BATTLE'S OVER

A NATION'S TRIBUTE

11TH NOVEMBER 2018

100 YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

EVERETT HISTORICAL / SHUTTERSTOCK

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WELCOME FROM
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PAGEANTMASTER

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Pageantmaster
Battle's Over - A Nation's Tribute

Welcome to the official publication of commemoration, tribute and legacy of *Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute*. Within these pages you will read about the causes and consequences of the First World War, and, most poignantly, about the bravery and sacrifice of a generation of young men in a conflict finally brought to an end with the Armistice of 100 years ago.

The publication will act as a continuing reminder of why *Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute* and its many constituent events on 11th November 2018 was conceived, and attracted such massive support across the Nation and the World.

May I sincerely thank all those throughout the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, the British Overseas Territories, the Commonwealth and other countries around the world who made this great historic international tribute and commemoration happen – whether in local government and communities, the Armed Forces and their supporters and charities; religious and civic society, including youth organisations; industry, commerce and finance.

Most importantly, I express my gratitude to the hundreds of thousands of members of the public in cities, towns and villages of the United Kingdom, and far beyond, who were moved to organise and attend these commemorations in tribute to all those from the battle front to the home front who suffered during the tragic events of 100 years ago, remembering in particular the many who never lived to see Armistice Day – 11th November 1918.

Battle's Over has been four years in the planning. I wanted it to very much be a "*people's tribute*" across the nation and other countries around the world, essentially organised by people from all walks of life, age groups and different backgrounds.

And in mentioning the young, my special thanks go to all those in the Air Training Corps, the Army, Navy and Combined Cadet Forces, along with the Boys' Brigade, the Scouts and others whose enthusiasm to participate in the various events has been truly inspirational.

WILLEQUET MANUEL / SHUTTERSTOCK

"Battle's Over has been four years in the planning. I wanted it to very much be a 'people's tribute' across the nation and other countries around the world"

LEFT : Gas fuelled Beacon, Berkley Castle, Gloucestershire, England.

BELOW : Town Crier James Donald from New Zealand will lead the 'Cry For Peace'.

The original plans for *Battle's Over* ambitiously called for volunteer groups and organisations to provide 1000 pipers to play *Battle's Oe'r* at the commencement of the day, 1000 Buglers to sound the Last Post in the evening, 1000 churches to ring their bells as part of Ringing Out For Peace, 1000 locations to host World War One Beacons of Light and 100 Town Criers to participate in the unique Cry for Peace around the world.

It is a measure of the level of enthusiasm and support for *Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute* that in all cases by the eve of the event these targets had been substantially exceeded as follows:

BATTLE'S OVER – A NATION'S TRIBUTE
11TH NOVEMBER 2018

6.00AM SLEEP IN PEACE, NOW THE BATTLE'S O'ER
Over 2000 Pipers had undertaken to play *Battle's O'er* at 6am local time, at individual locations throughout the world, starting in New Zealand.

6.55PM THE LAST POST
Over 1,300 buglers, trumpeters and cornet players had undertaken to play the Last Post at individual locations throughout the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and other countries around the world.

7.00PM WORLD WAR 1 BEACONS OF LIGHT
Nearly 1,400 had agreed to host the lighting of beacons throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and UK Overseas Territories, representing the 'Light of Hope' that emerged from the darkness of War.

7.05PM A CRY FOR PEACE AROUND THE WORLD
180 Town Criers had agreed to participate in this unique 'Cry' at 7.05pm local time, starting out in New Zealand that evening.

7.05PM RINGING OUT FOR PEACE
Over 1,300 churches had confirmed their participation in this final event of the day, ringing their bells at locations throughout the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and a small number of other countries around the world, as a lasting tribute to the fallen of WW1.

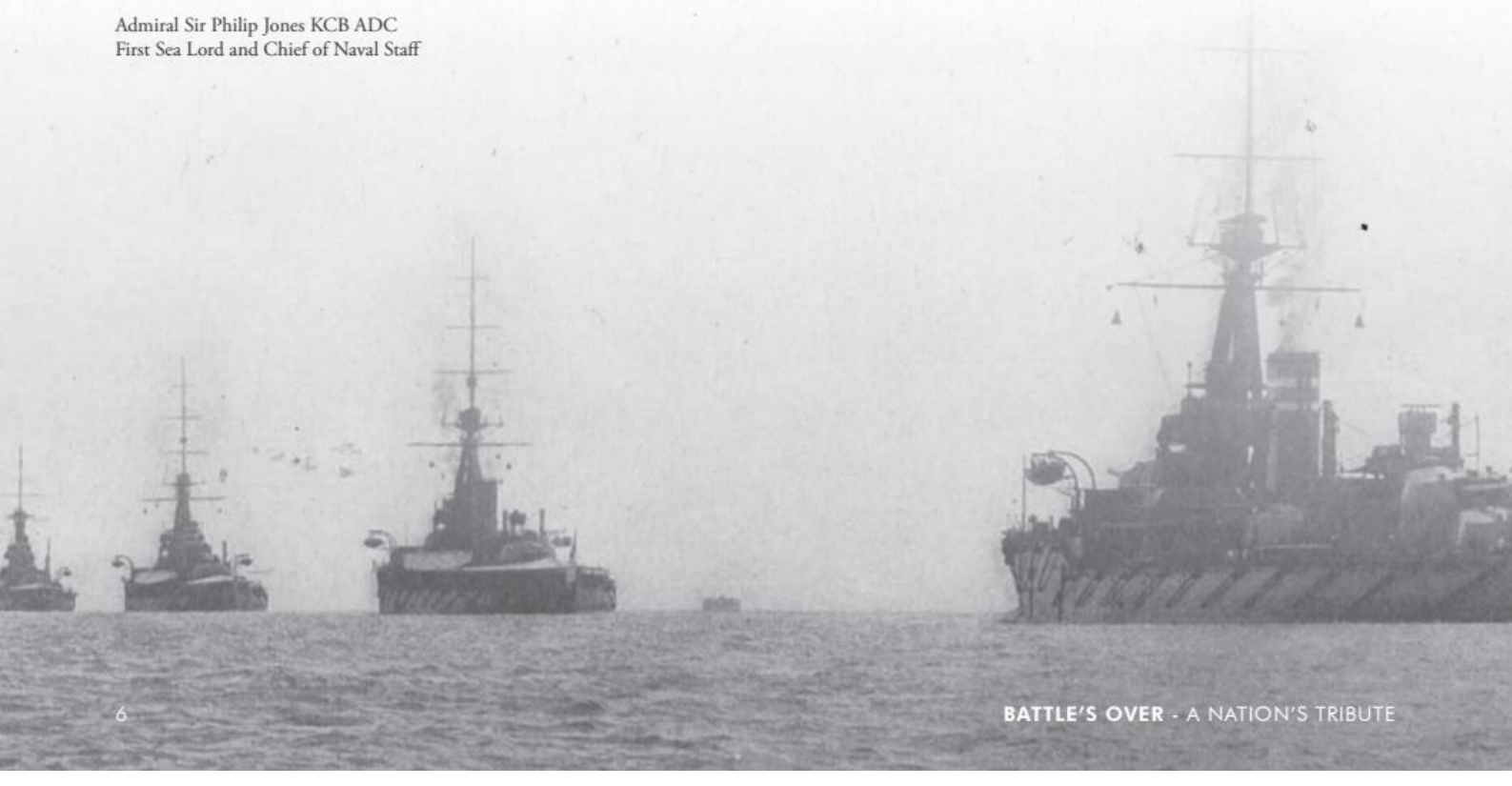
At a challenging time for our country, I firmly believe that *Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute* – and its unique acts of tribute and remembrance – massively touched the soul of our nation, uniting us with other countries similarly moved to honour the memory of all those at the battle front and on the home front who endured four dark years of suffering and sacrifice – and the many who were never to see the light of peace again as they fought and died for the freedoms we enjoy today.

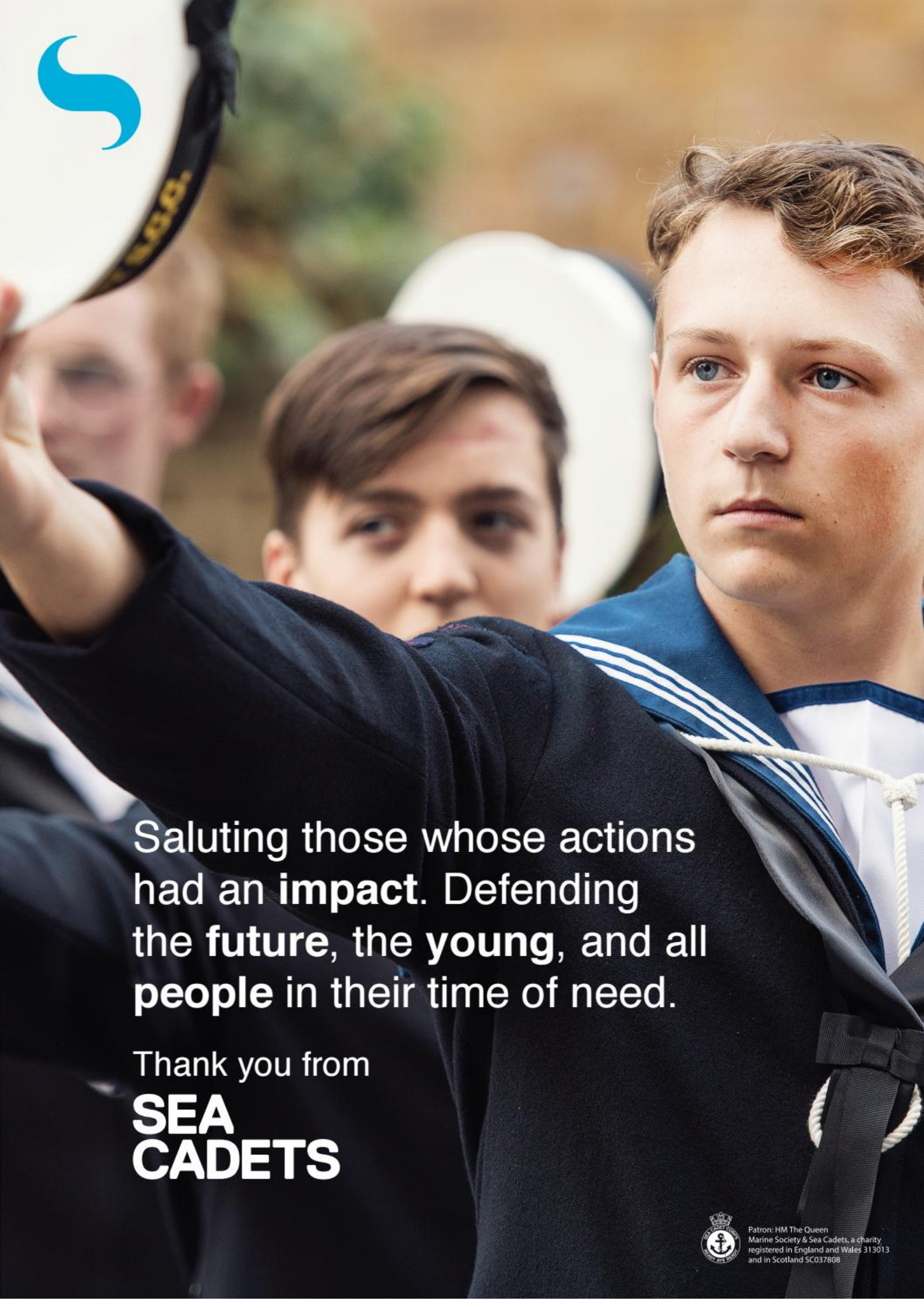
MESSAGE FROM
ADMIRAL SIR PHILIP ANDREW JONES KCB ADC
FIRST SEA LORD AND CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF

Admiral Sir Philip Jones KCB ADC
First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff

Images of trenches and barbed wire are an indelible part of our collective national memory, but the First World War also reached far beyond the Western Front. At sea, it stretched from the Battle of Jutland in the North Sea to the twin battles of Coronel and the Falklands in the South East Pacific and the South Atlantic Oceans, while to the east it spilled onto the beaches and clifftops of the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. The lighting of Beacons will be an opportunity for families and communities around the country and overseas to remember their individual connections to these global events, and the many personal examples of courage and sacrifice.

As these Centenary commemorations draw to a close, the memory of those who fought in the First World War must never be extinguished. We must continue to learn the hard won lessons of this terrible war, because today, as was the case a century ago, our own national wellbeing is indivisible from the cause of peace and security in the wider world.





ARMY

MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MARK AP CARLETON-SMITH
CBE ADC GEN
CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF

Mark Carleton-Smith

General Mark AP Carleton-Smith
CBE ADC Gen
Chief of the General Staff

The Beacons of Light Tribute is a poignant reminder of the darkness brought by war so evocatively captured in Sir Edward Grey's quote from 1914. As we reflect on the events which led to victory in 1918 we remember the sacrifice made by our Nation's soldiers and their families. In honouring that sacrifice it behoves us to look to the future and to ensure that this national commemoration reminds us of the importance of comradeship and community spirit to our national resilience, which sustained us then and continues to do so today.

