

# Overview of the Home Front in Britain (1914-18):

## Knowledge Organiser

### 1. Introduction to the Home Front:

- The Home Front included not only mainland Britain but also the entire British Empire's contributions and experiences during the war.
- The government's role in managing the Home Front was facilitated through the establishment of various committees and ministries.

### 2. Mobilization and Propaganda:

- The British government used a variety of media, including newspapers, posters, and pamphlets, to disseminate propaganda messages.
- Recruitment efforts initially focused on voluntary enlistment, but conscription was introduced in 1916 through the Military Service Act.

### 3. Women's Role:

- Women were employed in a wide range of industries, including armaments, engineering, and transport.
- The "Munitionettes" faced significant health risks due to prolonged exposure to harmful chemicals like TNT and cordite.

### 4. Munitions Production:

- The Ministry of Munitions, headed by David Lloyd George, was created to oversee and coordinate the production of war materials.
- Women in munitions factories worked in dangerous conditions and often suffered from health issues such as "canary girls" contracting toxic jaundice.

### 5. Rationing and Food Shortages:

- Rationing extended to other goods such as clothing, petrol, and coal.
- The "Homes Fit for Heroes" initiative aimed to address the housing shortage after the war.

## **6. Voluntary Aid and Nursing:**

- The British Red Cross played a vital role in providing medical assistance, organizing hospital facilities, and training nurses.
- VAD nurses served not only on the Home Front but also in field hospitals and overseas.

## **7. Zeppelin Attacks and Air Raids:**

- Zeppelin attacks primarily targeted London and other major cities, causing significant damage and civilian casualties.
- Anti-aircraft guns, searchlights, and night-fighter aircraft were employed to counter the threat of air raids.

## **8. The "Home Guard" and Civil Defence:**

- The Volunteer Training Corps, later named the Home Guard, eventually merged with other defence units to become a more organized force.
- Civil Defence measures included the establishment of the Women's Voluntary Services (WVS), which played a crucial role in various support activities.

## **9. War Economies and Government Control:**

- The government nationalized certain industries, such as railways and coal mines, to ensure efficient resource allocation.
- The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) merged to form the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1918.

## **10. Impact on Daily Life:**

- The scarcity of goods and resources led to the "DORA spirit" of making sacrifices for the greater good.
- The Women's Institute (WI) organised efforts to provide assistance to rural communities and support soldiers.

## **11. Censorship and Surveillance:**

- The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) allowed for censorship of newspapers, publications, and letters.
- The government employed postal censorship to monitor mail and identify potential espionage.

## **12. Propaganda and Recruitment Posters:**

- Prominent artists and illustrators like Arthur Rackham and Frank Brangwyn contributed to wartime propaganda efforts.
- Recruitment posters featured messages designed to appeal to a sense of duty and patriotism.

## **13. Social Changes and Post-War Effects:**

- The war influenced social attitudes toward women's roles, which eventually contributed to increased suffrage for women.
- The Representation of the People Act 1918 granted the vote to women over 30 and all men over 21.