



First World War

1914-1918

A virtual museum by: Evie Mordecai

Introduction

Welcome to the WW1 virtual museum by Evie Mordecai. This virtual museum will showcase an important piece of history and will show the triumphs and hardships of 'The Great War' which lasted from 1914-1918. The subjects that this virtual museum will be based on are:

- War Around The Globe: slides 3-4
- Soldiers In Families: slides 5
- Experience In War: slides 6-7
- Women In War: slides 8
- Turning Points Of The War: slides 9-11

The First Shot Of The Four Year War



The First World War lasted four years from 1914-1918. In the German colony of Togoland in West Africa, the first shot of The First World War was fired. The man who fired it was Lance Corporal Alhaji Grunshi, of the Gold Coast Regiment, and the action was important strategically because it was aimed at capturing and neutralising a radio station that relayed messages to and from German colonies and forces around the world.

Even though the First World War ended on 11 November 1918, Alhaji Grunshi's war continued until 25 November 1918 when a German commander finally surrendered 14 days after the Armistice.

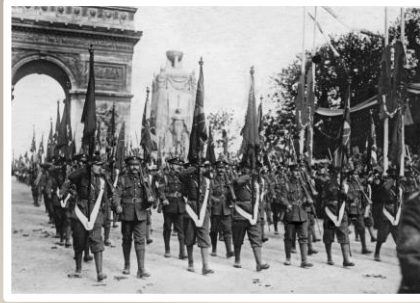
Alhaji Grunshi ended the war with a promotion to Company Sergeant Major and the ribbons of Distinguished Conduct Medal and Military medal on his chest.



Who Around The World Was Involved

What Countries Were Involved

The countries involved in the First World War are Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Romania, Japan and the United States. Most of these countries were involved in WW1 because of English colonies around the world. Most people didn't have a choice whether they fought or not.





Riley Family Photo



Francis James Riley with his Family

A Soldier That Survived

Francis James Riley was 33 when war broke out in 1914. He had been a soldier in the army for 12 years before the First World War as part of the Royal Garrison Artillery, he was 23 when he first joined the British army. During the First World War he was a Gunner and was involved in The Battle of Somme, Ypres Vimy and the Western Front. He received the Star and the general Service and Victory medals and for his (former) service, the Queen's and King's South African medals with six bars. He married Alice Elizabeth Burwash with whom he had 9 children with.

In the Riley family photograph, Francis James Riley can be seen on the left side of the screen wearing his medals. The woman on the right side of the picture is his wife, Alice Elizabeth Riley, and his children (That we are able to name) Alice Margaret Riley, Francis Patrick Riley, George T Riley, Alexander John Riley, Bernard Riley, Richard Riley and Terrance Riley.

THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1916,

APPLIES TO UNMARRIED MEN WHO, ON AUGUST 15th, 1915, WERE 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OVER AND WHO WILL NOT BE 41 YEARS OF AGE ON MARCH 2nd, 1916.

ALL MEN (NOT EXCEPTED OR EXEMPTED),

between the above ages who, on November 2nd, 1915, were Unmarried or Widowers without any Child dependent on them will, on

Thursday, March 2nd, 1916

BE DEEMED TO BE ENLISTED FOR THE PERIOD OF THE WAR.

They will be placed in the Reserve until Called Up in their Class.

MEN EXCEPTED:

SOLDIERS, including Territorials who have volunteered for Foreign Service;
MEN serving in the NAVY or ROYAL MARINES;
MEN DISCHARGED from ARMY or NAVY, disabled or ill, or TIME-EXPIRED MEN;
MEN REJECTED for the ARMY since AUGUST 14th, 1915;
CLERGYMEN, PRIESTS, and MINISTERS of RELIGION;
VISITORS from the DOMINIONS.