"As the lights go out and the beacons are lit it is timely to reflect on what we might learn from our forefathers' experiences. We owe it to those who have gone before us to help the younger generation, further removed by time from war, to see beyond the mud and the blood and the casualties. We might learn about national resilience and community spirit, and in being prepared to fight the war we might have to fight, there is a much better chance of deterring that war from ever happening."

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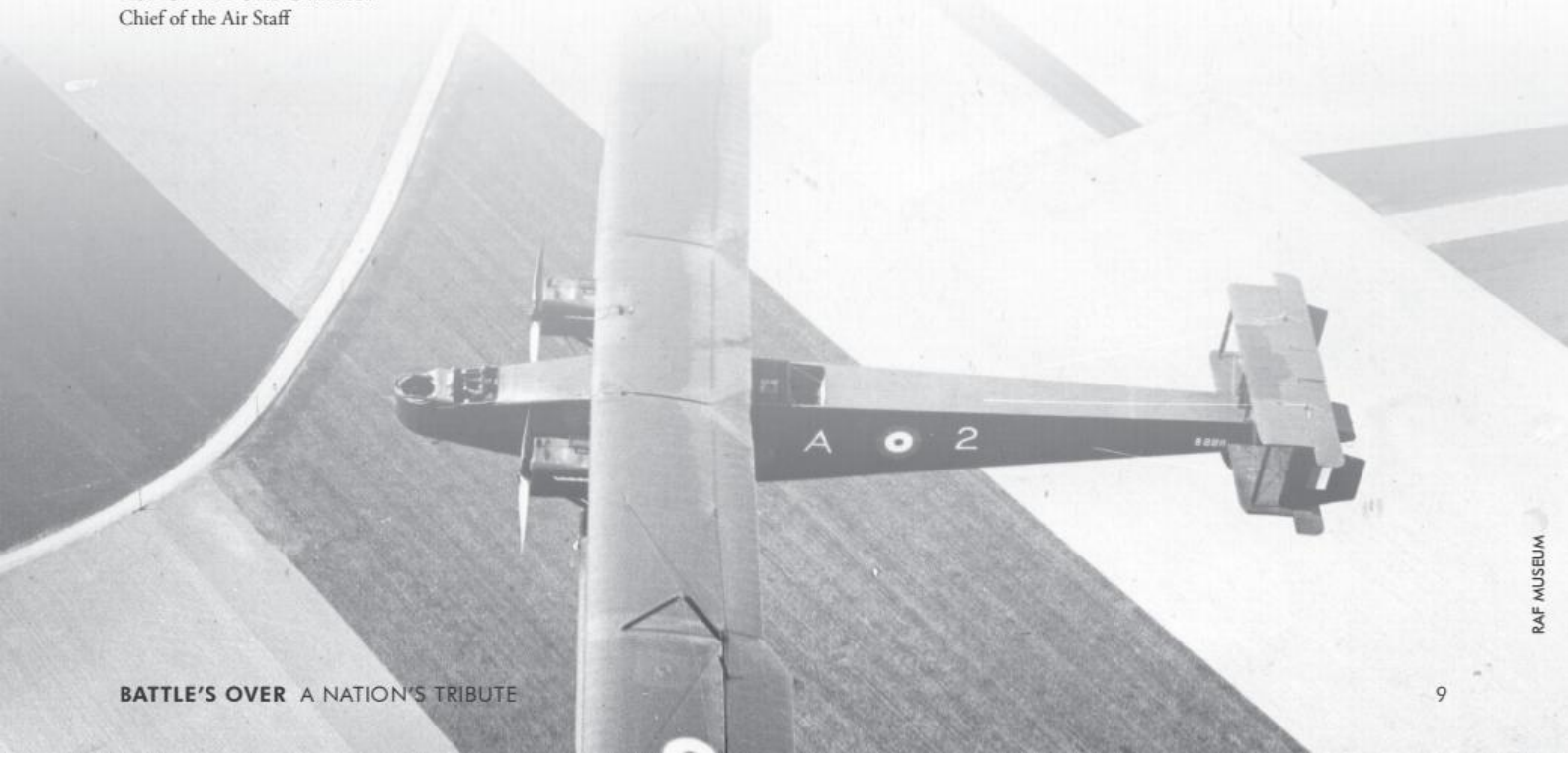
ROYAL AIR FORCE

MESSAGE FROM
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR STEPHEN HILLIER KCB CBE DFC ADC MA RAF
CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

This Tribute will be supported across the length of the UK and the breadth of her overseas territories. All of these communities made significant sacrifices in the seas, fields and skies during World War I, and this act provides the perfect opportunity to commemorate those hardships.

And yet, the return of these beacons of light to the darkness reminds us of the hope which carried the Nation and her citizens through. That message of hope and inspiration is particularly apt in the centenary year of the birth of the RAF as the world's first independent air force, and I welcome the opportunity to reflect on both the grave losses and the incredible achievements which occurred during those dark years.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier
KCB CBE DFC ADC MA RAF
Chief of the Air Staff



RAF MUSEUM

The Merchant Navy Association

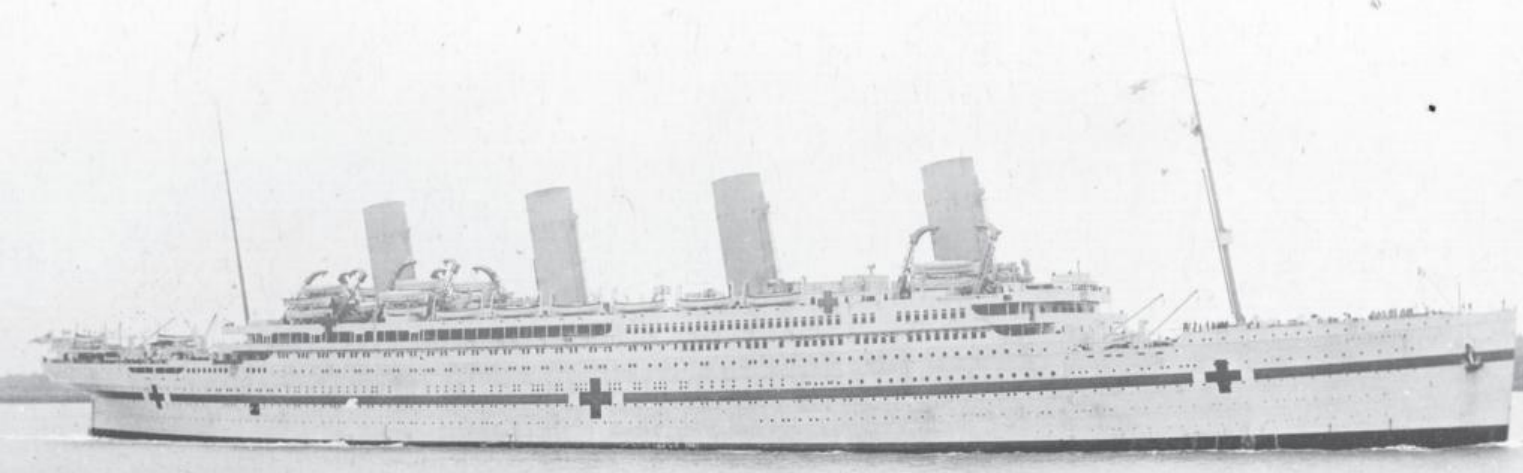
MESSAGE FROM
CAPTAIN JOHN SAIL MNM MNI
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN
THE MERCHANT NAVY ASSOCIATION

Battle's Over offers a wonderful opportunity to both record and remember what was endured and forgiven but not forgotten.

During the First World War attacks on merchant ships began slowly as the enemy sought to blockade Great Britain. In 1914 and 1915 a total of 342 ships and nearly 2,500 men, women and boys lost their lives with more being injured. During 1916 alone 396 ships and 1,217 seafarers lost their lives and if it were not for the introduction of the Convoy System, in 1917, many more merchant ships and their crews would have been lost and very likely the war as well. The Battle of the Atlantic was one of the most significant battles of that war and for the seafaring communities across the UK and overseas. We will remember them all now their 'Battle is Over'.

John Sail

Captain John Sail MNM MNI
National Chairman,
The Merchant Navy Association



The Merchant Navy Association

from ship to shore, from past to present

SERVING SEAFARERS

Successful campaigns include

Introduction of Merchant Navy Day
on 3rd September each year

Equal right to march with other services at the Cenotaph
in Whitehall on Remembrance Day

Creation of official unique Merchant Navy Veterans' Badge

With Seafarers UK, writing of Merchant Navy and
Royal Fleet Auxiliary veterans into the
Government's Covenant scheme alongside the Service

Initiated

Merchant Navy Day Commemoration Service
at Tower Hill, London

Merchant Navy Memorial
at the National Memorial Arboretum

Merchant Navy Falklands War Memorial
at Tower Hill, London

Please donate what you can, when you can, as often as you can.
Small donations will make a big difference.

visit **www.mna.org.uk**

The Merchant Navy Association Charity No. 1135661

FROM SARAJEVO TO COMPIEGNE

Battle's Over Editor Alan Spence describes the origins of the First World War, its descent into the most ruinous human and economic catastrophe in the history of world conflict – and how, regardless, indomitable human spirit, bravery beyond belief on both the battle and home fronts, allied with social and technological change, pulled Britain through to victory.

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THE ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED BEFORE FIRST LIGHT ON NOVEMBER 11 IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE AMIDST COMPIEGNE'S DARK FOREST

LEFT : This railcar was given to Ferdinand Foch for military use by the manufacturer, Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits. Foch is second from the right.

OPPOSITE : British and French Troops side by side

TO BEGIN AT THE END

The Forest of Compiegne, some 40 or so miles north of Paris in France's Picardy Region, is the place where the First World War finally came to an end with the signing by Britain, France and Germany of an Armistice in a railway carriage at 5am on the morning of November 11 1918.

The Armistice called for all hostilities to cease later that morning at 11 am – one of the most climactic moments in world history and eulogised ever since as the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month when the guns finally fell silent and the curtain descended on four years of unspeakable slaughter.

Through the Autumn of 1918 Germany's war machine had finally wilted in the face of successful British and French advances on the Western Front, and falling morale and desertions in Kaiser Wilhelm ll's army and navy, coupled with disillusionment fuelling revolutionary fervour on the home front, spelled it was all over.

Two days before the Armistice the Kaiser saw no other option but to abdicate – and the order which had ruled Germany since its creation in 1871 lay in ruins.

With its military resistance teetering on the edge of total collapse as the country sued for peace with the Allies, France's Marshall Foch, the Supreme Allied Commander, and his French and British colleagues were able to dictate terms to their broken enemy.

And thus the Armistice was signed before first light on November 11 in a railway carriage amidst Compiegne's dark forest, and pictures of the victors gathered on its steps created iconic newspaper and newsreel images around the world generating joy and relief, as well as great sadness for those who never lived to see them.

Just over 20 years later, images of the same railway carriage were again flashed around the world. This time, though, the story had been reversed. Adolf Hitler, seeking to expunge the humiliation and shame of the Armistice, demanded it be used on June 20 1940 to receive the French surrender to Germany in the Second World War.

A railway carriage still stands in Compiegne's forest to this day on the precise spot where world-changing history was twice made. Alas, though, it's a replica. The original, hauled by the retreating Nazis back to Germany, was destroyed as the Second World War drew to a close.

HOW DID IT ALL START?

War has a habit of propelling little or unknown place names in to the world news headlines. Cape Trafalgar and Waterloo, for instance, had to wait to be put on the map by Nelson and Wellington, and, of course, Napoleon.

Similarly before the Armistice, Compiegne fell very much in to this category in France itself, not to mention in Britain or the United States. As for Sarajevo, whilst known to Europe's diplomats as the capital of Bosnia in the Balkans, it wasn't exactly a name readily bandied around cafes on the Champs Elysees, or in the pubs of London's East End. That is until June 28th 1914. On that day the world changed, and the trigger for that change was pulled in Sarajevo literally.

Bosnia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the Habsburg Monarchy. Centred on Vienna, the Empire sprawled across and down central and eastern Europe to the Balkans where nationalism was increasingly fuelling often violent demands for independence.

Such was the case in Sarajevo on June 28th 1914 when a young Bosnian Serb, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Queen Sophie as their open horse-drawn carriage presented them to the crowds lining the streets of the Bosnian capital.

Not believing his luck when the carriage driver took a wrong turn and had to slowly reverse out of a side street, Princip found himself within feet of his target and didn't waste his opportunity. He shot both at close range, and they were dead before reaching hospital.

At another time in another place the assassination of a monarch-in-the-making would be most unlikely to trigger the biggest military conflagration in the history of the world. But this was the Balkans in 1914 with its multi-layered political and cultural complexities.

