

Rutland in the First World War

Teachers' Pack

I. Information Sheets



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Introduction

Rutland in the First World War: Teachers' Pack

This pack explores aspects of Rutland's community during the First World War. It has been produced as a supplement to the series of temporary exhibitions running at Rutland County Museum from 2014 until 2018 and to the 'Rutland Remembers' website (www.rutlandremembers.org).

The pack contains three main sections:

1. **Background Information Sheets:** Designed to give teachers an overview of the topic.
2. **Resource Sheets:** Consisting of information and primary sources which can be used with the worksheets and/or adapted by teachers for their own lessons.
3. **Worksheets:** To be used with the Resource Sheets and the 'Rutland Remembers' website.

The resources in this pack have been designed to be used as a learning resource for History (Key Stage 2). They can also be adapted for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3 pupils.

Rutland County Council would like to thank the following for the design, research and production of this pack:

Marion Drake

Emma Warren

Jayne Williams.

The team responsible for the 'Rutland Remembers' website is gratefully acknowledged.



Information Sheet I

The Centenary of the First World War, 1914-1918

The First World War shaped the twentieth century. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. The war is remembered largely because it caused such massive loss of life.

More than 9 million of those who fought were killed, along with millions of civilians who died from the fighting, disease and starvation. Estimates place the total at over 16 million. This death toll changed society's attitudes to war.

Millions more were wounded, with many physically or mentally disabled forever. Wives were widowed. Parents lost their sons. Children were orphaned. Few were left unaffected.

Change swept the world. Old countries collapsed. New countries emerged. Government controlled people's lives with new laws and regulations. Women found new work in growing industries.

Even the earth itself suffered. War tore through the landscape on an industrial scale, leaving scars that can still be seen. Thousands of war memorials remain in shattered communities across the world, permanent reminders of the war's devastation.

2014-2018 marks the centenary of the First World War - a conflict that helped shape all our lives.



Relief from Oakham School Memorial Chapel



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Information Sheet 2

1914: How Did the War Start?

There was no single cause of the First World War. The war's origins lay deep within a complicated series of European political alliances and rivalries. The relationship between Europe's leading nations changed dramatically over the twenty-five years leading up to 1914.

By the 1890s, Germany had emerged as one of the world's most dynamic industrialised nations. It built a firm friendship with Austria-Hungary, but also became increasingly aggressive towards other nations in Europe.

France and Russia looked to each other for mutual support. Britain too developed new international understandings. These significant political changes resulted in Germany feeling threatened.

Peace in Europe was finely balanced. A number of political crises had previously brought Europe to the brink of war. But restraint and political caution had always prevented it. There was no reason to think that events at Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina on 28 June 1914 would be any different.



Herbert Henry Asquith (Prime Minister, 1908-1916).



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Information Sheet 3

The Road to War, 1900 - 1914

On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was killed by a terrorist in Sarajevo.

Politicians and soldiers across Europe suddenly faced hard political choices. With little warning, they stood at the start of a road that might lead to war.

Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia for the assassination. With German support, Austria-Hungary threatened Serbia. Russia decided to stand up for the Serbs.

To the Germans, Austria-Hungary now appeared under threat. The Germans realised they might have to fight Russia to protect Austria-Hungary. Everyone began preparing their armies.

France also got ready to help Russia. The Germans had long planned to attack France first if it went to war with both countries. On 1 August, the Germans started their plan to invade France by moving through Belgium.

For 75 years, Britain had promised to protect Belgium. Now, to help both Belgium and France, Britain reluctantly went to war.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand (centre in plumed hat), leaving the town hall in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina with his wife Sophie on 28 June 1914. Minutes later, both were shot dead by Gavrilo Princip, a terrorist in a Serbian nationalist group.



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Information Sheet 4

Kitchener's Army

In August 1914, the British army had fewer than half a million full-time soldiers. They were spread across the Empire, with many in India. As Britain relied on the Royal Navy for its defence, only around 100,000 soldiers were ready to go to France.

In contrast, Germany sent an army of 1.7 million soldiers to fight around 2 million French men.

Britain's new Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, believed Britain had to increase its military strength quickly.

On 7 August, he appealed for new soldiers. Hundreds of thousands of men began to volunteer. Many came forward together, from either the same towns and cities or factories and sports clubs. They became known as 'Pals'.

Britain was unique in enlisting only volunteers. But by mid 1915 the number of men willing to join up was falling. As a result, conscription, or compulsory military service for men, was introduced in 1916 for the first time in British history.

Oakham Company 5th Battalion
Leicestershire Regiment leaving
en route for Loughborough,
September 1914.