MEN WHO MAY BE EXEMPTED BY LOCAL TRIBUNALS:

Men more useful to the Nation in their present employments;
Men in whose case Military Service would cause serious hardship owing to exceptional financial or business obligations or domestic position;
Men who are ill or infirm;
Men who conscientiously object to combatant service. If the Tribunal thinks fit, men may, on this ground, be (a) exempted from combatant service only (not non-combatant service), or (b) exempted on condition that they are engaged in work of National importance.

Up to March 2nd, a man can apply to his Local Tribunal for a certificate of exemption. There is a Right of Appeal. He will not be called up until his case has been dealt with finally. Certificates of exemption may be absolute, conditional or temporary. Such certificates can be renewed, varied or withdrawn.

Men retain their Civil Rights until called up and are amenable to Civil Courts only.

**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL MARCH 2nd.
ENLIST VOLUNTARILY NOW.**

For fuller particulars of the Act, please apply for Leaflet No. 115 to the nearest Post Office, Police Station, or Recruiting Office.

Conscription

By 1916, there was a high amount of soldiers were being injured or killed which meant that the need for more recruits to fight in the war was very high. However, news of what the war was really like had reached the people back home and men became less enthusiastic to volunteer. So the government introduced Conscription. This made it compulsory for all single men aged 18-40 to join the army, navy or airforce. Later in the same year, this was extended to married men.

Conscientious Objectors

Some people objected to war and refused to fight, mainly due to religious beliefs. These men were labelled 'Conscientious Objectors'. The government allowed them to be excused from the Conscription but they had to go to a tribunal and explain their beliefs, to prove that they were not just 'Cowards'. In reality, the tribunal would pressure them into joining. Members of the public would also pressure them by handing out white feathers to them as a symbol of cowardice to shame them into enlisting.

There were around 16,000 Conscientious Objectors. Although many refused to fight, they were still prepared to serve in alternative ways. They took important roles as ambulance drivers, hospital workers and stretcher bearers. These were not safe roles since many went out under fire to bring in wounded men. This earned the respect of regular soldiers, who otherwise often regarded to them as 'Shirkers'.



Trenches

Trenches were a key feature of the Western Front, where the Majority of British troops fought, and were also used on the other fronts but not so extensively everywhere. Trenches were not used so much in Africa or in the Middle East, or even on the Eastern Front, which was even longer than the Western Front.

Danger In The Trenches

Rifles: Rifles were the main weapon of First World War soldiers. They could be fired rapidly and accurately over long distances if used by a well-trained soldier. For close fighting, a pointed blade called a bayonet could be attached to the rifle.

Machine Guns: Machine Guns were a more recent weapon, yet they were still very deadly. They could fire 450-600 rounds of bullets every minute. Although machine guns were strongly associated with the first world war and were very effective, they were not the deadliest weapon.

Artillery: Artillery were the big guns which fired large explosive shells over long distances. They would be positioned behind soldiers and fired over their heads to the enemy lines. Artillery bombardments were used to destroy enemy forces before the soldiers attacked. Artillery was responsible for over 50% of casualties in the first world war.

Machine
Guns



Rifles



Artillery

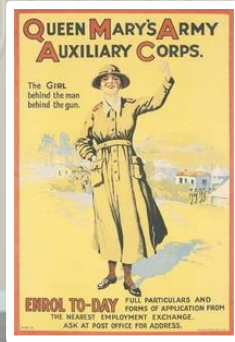


Women In War

Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was established in 1917, in response to pressure from women for more opportunities to contribute to the war as well as a shortage of soldiers. The government realised that women could take up roles behind the lines to free up more men to fight in the war.

Members of the WAAC were soon sent to France and were such an important role during the German Spring Offensive of 1918, when the British and French armies were forced to retreat, they were renamed the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC), with Queen Mary as their patron.



Nursing Roles

WW1 Nurses:

Mairi Chisholm and Elsie Knocker were two of the many women who served in the First World War in medical roles. Mairi's involvement began in 1914 when she rode from Scotland to London, on a motorcycle, to look for war work. She worked driving ambulances to evacuate the wounded, but was frustrated that so many died of shock on their way to be treated. With Elsie, a qualified nurse, she set up a first aid post just behind the front line of Belgium. The pair were awarded the Military Medal for their courage in going out into the No Man's Land to rescue the wounded.