Moreover, these just didn't stay within the Balkans themselves, but tracked dangerously to all of Europe's great capitals, which by 1914 possessed their own lethal matrix of dangerous rivalries and alliances.

In the hundred years since Wellington's victory over Napoleon at Waterloo,

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PRINCIP FOUND HIMSELF WITHIN FEET OF HIS TARGET AND DIDN'T WASTE HIS OPPORTUNITY. HE SHOT BOTH AT CLOSE RANGE, AND THEY WERE DEAD BEFORE REACHING HOSPITAL.

OPPOSITE : Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie leave the Sarajevo Guildhall after reading a speech on June 28 1914. They were assassinated five minutes later.

ABOVE : The arrest of the assassin Gavrilo Prinzep, and inset.

Europe's wars were relatively limited. The Crimean War in the 1850s with Britain's "Charge of the Light Brigade", later immortalised by the poet Lord Tennyson, springs to mind – as well as the short Franco-Prussian War of 1870, which led to Bismarck symbolically announcing the establishment of the German Empire in the Palace of Versailles' Hall of Mirrors just outside Paris. There were others too – but nothing which resembled the Continent-wide conflicts of previous periods, and Britain itself was not drawn in to any Continental campaigns in this period.

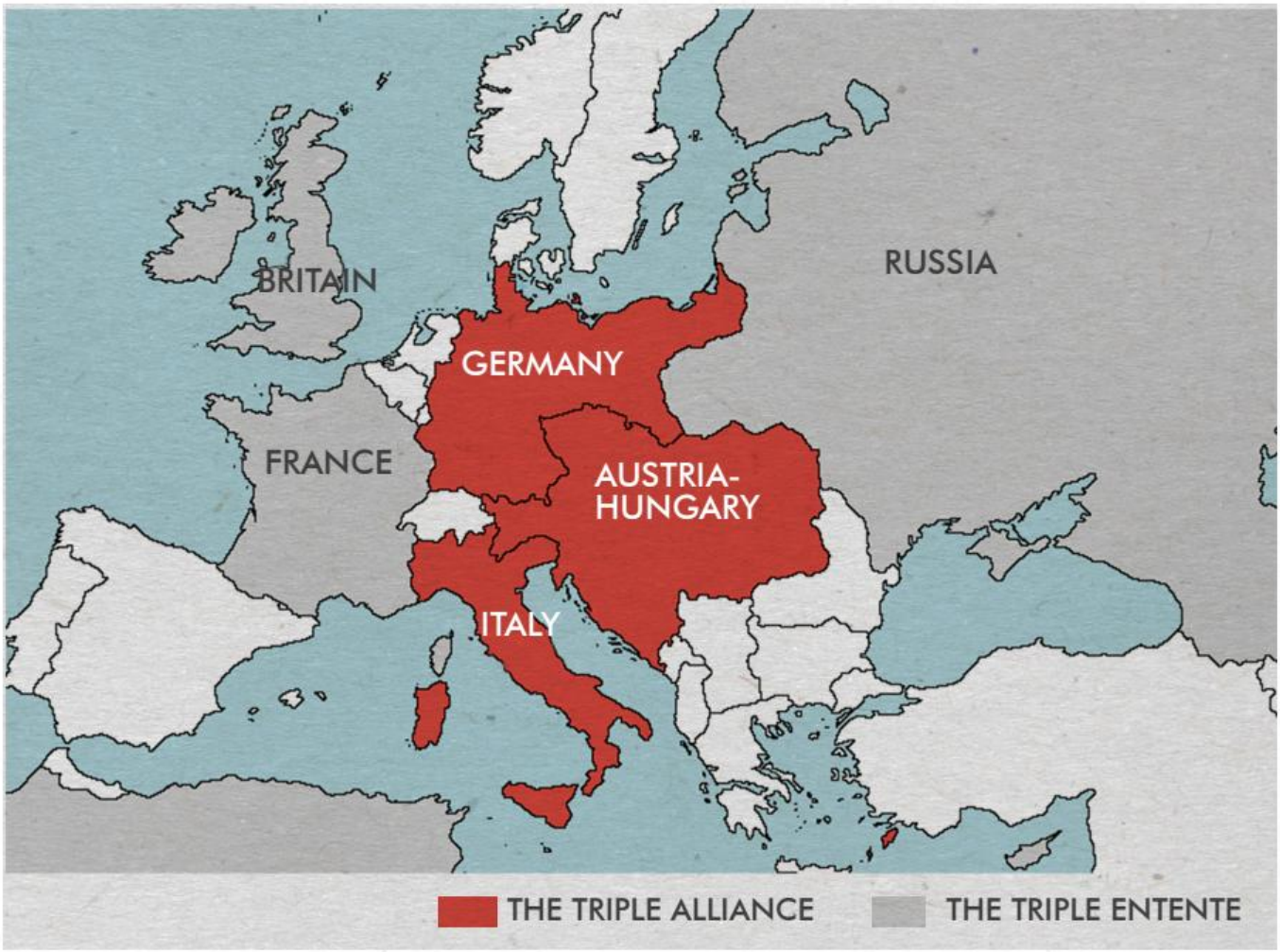
This period of relative peace, though, was deceptive. When not at war, great powers – especially those just warming up – seldom stop thinking about their position in the world; the threats, real or apparent, which they face; the opportunities for extending influence, creating further wealth, satisfying some political or cultural need in a nation's psyche. And there was plenty of this going on in the decades before the First World War.

Germany in 1914 was still only a few years short of its fiftieth birthday and had been energetically seeking to make up for lost time as both a military and colonial power. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was only a few years older. Britain, France and Russia were, by contrast, old hands. That said, the Ottoman Empire centred on Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey) had been around for six centuries.

As the 19th Century wore on the European powers, new and old, sought to protect and, ideally, expand their interests at a time increasingly characterised by a complex mix of new and old rivals; colonial competition; the ability of industry to produce ever more deadly armaments from guns to battle ships enabling an arms race; and rising nationalism amongst states large and small, such as, ominously, Serbia, which didn't see themselves as a building block in somebody else's big idea.

And the outcome of all this after many years of political and diplomatic calibration and labyrinthine negotiations, threats, and promises – made and broken – was a complicated system of alliances between two separate groups of Europe's major powers designed to guarantee their and their allies' security.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND THE TRIPLE ENTENTE



Though initially secret, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy were joined together militarily in the Triple Alliance negotiated in 1882. France and Russia, in response to what they regarded as a potential military threat signed a mutual defence pact in 1894. Britain, not an enthusiast of mutual defence treaties with powers on the European Continent, nevertheless finally decided it was in her interest to enter into the Entente Cordiale with France in 1904, which turned in to the Triple Entente when Russia joined in 1907 at a time when it seemed increasingly likely that Germany was on its way to becoming Britain's biggest threat.

As a recipe for maintaining some sort of power balance in Europe, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente may have looked a reasonable idea on paper, but all such arrangements contain a potentially dangerous flaw – countries can get drawn in to conflict through no fault or action of their own, but by the acts of a partner over which they may have no control.

IT EFFECTIVELY DIVIDED EUROPE INTO TWO DIFFERENT CAMPS WITH NO MAJOR POWER UNCOMMITTED TO EITHER WHICH COULD ACT AS AN ARBITRATOR OR PEACE-MAKER IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS

That said, in the case of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, there were huge additional complications. To begin with it effectively divided Europe in to two different camps with no major power uncommitted to either which could act as an arbitrator or peace-maker in the event of a crisis. Countries were either "Alliance" or "Entente". Moreover, neither were created by chance – they largely reflected the fears and concerns that their respective members felt about those in the opposite group - thus resembling a potential battle line-up in the making if deterrent and reason failed. Worse, their geographical composition left Germany and Austria-Hungary with the fear of war on two fronts with France and Britain in the West and Russia in the east.

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LEFT : Czar Nicholas II and French General Joffre at joint maneuvers in August 1913. The Triple Entente allies threatened Germany with a two front war in the tense years before World War 1.

BELOW : A 1914 Russian poster in which the upper inscription reads "agreement". The uncertain Britannia (right) and Marianne (left) look to the determined Mother Russia (centre) to lead them in the coming war.

And a further fundamental weakness was that they did not represent the complete diplomatic and military wiring of Europe. They were dangerously cross-wired in some places and in others the wiring led out of the power box altogether – further enhancing the chances of a conflagration.

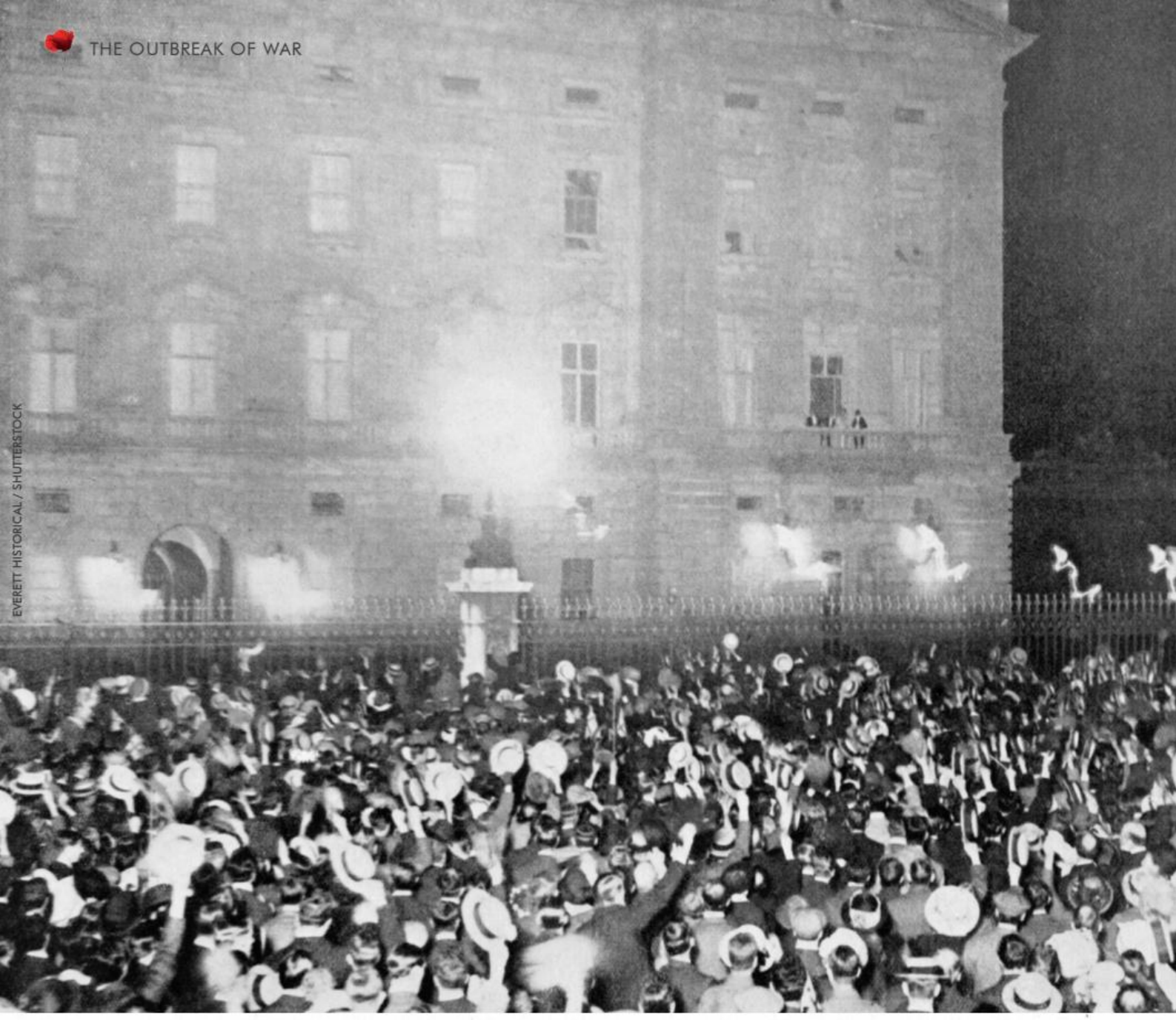
And Britain, under the terms of the Treaty of London signed in 1839, was committed to guaranteeing Belgium's neutrality should any nation in Europe attack one of its newest countries created in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars.

For example, Germany had been pushing for a close friendship with the Ottoman Empire for years, harbouring dreams of a Berlin to Baghdad Railway extending Germany's influence to the Persian Gulf. And though its power was fading, Ottoman friendship also offered another strategic opportunity: Ottoman tentacles still reached down through the Middle East to where its forces abutted Egypt and the Suez Canal, Britain's strategic route to India and the Far East.

Then there were two key "drag-in" treaties which played a major part in the frenzy of war declarations in early August 1914.

