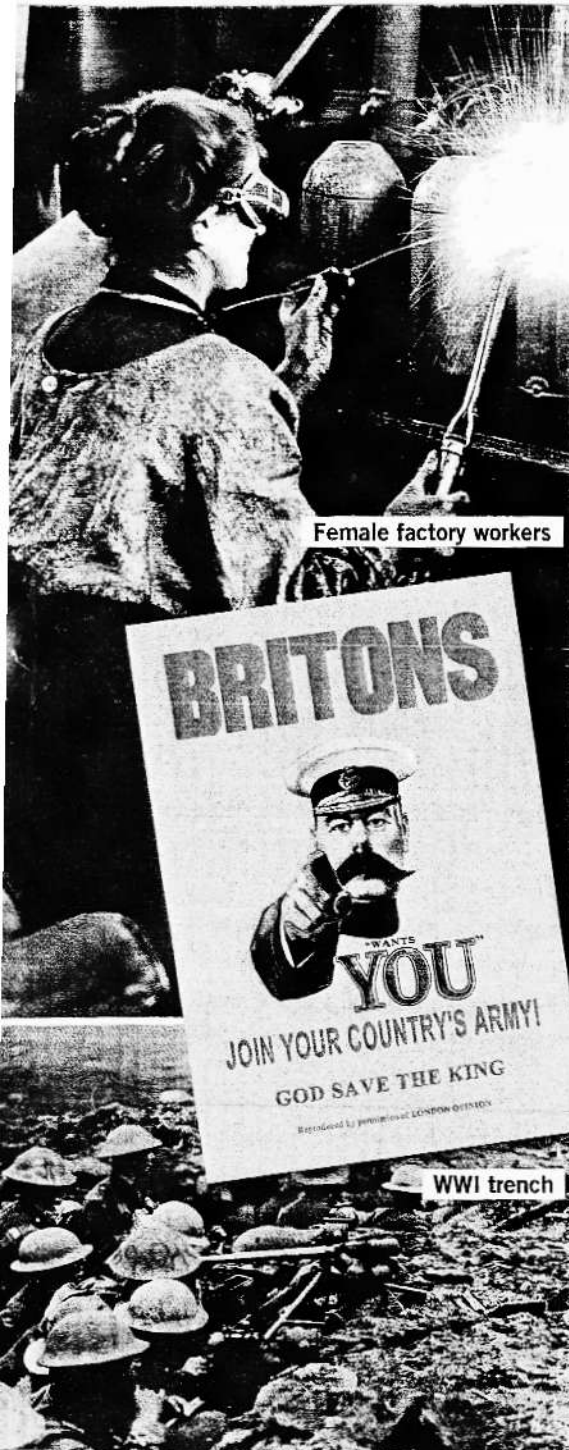
Both sides in World War I used **trench** warfare. The trenches stretched for kilometres. They protected the soldiers but it was difficult for the armies to advance. They were cold, disgusting places full of rats and mud, and soldiers often died from disease. The neutral area between the trenches was called "no man's land".

New technology

World War I used new inventions such as aeroplanes, submarines and **tanks**. Aeroplanes were used initially to observe enemy troops and later to shoot down other planes and to drop bombs. Submarines carried **torpedoes**. They used them to attack both warships and passenger ships. The first tanks were unreliable and difficult to drive, but they gradually became more efficient.

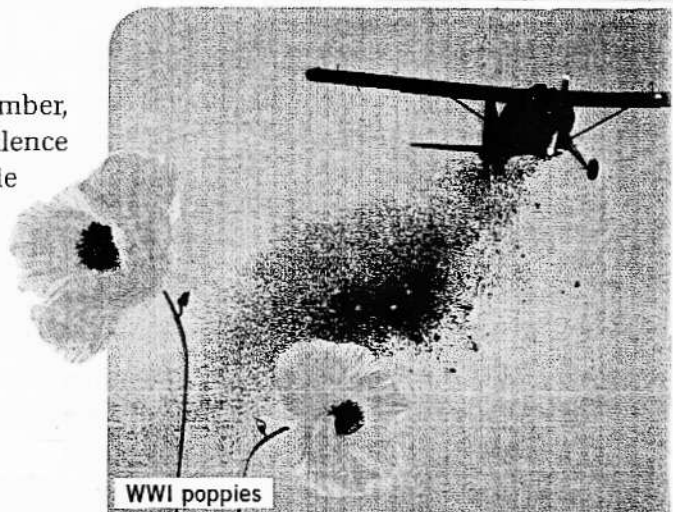
Remembrance

Fighting in World War I stopped at 11am on the 11th of November, 1918. At this time, every year in the UK there is two minutes' silence to remember all soldiers who died in every war. British people wear poppies in November. This fragile flower grew on the battlefields of France. It has a very short life - just like the young men who died there. Money raised from selling poppies goes to the families of soldiers killed in all wars.



Female factory workers

WWI trench



WWI poppies



DID YOU KNOW?

Uncle Sam has been the personification of the American Government since 1812 and this poster was used to recruit soldiers for the *American Army* during both World War I and World War II.



DID YOU KNOW?

Britannia with *Uncle Sam* symbolizes the British-American alliance in World War I.

SIDE BY SIDE~ BRITANNIA!



Britain's Day Dec. 7th 1918

MASS MEETING