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Information Sheet 5

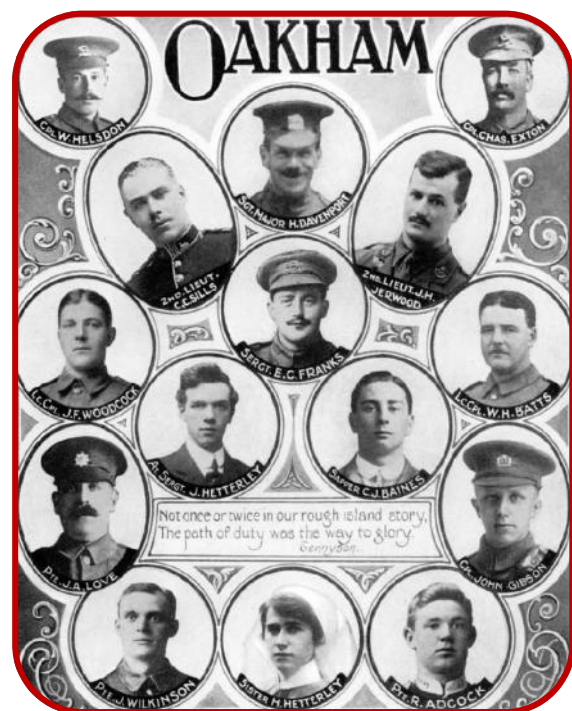
'A Call to Arms': Rutland in the First World War

Rutland men were quick to respond to Lord Kitchener's 'Your Country Needs You' appeal. On the 4th September 1914 eleven Rutland men enlisted and during the rest of the month countless more followed. Of those that joined up in September 1914, 95 never came home.

During the war over one-third of the male population of Rutland enlisted. In some villages, including Ashwell, Ayston, Burley-on-the-Hill, Lyndon, Normanton, Pilton and Whitwell, over half of their total male population joined up.

Very few regiments in the United Kingdom did not contain men from Rutland. Rutland men also served with the Royal Navy whilst others joined the Royal Flying Corps.

Over 600 Rutland men died during the war and around 500 were wounded and disabled. Ayston and Whitwell lost between 21% - 22% of their male population. Oakham itself lost around 118 men. Fourteen men were killed from just one street in Oakham - Dean's Street. More than forty families in Rutland lost more than one child and seven villages saw at least two sets of brothers killed.



One of the 'Portraits of the Fallen' Plates from the book 'Rutland and the Great War' compiled by George Phillips, 1920.



Information Sheet 6

The Leicestershire Yeomanry

The regiment was formed on the creation of the Territorial Force in April 1908. Its headquarters were in Leicester with squadrons based around the county and in Rutland:

'A' Squadron: Melton Mowbray (with drill stations at Harby, Oakham, Rearsby and Uppingham)

'B' Squadron: Leicester

'C' Squadron: Loughborough (with drill stations at Leicester, Mountsorrel and Whitwick)

'D' Squadron: Lutterworth (with drill stations at Ibstock, Hinckley, Market Bosworth, Market Harborough and Wigston).

In November 1914 the regiment landed in France and joined the 7th Cavalry Brigade. The regiment saw service at the First Battle of Ypres in 1914 and the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915. At Second Ypres, the regiment gained battle honours for the Battle of Saint Julien and - perhaps most notably - for the Battle of Frezenberg, where a squadron of the regiment held the line for its entire brigade.

The Battle of Frezenberg extracted a heavy toll on the regiment. On the night of the 12th May, 14 officers and 267 other ranks went into action. By the morning of the 13th, seven officers had been killed and 87 other ranks had been killed or were missing. Five officers and 88 other ranks had been wounded.