Russia had an agreement with Serbia that in the event of an attack it would come to its assistance – the reason was part cultural, but mainly strategic, reminding other major European countries that Russia intended to stay in the same league. The "attack" and the promised response were about to take place.

And for Britain, there was the Treaty of London in 1839 which guaranteed Belgium's independence in the face of any foreign aggression. Belgium, a weak state created in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, posed no threat to Britain through its North Sea and Channel Ports. But a powerful invader might – and such an invader was about to try.



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THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

When Principe pulled that trigger in Sarajevo on June 28th 1914, he not only killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, but set in motion a rapid series of events which would lead to the killing of almost 20 million soldiers and civilians, and a similar number wounded.

Austria-Hungary was understandably outraged by the murder of the heir to the Habsburg throne and his wife, and made massive demands on Serbia for reparations, including the policing of the country by Austro-Hungarian constabulary. Whilst Serbia agreed to meet many demands it was not willing to do anything which would compromise its chances of an independent existence. The outcome: the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia on July 28 1914, exactly one month after the murders. Two days later its war ships bombarded Belgrade, the Serbian capital.

Even before the Austro-Hungarian Empire had declared war on Serbia, Russia's Tsar Nicholas had given orders for a partial mobilisation of the Russian Army – which created alarm particularly in Berlin where military chiefs sensed this could be the beginning of the dreaded war on two fronts.

On hearing of the attack on Belgrade, Russia moved to full mobilisation, amidst calls from Germany that they should cease. They did not. Outcome: Germany declared war on Russia on August 1st triggering the full mobilisation of both the French and Belgian armies. Outcome: two days later Germany then declared war on France, and commenced its invasion of Belgium.

Stung by Germany's attack on Belgium, Britain demanded an immediate German withdrawal, reminding Berlin of its commitment to defend Belgian neutrality, and informing its French ally that it would not permit the German Navy to operate in the English Channel.

ABOVE : British volunteers for "Kitchener's Army" waiting for their pay in the churchyard of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London

LEFT : London crowds cheering the Royal Family on the Buckingham Palace balcony on the day Britain declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary. August 4, 1914.

RIGHT : One of the most iconic and enduring images of WW1, Lord Kitchener, the British Secretary of State for War, above the words "WANTS YOU".

As anticipated, Germany refused to withdraw from Belgium. Outcome: On August 4th Britain, in an act binding on all its Empire Dominions, including Canada, South Africa, India, Australia and New Zealand, declared war on Germany.

And to complete matters on August 6th the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Russia and on August 12th Britain and France declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
On the eve of Britain's declaration of war on Germany, Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey looked out of his office window and spied the lamplighters going about their evening task in the Mall. The scene moved him to invoke words to his friend John Alfred Spender, Editor of the Westminster Gazette, which have echoed down the decades ever since: "The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them re-lit in our time".

His gloom was not shared by the British public who gathered in the streets to cheer and shout their support for war. The time had come, the die was cast and flower of Britain's brave youth volunteered for service amidst a national mood of heroic celebration.

As the poet Laurence Binyon wrote: "They went with songs to the battle, they were young".

THE CONFLAGRATION

There had been warnings of what type of war a major conflagration in Europe could turn in to. And they were real warnings – not those that come in words and speeches alone; they came from the first major wars of the industrial age –the Crimean War and the American Civil War in the middle of the 19th Century, and the Franco-Prussian War a few years later. And these conflicts came with the first-ever batch of photographs ever taken in war – real images of real death and destruction. Alan Spence continues his narrative of the First World War.

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ABOVE : Dead soldiers and horses in a field after the Battle of Haelen which was fought by the German and Belgian armies on August 12, 1914 in Belgium.

OPPOSITE : Bandaged British soldiers in a battlefield trench, 1915-1918.

LEFT : Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, c. 1914

As people on all sides rejoiced at the outbreak of the conflict they were mostly oblivious to the potential consequences of the world's most powerful military powers hurling themselves at each other with all the might modern industry could muster from Dreadnought class battleships and the latest in machine gun and artillery technology to aircraft, tanks – and poisonous gas.

The public and many in the military expected a fast war of daring mobility and speed, and famously there was much talk of it being "all over by Christmas" – an expectation which did much to boost the numbers volunteering to fight: they, indeed, want to get involved before it was all over.

By the time the iconic poster of Lord Kitchener, Empire military hero turned Minister for War, appeared on hoardings in September, his finger-pointing message that "Your Country Needs You" had already been heeded by many thousands of young men.

Expectations of a quick victory for Britain were based on a popular belief – partly borne of propaganda – that the country could quickly knock Germany over. In Berlin, though, a quick victory over France had long been the basis of its military planning and preparations – which came together in the so-called Schlieffen Plan, named after its architect Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen, the former Chief of the Imperial Army General Staff.

"Remember, we can be in Paris in two weeks", the Kaiser remarked more than once, boasting or threatening – or both. On the other hand, it wasn't far from what the Schlieffen Plan was designed to achieve, particularly as Germany's military planners had anticipated a war on two fronts – in the west with France, and possibly Britain, and in the east with Russia.

So with the various declarations of war finally clearing the way for action, General Helmuth von Moltke, Germany's Army Chief of Staff, lost no time in launching two of his armies across the Belgian frontier on August 4th with the task of sweeping down to the French border and thrusting towards Paris.

At the same time, others engaged the French army across a broad front, though concentrating much of their attack on Verdun and Nancy in the west, where France had positioned much of its military resources.

Belgium was no match for Germany's mighty military machine, but it held a surprise for von Moltke – the extent to which it was prepared to resist, despite dreadful losses. Much of this resistance centred on the fortress towns of Liege and Namur which blocked the German thrust south towards the French border.

Inevitably their defences were demolished by massive howitzers, and the Belgian Army retreated towards Antwerp.

But by then the Schlieffen Plan had hit difficulties: Belgium had held up the Germans for a priceless two weeks or more. The Kaiser had missed his deadline for entering Paris, but more importantly Britain, also responding rapidly to the crisis, had, by then, managed to get over 60 per cent of the British Expeditionary Force across the Channel. At the request of the French, the British Commander-in-Chief General Sir John French, agreed to join battle with the German Army at Mons.

THE JOINT STAND AT MONS BY THE BRITISH AND FRENCH FURTHER DELAYED THE GERMAN ADVANCE AND ITS OBJECTIVE OF OCCUPYING OR ENCIRCLING PARIS.

Surprised by the British Army's quick arrival and the rapid fire of its regular riflemen (which led to the Germans wildly over-estimating the number of machine guns deployed in the British lines), the joint stand at Mons by the British and French further delayed the German advance and its objective of occupying or encircling Paris, thus cutting it off from the rest of the country and, of great military importance, the main body of its army.

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That said, the British and French did not succeed in stopping the German advance, and neither did their cussed resistance as, totally out-numbered, they fell back towards Paris, retreating south of the River Marne. This caused such great consternation in Paris that on September 4th the French Government moved to Bordeaux on the Atlantic Coast, one of the farthest points away from the fighting.

General Joffre, France's Commander-in-Chief, had previously underestimated the strength of the German armies coming down through Belgium, but fearing for the fate of the country's capital he now began to stealthily swing huge numbers of troops across the frontline from east to west in a desperate attempt to block the German route to Paris.

Meanwhile, German forces in the east continued to hammer away at what they thought was France's main military concentration around Verdun whilst those in the west, which had thrust through Belgium and into France, changed tack – a decision which ultimately rested with von Moltke.

They had covered much ground from the German-Belgian border a month before and constant combat was taking its toll on men and supply lines – with the latter lengthening ominously due to the pace of the advance. Meanwhile, German siege howitzers were still trying to deal with the remnants of the Belgian Army in Antwerp.

As the German forces designated to encircle Paris they were, by now, lacking sufficient men and materials to proceed with this objective and, instead, were ordered to attack south-east across the routes leading in to Paris, and join up with Germany's other armies fighting along the front.

Unfortunately, the move involved a dangerous miscalculation of the strength of the British and French armies to the south which the Germans believed had been largely put out of action, not realising the massive extent to which they had been reinforced by Joffre's French troop movements west.

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TOP : Belgian soldiers resisting the German invasion on the River Nethe. disrupting the 'Schieflen Plan' 1914.

LEFT : Members of the English Worcester Regiment who fought in the Battle of Ypres, 1914

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In early September German fortunes changed with the British and the French attacking north precipitating a German pull-back across the entire front, though the Channel ports remained very vulnerable to being cut-off by the Germans and potentially endangering Britain's military operations alongside her ally.

Recognising the latter danger, French vectored the British Expeditionary Force north-west committing – in the Kaiser's words this "contemptible little force" (hence "The Old Contemptibles", the self-given, affectionate name which continues to echo down the years) to a cluster of desperate battles through the Autumn in and around the town of Ypres.

Ultimately, German forces were unable to break through to the coast, with the British assisted by continued Belgian resistance in Antwerp until October and their occupation of a strip of their own country to the British force's left – which they continued to hold until the Armistice four years later.

The early months of the war had been characterised by rapid movements of vast armies and the use of military tactics handed down to commanders from the previous century – cavalry charges, rapid advances, tactical withdrawals and flanking movements.

But as winter descended on Europe in 1914, all these were played out – at appalling human cost: half the BEF had been killed or injured with French losses, including those taken prisoner, reaching beyond 850,000. Overall casualties on both sides had risen to around five million with one million dead – figures almost defying comprehension.

Both sides in the conflict had thrown everything in manpower and munitions at each other with all the force and power they possessed, but the outcome was stalemate – manifested in hundreds of miles of man-made trenches, often awash in slurried mud and infested with rats, stretching from the Belgian coast across to the Swiss frontier.

The largely unpredicted horrors of mass trench warfare had arrived for the first time in military history, and beyond horrendous artillery bombardments and mass infantry assaults through a hail of machine gun fire, the commanders on both sides were out of ideas.

Germany's inability to quickly knock France out of the war in accordance with the Schlieffen Plan had by the end of 1914 firmly landed Berlin in the middle (literally) of a war on two fronts.

Back in August 1914 Russia had followed up quickly on its declaration of war against Germany, attacking East Prussia and advancing with alarming speed. However, the Germans, taking full advantage of the Russians un-encoded wireless communications and relying heavily on the strategic skills and intimate knowledge of the East Prussian terrain of General von Hindenburg, who they had rushed out of retirement, inflicted two great defeats on the Russians at Tannenberg in August and the Massurian Lakes in September.

Austria-Hungary, however, did far less well against the Russians who over-ran Galicia, an area straddling the modern day border of Poland and Ukraine – and the Germans had to help out its Habsburg ally by invading Poland, though Russia held on to Warsaw.

However, despite its victories against Russia, the latter still remained firmly in the war and Germany still faced its two-front dilemma as the war entered its second year.

TOP : German machine guns in a trench near Darkehmen in East Prussia. during the Russian invasion of East Prussia 1914.

ABOVE : General von Hindenburg

Britain's position as 1914 turned to 1915 was probably best summed up by Winston Churchill in a letter to Prime Minister Herbert Asquith:

"I think it quite possible that neither side will have the strength to penetrate the other's lines.... are there not other alternatives to sending our armies to chew barbed wire in Flanders?"

Asquith had no answer to that question, but a powerful group in London led by Churchill himself as First Lord of the Admiralty, sought to respond to the deadlock with a plan to launch a massive amphibious assault in the Dardanelles, the narrow strip of water between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara which leads to Istanbul, then known as Constantinople, and on in to the Black Sea.

The Dardanelles campaign, more commonly known as the Gallipoli Landings, was the core element of a grand strategy to open up a new front in the "soft underbelly of Europe". The words are Churchill's, and they were to haunt him for the rest of his life.

Long regarded as the "sick man of Europe", Ottoman Turkey, it was thought, would be taken by surprise and unable to withstand the Royal Navy's fire power - followed by troop landings and a rapid thrust up to Constantinople.

Once Turkey was knocked out of the war, the Central Powers' "soft underbelly" would be opened up by British Empire and French troops driving north, assisted by Italian troops to the west already heavily engaged with Austria-Hungary and, perhaps, Greece coming in to the war on the side of the Allies. Moreover, supply routes would be opened up to Russia through the Mediterranean and into the Black Sea.

Churchill and his supporters, including David Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, believed it would shorten the war and bring to an end the hell of the Western Front where the chances of either side breaking the stalemate in the foreseeable seemed slim.

But it wasn't to be. Brilliant in its conception, it was flawed in its execution. The more the campaign's detractors stalled, the greater became the determination of its supporters to see it through – some would say dangerously so.

Ultimately, the debate turned on the availability of military resources. Not so much for the Navy, which was relatively well resourced under Churchill's command and control, but the Army. Small to begin with compared with that of Germany, the Army had suffered massively in the opening months of the war, and the General Staff had grave concerns about weakening it further on the Western Front in order to back what they regarded as, at best, an uncertain military adventure.

This tussle ultimately triggered a series of events for which senior figures on both sides were to blame – and ultimately paid the price in terms of their status and reputation.

