

A painting of a soldier in a field of red poppies. The soldier is seen from behind, wearing a dark uniform and a helmet, holding a rifle. The field is filled with vibrant red poppies, and the background shows a landscape with green trees and distant hills under a cloudy sky.

# THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A VIRTUAL MUSEUM BY ERIN SHIEL

# WELCOME TO A MUSEUM OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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Welcome to our virtual museum, today I am going to take you on a journey back to world war one. As you click through our virtual museum you will see hidden stories which you may never have heard before and some which you may have, make your decision about the myths and ideas about the war that have been around for centuries and look at major turning points in the war.



*reception*

# WHO AND WHERE WAS INVOLVED IN THE WAR AND WHY?

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We might think that the war only consisted of British soldiers and the German enemy engaged in trench warfare in France but really it was a GLOBAL WAR that was fought in many theatres and front. The fronts that were involved were:

- The Italian front
- Eastern front
- Middle east
- Dardanelles and Balkans
- Africa
- The war at sea
- Western front

Why was the first world war fought in the middle east as well as Europe?  
In the middle east places like Africa and India were allies of the main countries (Germany and England)

See the next slide to learn more about this

# WHO WAS RECRUITED?

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Lots of different types of people wanted to get involved in the war. Lets see some examples.

The British army recruited Farmers, shop assistants, clerks and more of the working class as well as public school boys. The reason why so many people signed up was because the army promised that whoever enrolled together, fought together.

During the war other people were brought in to help. For example both sides had Africans working for them- carrying equipment such as guns for long distances and some times being in the firing line. Unfortunately they were not looked after properly by either of the sides and there were famines.

another example are the Chinese civilians role – they dug trenches, lugged ammo and buried bodies. After a while thy were given roles such as engineers.

# WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE WERE THERE IN THE WAR?

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Conscientious objectors - Conscientious objectors were pressured into taking part in the war even though they would not have wanted to for religious or moral reasons . Although the government did allow them not to take part in the war that didn't mean that it was easy and they didn't have to do anything .They had to go to a tribunal in court and explain their beliefs to prove that they were not just cowards .In reality the tribunal put pressure on them to join. The general public gave them white feathers as a symbol of cowardice in men not in uniform that would shame them into enlisting. Though they didn't have to fight they did have to take part. Jobs that they had to do were important roles such as ambulance drivers, hospital workers and stretcher bearers these were not safe roles many went out under fire to bring in wounded men. Doing these jobs gained them the respect from regular soldiers. Conscientious objectors who did not take part and refused to do these roles or to follow orders were imprisoned. They were often mistreated or poorly looked after with inadequate food or care for their health .At least 75 died in prison or shortly after their release.



# WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE WERE THERE IN THE WAR?

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Women in war - Even though that it is true that women did not fight in the armed forces of most combatant nations in the First World War that doesn't mean they didn't take a wide range of roles including auxiliary roles in the army as well as more traditional nursing roles. Some women were killed and saw the trenches first hand. Women did the jobs as it was to do something useful and gain independence. They took on jobs that would have been done by the men in the army, such as engineering roles. That did not mean however that they were paid the same respect or even MONEY as the men who originally did those jobs in the first place.

Officers – junior officers (captains and lieutenants) lead their soldiers into battle whereas senior officers did more work behind the lines. There is usually 1 officer to 30 soldiers. The life expectancy of a junior officer was 6 weeks. The number of deaths/casualties of junior officers was due to the fact that they were near or in the front line. Usually officers were recruited from educated and middle class backgrounds.



# MYTHS AND IDEAS

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There are many stories we may have heard about the first world war but how do we REALLY know if they are true. In this section we will have a look closer into the myths.

Myth number 1: the soldiers lived in the trenches for years on end

Actually the average number of days that the British soldiers spent in the trenches was nowhere near what we think.

They spent 10 days per month and they only spent 3 days in the front line trenches.

Myth number 2: it was better to be rich/posh than poor

As we have already learnt the junior officers would be in more danger as they lead their troop into battle. With more junior officers being from well educated backgrounds than not, relatively more public school boys were killed than the working class. Private soldiers killed=12/100 whereas officers killed=17/100.

Myth number 3: there was a football match played on Christmas 1914

It is said that Christmas 1914 on no man's land the allies and Germans came together and played a football match. Although there is evidence to suggest that this was not true and what they actually did was meet, exchange gifts, Bury each others dead and cut each other's hair. There is no evidence of a football match.

So what do you think about these myths?

# HIDDEN STORIES

In this section we will be looking at the hidden stories of people who took part in the war.



Mairi Chisholm and Elsie Knocker

They were two of many women who served in the first world war in medical war. Elsie set up a first aid post just behind the front line in Belgium. The pair were then awarded the military medal for their courage in going out into No Man's Land to rescue the wounded.

Walter Tull

He was the first black officer in the British army. He was a professional footballer for Tottenham hotspur. He joined the army as a private and was promoted to second lieutenant making him the first non-white officer to command white British troops in the British army. Army regulations banned black soldiers from being promoted to officer status but the rules were then relaxed due to the need for talented officers.

He was killed in 1918 at the battle of Arras, the soldiers he commanded tried to find his body but they were unsuccessful he is commemorated as missing on the Arras memorial.





# HIDDEN STORIES

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..... Carried on

## Nellie Spindler

She was already trained as a nurse when the war broke out but at first she wasn't old enough to take part as a hospital nurse in the war. That didn't stop her, on her application form she recorded her date of birth wrong (on purpose). She made it to seem like she was two years older than she actually was (25 years old instead of 23 years old). She was sent to a hospital in Britain and later to France, where she worked in a casualty clearing station during the battle of Passchendaele. In 1917 she was killed in action, the hospital she was working in was being shelled all day. She was struck at 11am and became immediately unconscious and died twenty minutes later in a fellow nurses arms.



# TURNING POINTS

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Over the years historians have questioned when the turning points of the war were and why they happened. They have said these few.

- The battle of the Somme in 1916

The battle didn't quite go to plan as the Germans already knew that it was coming. One million people were killed over the whole battle (5 months)

The battle changed lots of tactics such as tanks being used for the first time, new ways of bombarding the Germans with a surprise 5 minute attack every morning and working closely together.

- The battle of Arras in 1917

The allies once again decided to launch an attack on the Germans. This time went better than the last. The Canadians were able to capture Vimy Ridge.

What do you think? When do you think the turning points were?

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**THANK YOU FOR VISITING  
OUR VIRTUAL MUSEUM**

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**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN SOON!**