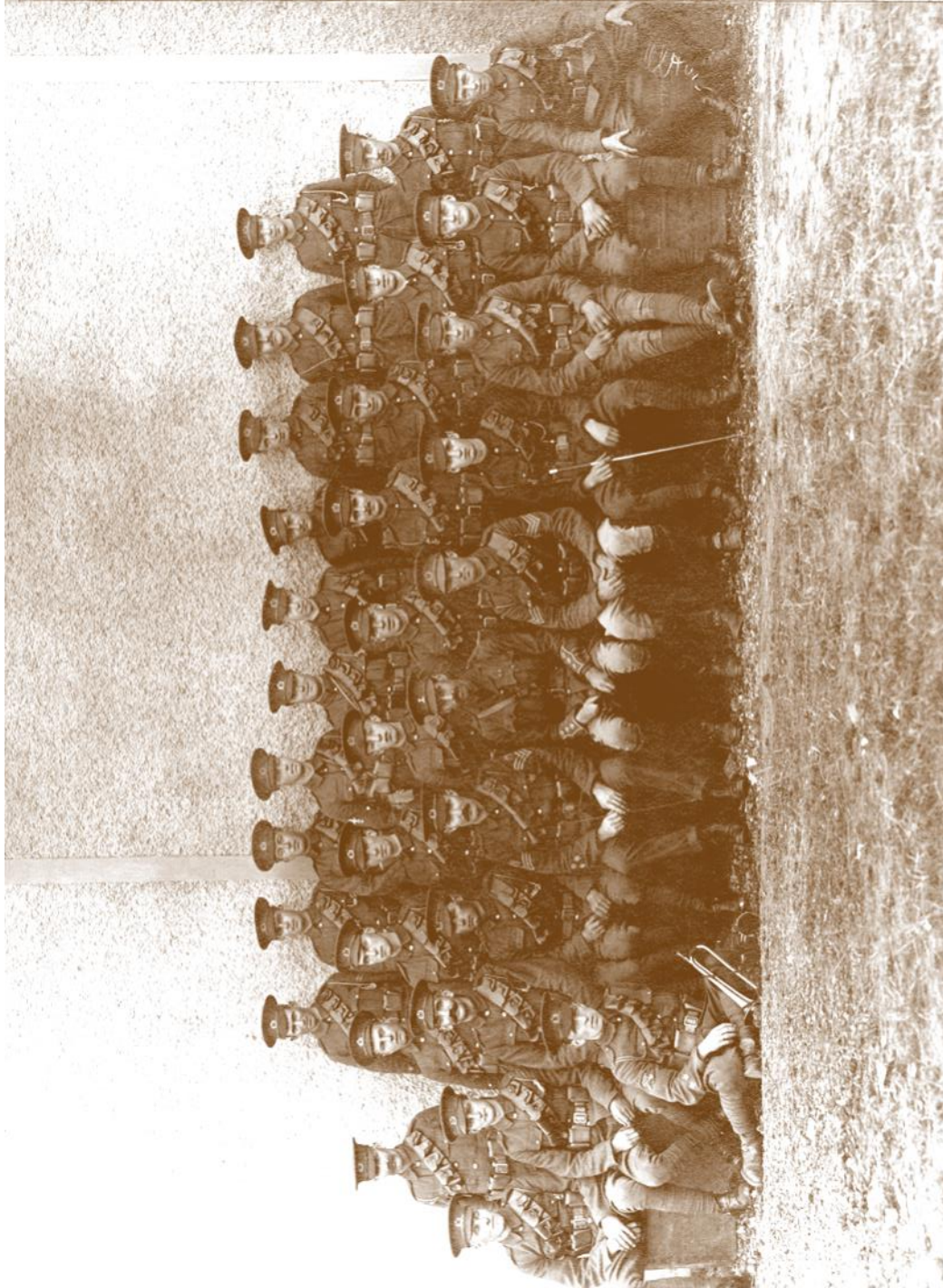
After being heavily depleted in Second Ypres, the regiment did not see significant action throughout 1916. In 1917 it saw action at the Battle of Arras and the Battle of the Scarpe. In 1918 separate squadrons saw action at the Battle of Amiens, the Battle of the Hindenburg Line and the Pursuit of Mons.



Information Sheet 7

The Leicestershire Yeomanry, Rutland Detachment

Photograph of 'A' Squadron, Rutland Detachment, Leicestershire Yeomanry



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Information Sheet 8

The Leicestershire Yeomanry, Rutland Detachment

Photograph of 'A' Squadron, Rutland Detachment, Leicestershire Yeomanry

The photograph dates from 1914 - prior to the outbreak of war. Many of the young soldiers shown were the sons of local farmers and tradesmen. Some of the men were later commissioned into other regiments during the war.

Rear (left to right):

C. Baines(?), William Lambert, William Henry Woods, Archibald Arthur Clarke, Aubrey Turner, John Gibson, Charles Johnson Payne, William Gilbert Grever, (unknown), James John Sharp

Centre (left to right):

Farr(?), Frederick Vendy, Rupert John Baines, Cecil Ball, Greer(?), Shilton(?), Frank Basil Hoy, John Edwin Baines, Greville Castle, Boyfield Dobney

Front (left to right)

Frank Coleman, George Weston, Frank Farmer, William Freeman Eayrs, George Bailey, Major Geoffrey Ronald Codrington, Charles Cecil Wilson Bailey, J. Farrow(?), R. Hill(?), Henry William Fowler, Frank Smith Wright

On Floor

(unknown)



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Information Sheet 9

Remembrance - The Poppy

The distinctive red poppy has a long association with Remembrance Day. It has become a potent symbol of the great losses suffered during past wars.

The scarlet corn poppy (*popaver rhoeas*) was a common flower on the Western Front, as it was one of the few plants to grow on the battlefields. It grows naturally in conditions of disturbed earth throughout Western Europe. The destruction brought by the Napoleonic wars of the early 19th Century transformed bare land into fields of blood red poppies, growing around the bodies of the fallen soldiers.

In late 1914, the fields of Northern France and Flanders were once again ripped open as World War One raged through Europe's heart. Once the conflict was over the poppy was one of the only plants to grow on the otherwise barren battlefields.

The significance of the poppy as a lasting memorial symbol to the fallen was realised by John McCrae (a Canadian surgeon who had been present in France at the fighting) in his poem 'In Flanders Field' (1915).

The poppy was adopted by The Royal British Legion in 1921 as the symbol of remembrance and for their Poppy Appeal.



British 'Remembrance Day' poppy dating from the 1920s. © IWM



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