With Kitchener unwilling to release troops in France, a plan was hatched, on Churchill's insistence, for the Navy to go-it-alone and on 19th February British and French battleships began a fearful bombardment of Turkish defences on the Dardanelles coastline with a view to threatening to bombard Constantinople if the Turks refused to sue for peace.

However, disaster was soon to strike as the battle fleet ran in to a Turkish coastal minefield causing the loss of two British and one French vessel – and the withdrawal of the entire fleet.

The decision was now taken to turn the Dardanelles offensive in to the combined operation with the Army as originally conceived by Churchill and colleagues – and Kitchener released a division of men from France.

The landing force primarily comprised British, French and Dominion troops from India, Australia and New Zealand. In late 1914 the forces of the latter two countries had been formed in to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps Service – the Anzacs - and Gallipoli was the first time that they were deployed.

Two precious months elapsed between the naval bombardment and the arrival of troops, and during this time the Turks had built up their coastal defences, taking advantage wherever possible of rocky high land in the immediate hinterland. Moreover, all element of surprise originally possessed by the attacking forces had long since been lost.

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ABOVE : Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1914.

LEFT : HMS Irresistible listing and sinking in the Dardanelles, March 18, 1915. The ship hit a mine while shelling Turkish defenses. Photograph taken from the battleship HMS Lord Nelson.

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ON 25TH APRIL THE LANDINGS COMMENCED ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA AND IN BITTER, SOMETIMES CHAOTIC FIGHTING THE CASUALTIES RAPIDLY MOUNTED.

LEFT : Supply ships unloading horses and other supplies after the hard fought British landing on the southern tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula during the Dardanelles campaign, 1915.

BELOW : An Australian soldier carrying a wounded comrade at Gallipoli, 1915.

On 25th April the landings commenced on the Gallipoli Peninsula and in bitter, sometimes chaotic fighting the casualties rapidly mounted on both sides as the conflict descended, amidst tragic irony, in to something the Allies were there to help banish from the battle fields of Western Europe – trench warfare. This time in the fierce temperatures of Oriental summer with its disease-breeding, fly-infested heat enveloping the dead and wounded.

Despite a second assault force landing in early August at Suvla Bay, the allies were unable to break out from the beach-heads in to the Turkish interior and there was to be no triumphant entry in to Constantinople and epic collapse of the Ottoman Empire – at least for now.

Military forces are often at their most vulnerable when retreating. For a second time the grim irony of war wafted down the Dardanelles – this time benignly. The decision to evacuate was followed late in the year by a text-book withdrawal replete with deception which enabled the vast majority of troops to escape without further casualties. But of those there had already been appalling numbers.

Altogether British Empire and French troops killed, wounded and evacuated sick amounted to over 250,000. It was said that Australia and New Zealand came of age as nations at Gallipoli. If so, it was a tragic way to do so – of the 50,000 Australians who served in the campaign almost half were either killed, wounded or died of disease.

Of the 8500 New Zealanders who served, almost one-third died and the majority of the remainder were wounded.

The Indian Army also fought at Gallipoli, and its losses were equally appalling. Of the 5000 troops deployed, around 80 per cent were either killed or wounded.

As for the Turks themselves, they, too, sustained massive losses equal in number to the Allies and were subsequently thought to have been close to collapse. Had this been known at the time and more British and French resources been available, the entire war may have taken a different trajectory from that point.

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There were faults at all levels – from the political and military leadership at the top, down to some of those commanding on the ground. But no-one can ever doubt the bravery of all those who fought in this disastrous campaign, nor question the appalling conditions in which they did so.

Meanwhile, throughout 1915 the war in Belgium and France remained in stale-mate, though the situation in London was more fluid.

Shaken by the emerging outcome of the Gallipoli landings and rocked by the so-called "Shell Report" in which the Daily Mail caused a national furore by reporting that Britain's munitions industry was not providing sufficient shells for the army, Asquith's Liberal Government collapsed – it was the last majority Liberal Government to run Britain.

Asquith was invited by King George V to form a Coalition with representatives of all major parties. Whilst Kitchener stayed on as Secretary of State for War, Churchill lost the Admiralty, washed out of office by the waves from the Gallipoli crisis.

Meanwhile, Asquith turned to Lloyd George to provide the energy and direction to solve the munitions shortage, putting him in charge of a new Ministry of Munitions. And he duly obliged.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST
THE WAR'S BIGGEST BATTLE GROUND

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The conflict in the Middle East comprised the First World War's biggest battle ground from the Arabian Peninsula to Ottoman Turkey, Egypt, the Levant across to Mesopotamia – and north through Persia to the oil fields of the Caspian.

The common strategic interest of the major powers lay in its oil reserves. For Britain an additional concern was the security of the Suez Canal linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea, and beyond to India, the Far East and Australasia.

For Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire taking control of the Canal would be a major blow to the British Empire, and a massive strategic gain for them, militarily and commercially.

Separately Germany harboured dreams of completing a Berlin to Baghdad railway linking it to the rich Gulf oilfields and the strategic sea routes to the Far East through the Persian Gulf.

To this end it had consolidated its ties with the Ottoman Empire, a power threatened by the rise of nationalism and unable to keep pace militarily with Europe's main powers, but still, nevertheless, in control of a vast swathe of the Middle East from Sinai to the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula north to the border of Turkey itself.

GERMANY HARBOURED DREAMS OF COMPLETING A BERLIN TO BAGHDAD RAILWAY LINKING IT TO THE RICH GULF OILFIELDS AND THE STRATEGIC SEA ROUTES TO THE FAR EAST

The First World War started badly for the British Empire in the Middle East. In early 1915 a German-led Ottoman Army invaded Sinai which the British controlled as part of their Egyptian protectorate and launched a series of attacks on the Suez Canal which in places they crossed. But with a major Empire military presence in the region, the Ottoman troops were unable to take control of this vital strategic link.

In late 1915 on the other side of the region in what is now modern-day Iraq, a British-led Indian Army, having taken control of Basra at the top of the Gulf, headed north through Mesopotamia aiming, ultimately, to take Baghdad.

After months of fighting it became trapped at Kut-al-mara where it was besieged. Worn down by conflict, the heat, disease and short of food and supplies, it finally surrendered in April 1916 and 13,000 Empire troops became prisoners of war. It was viewed as a humiliation to be avenged.

A new British army commenced its offensive in December 1916, advancing on both sides of the Tigris River and fought its way to Baghdad by early March, arriving to cheering

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crowds who regarded the British as their liberators from the Ottomans.

Fortunes turned in Egypt with the arrival of General Sir Edmund Allenby to command the Empire forces allied with the increasing influence of a small group of intelligence officers – a curious mixture of military officers, diplomats, academics and intellectuals. Together they staffed the Arab Bureau in Cairo and crafted a close relationship with King Hussein of the Hedjaz and custodian of the two holiest cities of Islam - Mecca and Medina.

One these crafters was a young officer named Thomas Edward Lawrence (subsequently "of Arabia") who was key to persuading King Hussein and his sons, principally Prince Faisal, to rise up against the Turks in what came to be known as the "Arab Revolt".

A brilliant linguist and polymath, he became Faisal's military advisor in the field and arguably leader-by-proxy of the Revolt to which he brought his own brand of military strategy based on fast-moving guerrilla warfare designed to harass and incapacitate the enemy with minimal losses to his own forces.

Under Faisal and Lawrence the Revolt, launched in June 1916, steadily moved north through the

Hedjaz region which ran parallel to the Red Sea along the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Its objective was to cause the Turks as many problems as possible by constantly cutting the Hedjaz Railway and telegraph communications which linked Medina with Damascus and beyond.

Thomas Edward Lawrence
Subsequently known as Lawrence of Arabisa

Later in 1917 and 1918 they acted more in concert with Allenby's forces which broke out across Sinai and took Jerusalem by Christmas 1917. The following year Allenby fought his way to Damascus by October 1918, with Lawrence's irregular troops on his right flank harassing the Turks all the way.

The Ottoman Turks continued to retreat north to Anatolia, a broken force witnessing the final collapse of its 800-year old Empire

ABOVE : The Union Jack flies over Bagdad as British troops enter the city after its capture on March 11, 1917

OPPOSITE : First World War Map of the Middle East. When defeated Turkey lost its Ottoman Empire, and it was divided into Nation-States.

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Meanwhile, on the Western Front the Germans used poison gas for the first time in the war at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915, threatening a breakthrough of the Allied lines - which never materialised as the momentum of their attack flagged.

Both the British and French armies launched major attacks in 1915, including the British at Neuve Chapelle in March and Loos in September, without breaking the German lines.

Neuve Chapelle was Britain's first major planned offensive in the war and the first occasion on which Indian forces were used as a single unit. The Battle of Loos marked the first occasion when the British deployed huge elements of Kitchener's New Army of recruits, and also the first time the British Army used poison gas.

And, by the time the autumn weather began to deteriorate, Britain and France between them had suffered another half a million casualties and Sir John French, failing to breakthrough at Loos, had been replaced as Commander-in-Chief of the BEF by Sir Douglas Haig.

Each year the War indelibly etched new names in to the pages of military history – names which became composite by-words for bravery, suffering and sacrifice often on a tragically epic scale. In 1916 these included, amongst others, Jutland, the Somme and Verdun.

With more defeats of the Russians recently behind them, the Germans decided that the time had come to break France at Verdun in early 1916, and began to amass a vast array of giant siege artillery aimed at destroying the forts that surrounded the city.

THE BATTLE OF VERDUN COMMENCED ON 21ST FEBRUARY 1916 WITH AN ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT OF OVER TWO MILLION SHELLS ON THE FIRST DAY

Although the French Commander in Chief General Joffre was well aware of this build-up, he continued to think a German attack in the area unlikely due to the absence of a strategic objective. In this he was correct in the sense that there were other potential attack routes in to the heartland of France without engaging Verdun's massive defensive cordon.

What he initially missed was that Verdun was the strategic objective – not something to be necessarily taken and occupied, but a place which the Germans knew France would, for strategic and prestige reasons of its own, defend until the last.

In other words the place where Germany would bleed France to death as Joffre threw everything in to defending Verdun, including the country's strategic reserve of men and materials if necessary.

The German Commander-in-Chief General Falkenhayn – the successor to von Moltke who had failed to drive home the Schlieffen Plan – even predicted that the British may be forced in to mounting a relief operation, and that they, too, would be sucked in to Verdun's meat grinder, as it came to be known.

The battle of Verdun commenced on 21st February 1916 with an artillery bombardment of over two million shells on the first day and, in all, the siege lasted until 18 December – the longest single battle between Germany and France throughout the entire war.

Falkenhayn's plan was to take a strategic line of high ground to the north of Verdun from where he would bombard the French with powerful long-range artillery steadily depleting their ranks and degrading their fortifications. They would need to counter-attack to take the pressure off their lines but, Falkenhayn believed, this would make them more vulnerable still.

The plan worked in part, but the Germans had underestimated the French will to resist and their willingness to perpetually counter-attack. Verdun, fought over a small area of land, increasingly became a protracted battle of artillery and troop engagements which required the Germans to commit infantry to a much greater level than envisaged.

By the middle of the year, the Germans managed to get within a short distance of Verdun's citadel, but the French held true to the words of their commander Marshall Petain: "Ils ne passeront pas!" ("They shall not pass").

The artillery pounding and infantry attacks swung in both directions through the summer, the autumn and in to the winter when, finally, with both sides reaching exhaustion and between them having lost around a million men killed and wounded, over 300 days of slaughter could no longer be sustained. Stalemate.

The Germans had wrought massive destruction on the French Army, perhaps more than they realised at the time, but they had not achieved its disintegration. And their achievements had to be seen in the context of their own horrific losses – a major contributory factor to Germany not launching another major offensive for almost two years.

And as for the British, they were not sucked in the meat grinder, but, as the situation at Verdun had deteriorated frighteningly in the Spring of 1916, the French pleaded with General Haig to attack on the Somme further west where the British and French lines joined to take some of the pressure off their troops at Verdun.

Haig was not well-disposed to the idea. Whilst he believed in the fighting capabilities of his new volunteer army, many, nevertheless, lacked experience. Moreover, munition stocks, though adequate, were not as high as he would have liked.

As for the strategic position on the Somme itself, there was no bulge in the line. It was straight, and therefore called for a frontal assault; and it wasn't just a line of trenches, which would have been bad enough, but also comprised deep bomb-proof dug-outs and concrete pill boxes.

All this was far from ideal, but Haig knew he had no choice and the Somme offensive began on 1st July after a weeklong barrage of the German positions.

The appalling British losses of 60,000 men – one-third of them killed – on the first day have gone down as one of the darkest days in the history of the British Army. The bombardment had failed to destroy the German defences, including miles of barbed wire – and the British were cut down by machine-gun fire in their thousands.

The Germans lost ground with offensives and counter-offensives continuing through the summer and in to the autumn when the rains and exhaustion finally brought the battle to end.