Turning Points Of The Great War



1914

When the war started, all commanders on all sides were optimistic that the war would be over quickly. Germany was convinced that its carefully planned attack on France (called the Schlieffen Plan) would succeed. Britain, France and Russia were all equally convinced that German forces would be defeated quickly and decisively. They were all proven wrong, for there was to be no quick end to the war.



1915

The picture above shows Indian troops from the Meerut and Lahore Divisions preparing to German positions at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in March 1915. Artillery, machine guns, accurate rifles and well fortified trenches made it much easier to defend ground than it did to attack. The French and the British tried repeatedly to break through the German lines. However, the big attacks in the spring and autumn failed to make any ground. The German positions were just too heavily fortified and it proved impossible.



1916

In December 1915 Britain and France decided that they would launch a joint attack in 1916 with the aim of breaking through German lines and ending the war. However, in February 1916 Germany launched a huge attack on the French at Verdun. This meant a change of plans and by early summer it was clear that the British attack near the River Somme was needed to relieve pressure on the French at Verdun.



1917

By Spring 1917 Britain and France had still not managed to break through the German lines. German forces had retreated to a more heavily defended position, the Hindenburg line. So, the Allies decided to launch another set of joint offensives building on their cooperation in 1916. The British decided to make their attack on German positions around the French city of Arras, aiming to capture Vimy Ridge.



United States Joins The Fight

Up until 1917, the United States had stayed out of the First World War. However, that changed in 1917 due to Germany deciding to launch unrestricted submarine warfare. In 1915 a German submarine had sunk a passenger ship called the 'Lusitania' killing 178 Americans. The United States had warned Germany that more attacks could lead to war. In 1917, German submarines started sinking ships bringing supplies to Britain. German submarines sunk several American ships and the German foreign minister wrote to Mexico asking if they would join the war on Germany's side. This was a step too far and on 6th April 1917 the United States declared war on Germany.

1918 The War Ends



1918 was the year the war changed. Early in the morning of 21st March 1918 British lines came under fierce attack from German artillery. Soldiers sheltering in their dugouts were left dazed by the ferocity of the attack. Carefully targeted shelling destroyed communication lines, cleared heavily defended areas and destroyed British artillery. Then out of the morning mist, after 5 hours of relentless bombardment came small squads of elite German infantry moving amidst the chaos to quickly capture British positions. Faced with the intensity of the attack British commanders issued the order to retreat. The attack marked the start of the German Ludendorff Offensive, also known as the Spring Offensive.

During the Ludendorff Offensive the Germans used new tactics to great effect. Like the Canadians had at Vimy Ridge, they attacked using small squads of elite 'storm troopers'. Rather than an artillery bombardment that lasted weeks, the Germans used short and intense attacks. The storm troopers advanced behind a creeping barrage, like the British had during the Battle of the Somme, and took the defenders by surprise.

What Were The Consequences?

In the early days of the Ludendorff Offensive the Germans made rapid progress. In some places they advanced as much as 40 miles. However, their success did not last and by early April the attack ground to a halt. The Germans were too exhausted to sustain the offensive and lacked the transport they needed to bring forward fresh troops and supplies. They struggled to move men, supplies and guns across the shattered landscape of the Western Front. After several failed attempts to move further the French counter attacked on 18th July and forced the Germans back.

The attempt to break through Allied lines had exhausted the German army and the failure of the offensive was devastating for them. The attack had cost the Germans many of their best troops and they suffered nearly 700,000 casualties. Worse still, the attack had left the German Army in a dangerously exposed position lacking in men and supplies. Morale began to crumble, victory had seemed so close but now the struggling German forces faced a massive counter attack from British, French and huge numbers of fresh American troops. It was the Allies turn to respond.



Thank You