Like so much of the fighting that took place during the First World War, the casualty levels of 400,000 and 200,000 for the British and French respectively seemed an extortionately high price to pay for what was achieved in terms of territory – a strip about 20 miles long and 6 miles wide.

And undoubtedly it was. But within the context of continuing attrition, German losses of around 600,000, added to those at Verdun, probably marked the turning point for Germany on the Western Front, although two more years of horrific slaughter still lay ahead.

British losses were a massive blow to its volunteer army, but the first deployment of tanks, albeit in a small number, was the beginning of a new era in warfare – even if their first appearance proved perhaps more psychologically damaging to the Germans than physically.

Either way they were a factor in the capture in late September of Thiepval – these days one of the most well-known former Western Front sites of homage and remembrance visited annually by thousands from all over the world.

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OPPOSITE : French soldiers crawling through their own barbed wire entanglements as they begin an attack on enemy trenches at the Battle of Verdun April, 1916.

LEFT: Wounded British soldiers on the battlefield near Ginchy, France, during the Somme Offensive, Sept. 1916. Irish volunteers of the 16th Division wait for evacuation by horse-drawn ambulance

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Whilst great land battles raged across Europe in 1916, this was also the year of the great naval showdown between the British and the German fleets.

In the years before the War, the arms race between Britain and Germany had most dramatically expressed itself in strategic naval competition to build the most of a new generation of powerful battleships – the Dreadnoughts, named after HMS Dreadnought launched by Britain in 1906. With ten 12 inch guns, she had twice the fire power of any predecessor.

When war broke out the world's two great naval fleets longed for the opportunity to clash on the high seas and settle their differences in the biggest naval battle of all time.

In Britain there was much talk of the "Second Trafalgar", whilst the Kaiser dreamed of humiliating the victors of that climactic sea battle and open up the sea lanes to German naval and merchant shipping, whilst expanding German overseas colonies and territories.

There was just one big problem. Neither side could afford to lose – for to do so would probably mean losing the war. Up to the Battle of Jutland, the Royal Navy had given a good account of itself after an early set back off the coast of Chile in November 1914 when the East Asia Squadron of Germany's Imperial Fleet almost by accident ran in to a British Squadron, which it seriously outgunned.

Two British heavy cruisers were sunk with the loss of over 1,600 men, whilst the German vessels got away with just three men injured.

The outcome rocked the Admiralty which sent reinforcements down to the south Atlantic, meeting and destroying the German Squadron in the Battle of the Falklands, giving Britain mastery of the southern oceans for the duration of the War.

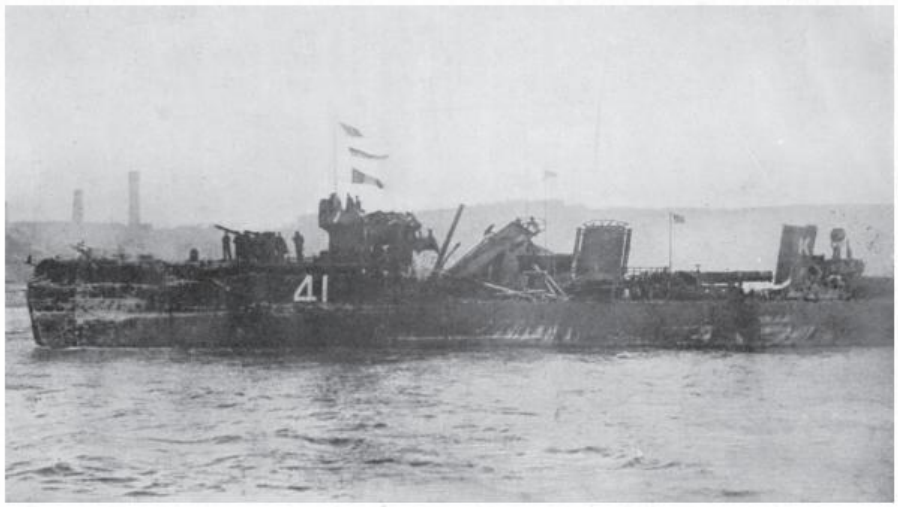
By Christmas 1914 the British Blockade of Germany was well in place with German naval and merchant vessels largely bottled up – and the Germany's Imperial Fleet largely marooned at home.

Occasionally there were skirmishes in the North Sea during the first two years of the war with German naval vessels breaking, for example, down England's east coast shelling, amongst other places, Hartlepool, Scarborough (where a shell passed through the light house at the end of the pier) and Lowestoft.

However, in spring 1916 Admiral Scheer, the commander of the German Fleet, set a trap for the British Fleet. He ordered Admiral Hipper to sail a squadron of battle cruisers with accompanying vessels along the Norwegian Coast to attract the attention of Admiral Beatty's battle squadron, and draw it in to the range of Germany's main fleet which he had kept back out of sight.

ABOVE Admiral Reinhard Scheer, the commander of the German Fleet

TOP: The Royal Navy battlecruiser HMS Inflexible standing by to pick up survivors from the German cruiser SMS Gneisenau after the Battle of the Falkland Islands.



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LEFT : British destroyer HMS Spitfire after the Battle of Jutland, showing damage sustained in the battle, June 1916

BELOW : In this photo taken from a British airship, German battlecruisers steam toward Scapa Flow, in the Orkney Islands, Scotland, Nov-Dec 1918.

Meanwhile, naval intelligence reported on 30th May that the German Fleet had put to sea and Admiral Jellicoe immediately ordered the main British Fleet to sea from Rosyth, Cromarty and the Scapa Flow.

WHEN WAR BROKE OUT THE WORLD'S TWO GREAT NAVAL FLEETS LONGED FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO CLASH ON THE HIGH SEAS AND SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES IN THE BIGGEST NAVAL BATTLE OF ALL TIME.

Beatty's battle cruisers eventually made contact with Hipper's force off Denmark's Jutland Peninsula – and another previously little known name was about to assume a mighty place in the annals of British (and German) naval history.

Beatty quickly lost two battle cruisers, the Indefatigable and the Queen Mary and was hampered in the initial exchange with Hipper by his Dreadnoughts not being within range as the two sides clashed.

Hipper turned to lure Beatty in to the line of Germany's approaching main fleet commanded by Scheer as Jellicoe raced down the North Sea to engage – and briefly the possibility of a "Second Trafalgar", indeed, seemed possible.

In all, the frenetic action took place over 36 hours. On the first day – 31st May - both fleets manoeuvred and engaged to gain best advantage for the kill as the evening mist was enveloped by night, amidst fears of U-Boat and destroyer-launched torpedo attacks, and mine fields off the Danish Coast. And then the following day – 1st June – dawned to many more hours of gruelling clashes between the mightiest, deadliest naval ships ever to set sail – along with a vast armada of support ships and submarines.

And for the first time aircraft played a role in a major naval battle – with Royal Naval Air Service pilots helping gunners with range-finding from above the smoke screens and murky light.

Finally, in the afternoon the two badly-mauled navies finally disentangled. But who had won? Both sides claimed victory. British losses were greater than those of the German Fleet – 14 ships and over 6,000 men, compared with 11 ships and 2500 men.

But ultimately, Germany's Fleet broke for home never again to re-emerge until at the end of the war it steamed across the North Sea to surrender to the Royal Navy at Scapa Flow.

Back on land and after the great conflicts of Verdun and the Somme, Germany in late 1916 and early 1917 planned a period of defensive consolidation on the Western Front to re-build and replenish its military resources, whilst hoping the country's U-Boat captains would leave its opponents on land increasingly short of food and munitions.

Its defensive posture came to be epitomised by the completion of the heavily fortified Hindenburg Line - commenced during the previous year's Battle of the Somme - in some places up to 30 miles behind its own front line.

In February 1917 its troops completed their pull-back to the Hindenburg Line, which significantly shortened its front with the British and French, consolidating resources of men and equipment.

Meanwhile, the British and the French, re-equipped - including with many aircraft and new artillery - following the great battles of the previous year, planned major offences.

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In what became known as the Nivelle offensive - after an exuberant young General Robert Nivelle who had distinguished himself at Verdun and replaced Joffre as Commander-in-Chief – the Allies hurled themselves at the German lines with British forces pushing from Arras, and the Canadians famously taking Vimy Ridge.

But further south, around Soissons and Reims, the French ran in to appalling machine gun fire from particularly well dug-in lines, which partly reflected earlier leakage of Nivelle's battle plan.

Such was the level of casualties and the sense of disappointment after Nivelle's overly-optimistic predictions, that some French units came close to mutiny, and it was left to Marshal Petain, the hero of Verdun, to rebuild morale.

In Flanders, Haig pressed on trying, amongst other objectives, to eject the Germans out of their U-Boat bases in Ostende and Zeebrugge in a campaign which featured the biggest mining explosion of the war at Messines Ridge – Lloyd George claimed he heard it in Downing Street.

The story of the miners who went to war to dig long shafts beneath enemy lines and plant explosives was less known until more recent years, but was an important feature of the Battle's Over commemorative event with the creation of symbolic Lamp Light of Peace using a Welsh Miner's lamp and artefacts from the Western Front, including coal and wood from old trench ramparts.

Haig's offensive became officially known as the Third Battle of Ypres, but is remembered, more simply and notoriously, as Passchendaele. Haig's bombardment smashed the drainage system across Flanders' flat landscape and one of the wettest summers on record did the rest as, amidst the slaughter, men drowned in liquid mud which sucked them to their death.

The Hell of Passchendaele continued through to November with losses of 300,000 British troops, twice those of the Germans.

Against this tragically familiar background of military offensive and counter-offensive, the three great distinguishing events of 1917 were the commencement of unrestricted U-boat warfare by Germany, the consequent entry of the United States in to the War, and the Russian Revolution, which led to the end of Germany's war on two fronts.

There had been some hope that the Hague Conventions signed to "humanise" war in the years prior to the First World War would minimise merchant marine casualties in any forthcoming conflict. Alas, this was not the case.

Had Britain and Germany been self-sufficient in food and other vital supplies, the Atlantic and the North Sea would not have become the battlegrounds that they did for the mercantile marine. But both were far from self-sufficient, relying on supply lines which stretched around the world.

TOP : Aerial view of the village of Passchendaele before and after the Third Battle of Ypres, 1917

ABOVE : Lamp Light of Peace

RIGHT: German WW1 POWs who surrendered at Messines Ridge in June 1917.

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On the outbreak of war the Royal Navy declared a blockade of Germany which severely limited the country's access to international sea lanes. Neutral ships, including from the United States, were apprehended and arrested if thought to be heading for German ports or ports to which Germany had access.

For Germany it was a question of trying to cut Britain's supply lines without the use of surface vessels which, absent Jutland, were largely bottled up in home ports. So the German High Command put its faith in U-Boats.

THE U-BOATS DIDN'T WASTE TIME – BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND APRIL 500 VESSELS OF ALL NATIONALITIES HAD BEEN SUNK

The sinking of merchant shipping began relatively slowly with U-boat captains breaking the surface and instructing merchant seamen to leave the vessel before sinking it – under the terms of internationally agreed "prize rules".

But there were also sinkings without warning, most infamously of the Lusitania off the coast of Ireland in May 1915 with the loss of almost 2000 lives – an appalling act which almost brought the United States in to the War at that point.

Amidst tightening supplies of food and critical materials and the unlikely prospect of the German Navy breaking Britain's blockade after the outcome of the Battle of Jutland, it was finally decided to launch unrestricted U-boat warfare in February 1917. This constituted a dramatic bid to starve Britain in to submission before the inevitable entry of the United States in to the War and the arrival of its troops in Europe.

The U-Boats didn't waste time – between February and April 500 vessels of all nationalities had been sunk with the rate rising to an average of 13 a day during the second half of April. For its part the United States didn't wait that long. Congress approved President Wilson's request to declare war on Germany on 6th April.

In Britain, where grain stocks were down to six weeks by the end of April, the public and Parliament demanded action, whilst the military on the Western Front feared for their supply lines.

For some time the idea of trans-Atlantic convoys had been under consideration but had some significant detractors, including amongst senior Royal Navy officers concerned about its practicability and the possibility of creating large concentrated targets for the U-boats.

However, despite opposition and in desperation, the Government forced the system through, and the first experimental convoy gathered off Gibraltar in early May.

There were many hiccups, but the system worked with naval escorts defending the merchantmen and assisted by such ruses as zig-zag painting to confuse U-boats on the surface and the development of more effective depth-charges to attack submarines beneath the surface.

Much shipping was still sunk, but the rate per month (which had been outstripping the pace at which shipyards could replace them) declined substantially such that during 2017 as whole the overall number of vessels lost was 1,197 (6,408 seafarers) and in 1918 this fell further to 544 vessels (4,122 seafarers).

TOP : The crew of a German UC-1 class submarine on deck, 1917

The threat of starvation receded, albeit not sufficiently for food rationing to be avoided – this was introduced in January 1918.

The gamble of unrestricted U-Boot warfare had failed, and now the Germans were faced with the consequences - for not only had Britain survived the grim experience, but American troops were in action by October in Europe having overcome major recruitment, training and logistical difficulties – **see box opposite.**

Despite these major strategic setbacks, 1917 nevertheless saw Germany reap great benefits from a climactic event – though not of its own making: the Russian Revolution.

Poverty, economic breakdown, corruption and dystopic government were amongst the factors which ushered Russia towards revolution, all coupled with the decadent court of Tsar Nicholas II, who weakly wafted between reform and tyranny.

Moreover, a humiliating defeat by Japan just over a decade earlier didn't help, and, indeed, at the time, almost triggered an uprising against the Tsar when naval units mutinied in Sevastopol.

Ironically, the outbreak of war in 1914 probably delayed revolution for a while as patriotic fervour tamed resentment and opposition.

Additionally, the traditional Tsarist loyalty of vast numbers of Russian peasants, who made up much of the

army, could – at least initially - be relied upon to fight for Russia and its "Father" as the Tsar was affectionately known to many.

Undoubtedly, the Russian Army fought bravely, managing to endure and withstand great defeats inflicted upon it by the Germans without disintegrating. But the Army was not helped by the Tsar himself assuming supreme command in 1915 and side-lining generals who had managed to hold it together in the face of often terrible losses.

He may have thought his mere presence at the front would underpin morale. If he did, he was much mistaken. Moreover, he was not a military man and had little or nothing to contribute by way of strategic thinking and military management, particularly given the new age of complex total warfare which many of the brightest and best military thinkers around Europe had yet to absorb.

But in locating himself near the front, there was another negative for the Tsar, his family and Russia's old order. It took him away from Moscow where Tsarina Alexandra was in thrall to Grigory Rasputin, a monk claiming "holy" powers and who the Tsarina believed had been responsible for curing her son of haemophilia.

In the Tsar's absence, Rasputin, leveraging his hypnotic influence over the Tsarina, wreaked havoc throughout the court and the government, taking it upon himself to dismiss and appoint ministers at will and, as a result, quickly building up a bow wave of resentment and anger which quickly washed up at the door of the Tsar himself.

Although known as the "February Revolution" as it occurred in the February of Russia's calendar at that time, it actually took place in March 1917 when law and order broke down in St. Petersburg. Workers disarmed the police and the army, declining to intervene, focused on forming their own workers' councils or soviets which Lenin and the Bolshevik revolutionaries believed were the building blocks of a socialist economy.

Such was the frailty of Tsar's power base by this time that, within a matter of three days, he had abdicated. Subsequently there were attempts to form governments to restore order and introduce some measure of social reform, even moderate socialism.

But in a matter of months they were washed away by the Bolsheviks, further inspired by the return from exile in Switzerland of Lenin himself to his homeland – assisted, not surprisingly, by Germany.

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ABOVE : Tsar Nicholas II of Russia

LEFT : Russian soldiers deserting the Kerensky offensive in July 1917. The Provisional Revolutionary government intended to stay in the war, Bolsheviks sought to make separate peace with the Central Powers.

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ABOVE : A crowd in Times Square holding up headlines reading 'Germany Surrenders, Nov 1918

LEFT : Column of American troops passing by Buckingham Palace, London, 15 August 1917.

THE US COMES OF AGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

The United States decision to declare war on Germany on 6th April 1917 came as a direct result of the German's unrestricted U-Boat offensive, although relations between Berlin and Washington had already plummeted following the interception by the British of a telegram – the so-called Zimmerman telegram – sent by the German Foreign Minister to German Ambassador Zimmerman in Mexico.

The British couldn't believe their luck. It revealed a German offer to help Mexico recoup land from the United States ceded at the end of the American-Mexican War in return for help in its war with the Allies. It was subsequently published in American newspapers.

There is, of course, a big difference between declaring war and having the means to go to war. Particularly on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. It was also the first time America had committed to fight a war in defence of other countries on their territory.

The United States had not traditionally maintained a large standing army, particularly compared with the great armies of the European powers, and in 1917 this stood at around 120,000 – only twice the size of British losses on the first day of the Somme. So recruitment and training was a big challenge, as was the logistics of getting troops over to Europe.

By June 2017 only 12,000 US troops had reached the Western Front, but by the following May one million were stationed in France and by the end of the war four million Americans had served in the Army – figures which attest to the energy, planning and funding Washington put behind its commitment to support the Allies.

The American Expeditionary Force's Commander was General John J Pershing *(right)* and his objective was to create an experienced fighting force capable of operating independently in its own right. He was against the idea that American troops should be used to fill in the gaps when French and British units were running thin.

US troops did not enter the trenches until October at Nancy in France and US divisions usually fought at the beginning to augment French and British units. However, this steadily changed as they developed more experience and following the American victory at Cantigny in the Somme Valley in May 1918.

By July French were supplementing American operations and at the Battle of St. Mihiel in the Meuse region of north-east France in September Pershing commanded the biggest American Army ever assembled of 500,000 men. Later that month Pershing commanded around one million men, comprising Americans and French at the Battle of Argonne.

By the time of the Armistice, American forces had suffered 116,500 deaths and almost three times that number wounded.

And America had come of age as an international military and political force.

Well aware of Lenin's opposition to Russia's war with Germany, they allowed him to travel by sealed train in to the middle of their enemy's political chaos in the hope that he would either directly or indirectly cause Russia to sue for peace.

They got what they wanted – in spades. Lenin himself eventually became leader of the country and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed in March 1918 between Russia and Germany, Austria Hungary, Bulgaria and Ottoman Turkey. This not only ended Germany's nightmare of a war on two fronts, but vast amounts of Russian territory were ceded to her, including the Ukraine's vast grain lands – a windfall in view of the British naval blockade in the Atlantic and North Sea causing increasing food shortages.

Brest-Litovsk released one million troops from the Eastern Front and Germany felt it could now take the military initiative on the Western Front. But its strategists also knew that it, indeed, had to be now – before the British naval blockade did more damage still to food supplies, the convoy system further reduced British shipping losses by U-boats, more troops piled in to Europe from the United States – and its allies Austria-Hungary and Ottoman Turkey collapsed.

Peace with Russia gave Germany's Ludendorff numerical superiority over the British and French for the first time in the War - and a windfall of around 1000 artillery pieces.

The German hammer first fell on the British Army's right wing running south from Arras against which the Germans were able to concentrate 71 divisions and 2,500 heavy guns compared with the British Army's 26 divisions and 1000 guns.

The offensive began on 21st March with a massive barrage of high explosive and gas shells and the subsequent attack by German infantry had the advantage of taking place in dense fog, preventing British machine gunners from seeing the enemy approaching.

It was a lethal combination which enabled the German infantry to break through the line and onwards in to open countryside, and demanded that Haig move back to avoid encirclement. Marshal Foch, who was by now supreme commander of all armies – French and British – on the Western Front threw every last unit he could raise at the German offensive, which bulged the front line dangerously towards Amiens.

On 9th April Ludendorff hurled his army and all its reserves at the British again – this time in the north between Ypres and Bethune, re-taking Messines Ridge and endangering the Channel ports – prompting Haig, usually an undemonstrative figure, to issue his famous order:

"With our backs against the wall and believing in the justice of our cause, each one must fight on to the end".

Reinforced by seven French Divisions, the British finally managed to hold the Germans outside Ypres.

But again Ludendorff attacked, cracking in to weary French and British troops at the other end of the line near Rheims – and again he broke through and in three days of uncertainty and consternation drove on to the River Marne and within reach of Paris.

BELOW : British forces in Bapaume, France, site of a battle from August 21 through Sept. 3, 1918, the Allied counter offensive would drive the Germans back.

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But all Ludendorff's offensives, though spectacular and horribly menacing, suffered from lack of follow-through and momentum in the face of furious resistance, increasingly inspired by the presence of General Pershing's American troops, fresh to the fight and exuding optimism.

Eventhough his initial resources had been immense, they were not finite and their daily degradation in terms of men, equipment and food finally told on the Army's ability to proceed further.

On 18th July Foch counter- attacked on the Marne bulge nearing Paris, using hundreds of aircraft in an offensive, as well as a reconnaissance role, along with a huge number of tanks. The Germans retreated, though fighting strongly.

Rather than pressing on through, Foch turned north to the Amiens bulge and delivered a similar blow to the Germans in early August, again with tanks and aircraft playing a major role in a relentless attack which to some extent resembled an early version of the Blitzkrieg strategy which Hitler used a generation later to conquer Europe.

This time the German pull-back was more serious – indeed it descended in to a disorderly retreat with some war-weary, demoralised troops jeering at relief units who they accused of prolonging a lost war that was bleeding Germany to death. Ludendorff described the incidents as "a black day" for the Army.

With his earlier losses replaced Haig attacked again and again like a boxer sensing his opponent was on the ropes. The mood was beginning to change along the entire length of the front with the French and the Americans further south pushing the Germans back.

Soon the Allies' momentum from Ypres to Verdun became unstoppable and the whole frontline – almost unbelievably to many - continued to roll back more or less at an even rate.

In late September, British forces breached the iconic Hindenburg Line…. Germany had punched itself out, its reserve was depleted and the Allies were increasingly met in combat by young boys and old men who had been desperately drafted in to battle.

On 4th October, Germany and Austria, seeking an immediate cessation of hostilities, asked Woodrow Wilson, the President of United States, for an armistice. His response was that they would have to evacuate all occupied land and yield to the terms of the armistice as laid down by the victorious Allies.

The German Government haggled for weeks amidst continuous fierce fighting which meant that the Allies never made it on to German soil before the Armistice was eventually signed at 5 am on the morning of 11th November 1918 calling for all hostilities to cease by 11 am that day.

Reaction amongst the troops was mixed. Some, emotionally and physically in a state somewhere beyond exhaustion, either lacked the energy to celebrate or simply did not believe the war had ended. There were others, many, who taking in the full meaning of the Armistice celebrated with great joy – albeit with sadness for all those friends and comrades they had lost.

In London, provincial cities, towns and small hamlets people gathered in great crowds down to small clusters to celebrate a victory which had been so long in coming and gained at such an appalling cost in lives lost and lives ruined.

Joy vied with relief. And when the celebrations were over, mothers, fathers, wives, girlfriends…anyone who had lost a loved one and some who had lost several were left to grieve and remember.

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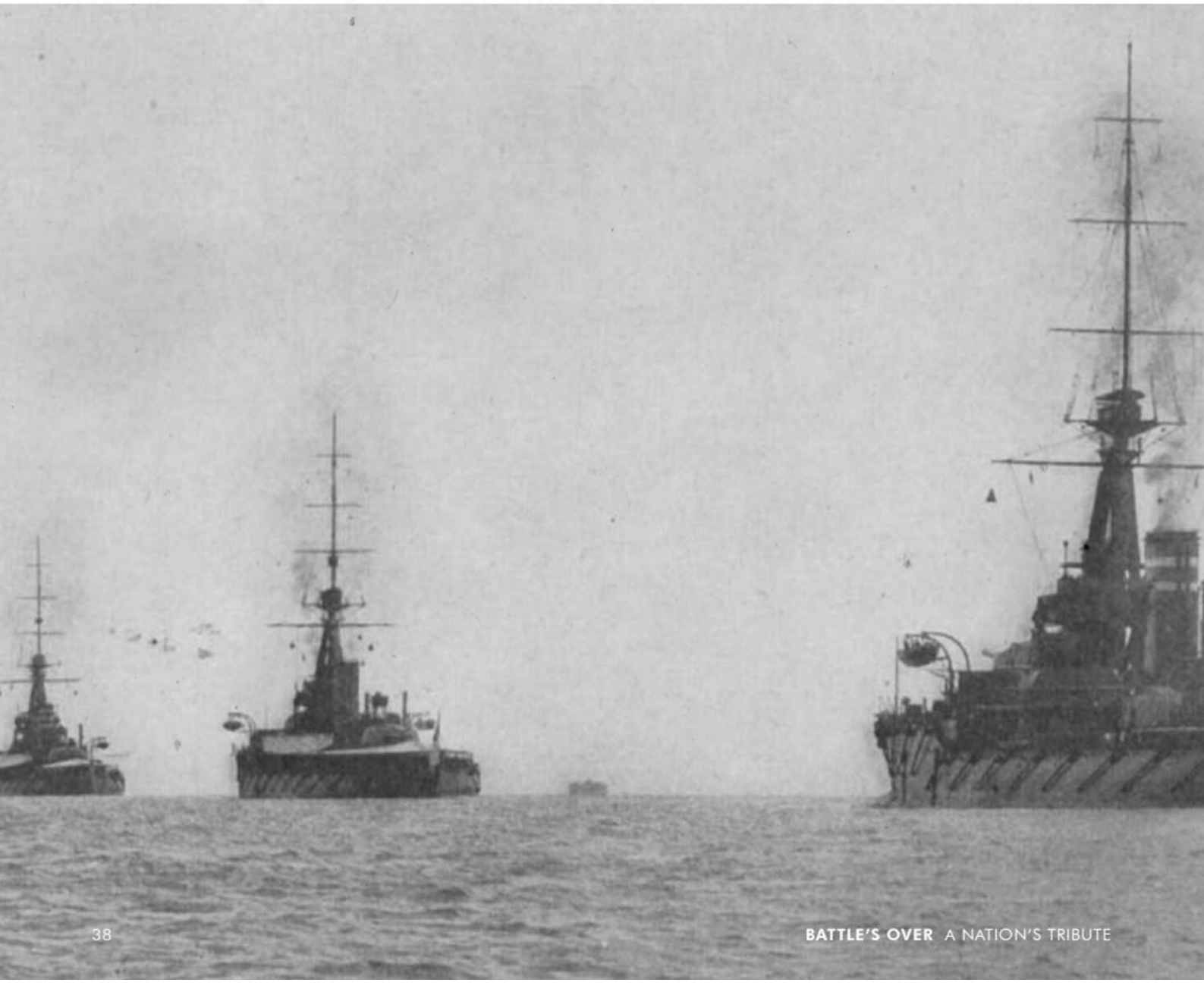
Youth it is beautiful, youth it is fleeting,
Quickly it passes, ne'er to return.
Long is the twilight, drear is the ev'ning,
Sad are the hearts that unceasingly yearn

And for those in the opposing trench……

Schön ist die Jugend bei frohen Zeiten,
Schön ist die Jugend, sie kommt nicht mehr.
Bald wirst du mude durch Leben schreiten,
Um dich wird's ensam, im Herzen leer.

THE ROYAL NAVY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Former First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff Lord Boyce describes how, in anticipation of a second Trafalgar, sea warfare had been revolutionised by advances in technology scarcely imaginable a couple of decades earlier – and how Britain and Germany's rival battle fleets eventually met in the North Sea at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.



Throughout the Nineteenth Century, the Royal Navy was the dominant global maritime force. Then, as now, maritime trade was the underpinning of Industry and Empire, and the success of the Royal Navy was fundamental to the development of Britain as a great power.

By the end of the Nineteenth Century other nations, such as America, sought to emulate Britain's navy, and from 1898 Germany sought to challenge Britain's dominance at sea.

The ambitious new state began to build short range battleships that directly threatened Britain's maritime lifelines.

The higher echelons of the German Navy developed a 'risk theory' that a sufficiently powerful fleet might deter Britain from intervening in any European conflict involving Germany. Conversely Britain responded by improving relationships with other nations, particularly France and Russia, while shipbuilding was increased on a grand scale.

The revolutionary battleship HMS Dreadnought was launched in 1906. By 1912, just before the Royal Navy's shipbuilding programme reached full maturity with the launch of the first of the Queen Elizabeth class battleships, the naval challenge had been successfully met and Germany diverted significant expenditure back to the army.

The gamble had failed, but many of the antagonisms and alliances of the First World War had already been established.

THE HIGHER ECHELONS OF THE GERMAN NAVY DEVELOPED A 'RISK THEORY' THAT A SUFFICIENTLY POWERFUL FLEET MIGHT DETER BRITAIN FROM INTERVENING IN ANY EUROPEAN CONFLICT INVOLVING GERMANY

The tensions created by the rival shipbuilding programmes may have lead the public on both sides of the North Sea to expect a clash at sea of epic proportions, yet the influence of the Royal Navy in the opening stages of the war was subtle and profound.

In August 1914 the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet was mobilised for summer exercises and deployed to Scapa Flow, its main base throughout the war.

This fleet of battleships provided a distant blockade of Germany and formed a shadow of power in the North Sea that allowed smaller and lighter squadrons to operate from ports such as Rosyth, Harwich and Dover.

Although there were frequent actions in the North Sea, lighter forces were safeguarded from sustained interference by the German Navy. German warships could appear only briefly for fear of being cut off and overwhelmed by the Grand Fleet.

Meanwhile, the deployment of the British Expeditionary Force was achieved and sustained with relatively light escorts, but significant covering forces to react to threats – an outstanding success given that the main Channel ports of disembarkation, particularly Boulogne, were only 30 miles from enemy held coast and only 50 miles from key German naval bases.

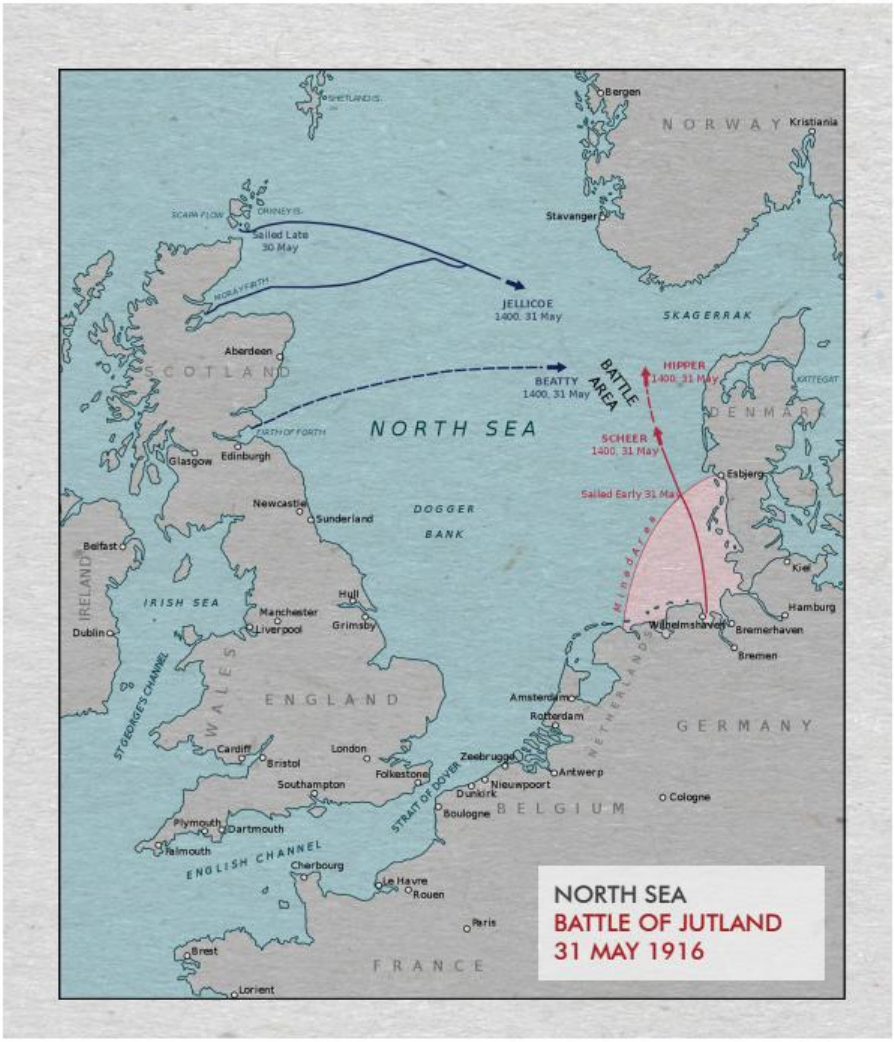
Over 5,000,000 British troops travelled by sea, most to the Western Front but many worldwide, deploying to deal with colonial revolts, which Germany sought to foment and support, and to Gallipoli and Salonika. Throughout the war there were a total of 22 million Allied troop movements by sea.

The technological threat of mines, and the ship-killing potential of torpedoes, limited the ability of the Royal Navy to undertake sustained offensives against the enemy coast, or to deploy into the Baltic, but the German Navy were just as cautious with their battleships.

In the opening stages of the Great War, it looked as though the war at sea would proceed elsewhere: the German Chinese colony of Tsingtao was overrun with the support of a combined Anglo-Japanese naval force; the shock of the losses of Coronel off the coast of South America, followed by the success of the Battle of the Falklands; and raiding cruisers of the German Navy achieving initial triumphs, but eventually overcome in actions around the globe.

OPPOSITE : The 2nd Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet in 1914.

LEFT : HMS Dreadnought, her launch helped spark a naval arms race as navies around the world, particularly the German Imperial Navy, rushed to match it in the build-up to World War I



LEFT : A map of the Battle of Jutland

BELOW : HMS Warspite and Malaya, seen from HMS Valiant at around 14:00 hrs

THE TWO RIVAL BATTLE FLEETS EVENTUALLY MET IN THE NORTH SEA AT THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND ON 31 MAY 1916, A CONFUSED BATTLE THAT EMBROILED 250 WARSHIPS AND OVER 100,000 MEN IN HECTIC ACTION, AND CAUSED CASUALTIES ON A FEARFUL SCALE.

The opening of the second front at Gallipoli, a muddled underestimation of the enemy's abilities, engaged the public imagination as the big guns of the Queen Elizabeth, amongst other heavy units, were seen to pound the enemy defences with awesome potency, if little military effect.

In lieu of a second Trafalgar, the war at sea had been revolutionised by advances in technology scarcely imaginable a couple of decades earlier.

Concerned by the potential for destruction of Zeppelin airships, Royal Navy seaplane carriers brought their aircraft to the enemy's coast prior to the Christmas Day raid on Cuxhaven in 1914.
This raid may have been more impressive than lethal, but the Royal Navy and its Air Service worked with dogged determination and experimentation to perfect flight at sea and create a true aircraft carrier towards the end of the war.

Perhaps more impressive still was the impact of submarines on the conflict. German U-boats and British submarines began to prey on the other's surface warships from August 1914 onwards.

The Royal Navy and British public alike might view the enemy's submarines as operating with a piratical underhandedness, but few could fail to be impressed by the Allied submarines that forced their way into the Baltic, or through the Dardanelles Strait.

The two rival battle fleets eventually met in the North Sea at the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916, a confused battle that embroiled 250 warships and over 100,000 men in hectic action, and caused casualties on a fearful scale.

For the German High Seas Fleet the battle became a brief propaganda success as they were able to stress that their personnel and materiel losses were less than those of the British Grand Fleet. Yet, the High Seas Fleet remained strategically on the defensive.

During the Jutland battle Admiral Scheer had broken off the engagement and retreated once he understood that his plan to locate and destroy a part of the Grand Fleet had failed.

The numerical superiority of the Royal Navy, reinforced by the Fleet's aggressive action and superior radio intelligence, increasingly inhibited German activity.

The German Navy perceived an intensification of the submarine war as the solution to enforced inaction. In 1917 their government was persuaded to implement unrestricted submarine warfare to counter the deadlock of the war, particularly on the Western Front, as well as the debilitating effects of the Allied maritime blockade.

The combination of this blockade limiting and distorting Germany's economy, and the huge demands of industrial scale fighting ashore, meant German military leaders knew that they were very likely to lose an enduring war.

As with their pre-war risk theory, this was a speculative move that relied on the German expectation that Britain would collapse prior to the entry of the United States into the conflict, the other predicted outcome of the submarine campaign.

Although the tonnage of Allied vessels sunk by submarines began to escalate in horrifying fashion, Britain did not come close to collapsing, and the zenith of the U-boats' successes coincided with the decisive American declaration of war in April 1917.

Having begun the Great War preparing for fleet actions, the Royal Navy progressed it with advances in countering the U-boat threat.

The simple expedient of convoying merchant vessels reduced the number of viable targets available to submarines. The Admiralty experimented with disguised merchant ships to trap their U-boat aggressors, and developed the depth charge, first used successfully to counter a submarine in 1916, as well as piezoelectric hydrophones as a means of locating a largely invisible combatant.

The Royal Navy's paravane, a towed device designed as protection against mines, was further developed as an anti-submarine weapon, while developments in aircraft technology meant that they could be flown on anti-submarine patrols.

The hindrance of the U-boat menace in the North Sea was also the thinking behind the ambitious and courageous amphibious Zeebrugge Raid in April 1918, an awesome propaganda coup that alleviated some of the Grand Fleet's frustration, even if it only partially reduced German submarine capability.

With vast numbers of US troops successfully arriving in France without encountering enemy submarines, the full impact of the maritime blockade against the German Empire was revealed.

Germany launched its massive offensives on the Western Front in March 1918 prior to the large-scale US troop deployments, pushing rapidly against the exhausted allied front-line troops, including the Royal Navy's own elite 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, consisting of Army, Navy and Royal Marine battalions.

Yet these offensives could not be sustained with the war materiel Germany had at hand.

Histories have focused on the social impact of the maritime blockade which contributed to German collapse on the home front, but the blockade also distorted the German Army's operational capability. The balance of war-fighting resources could be better maintained by the Allies, and they were in an unassailable position once the Americans arrived en masse.

Despite the vicissitudes of the war at sea, the two battle fleets remained relatively intact, and the German High Seas Fleet remained a potent "Force in Being".

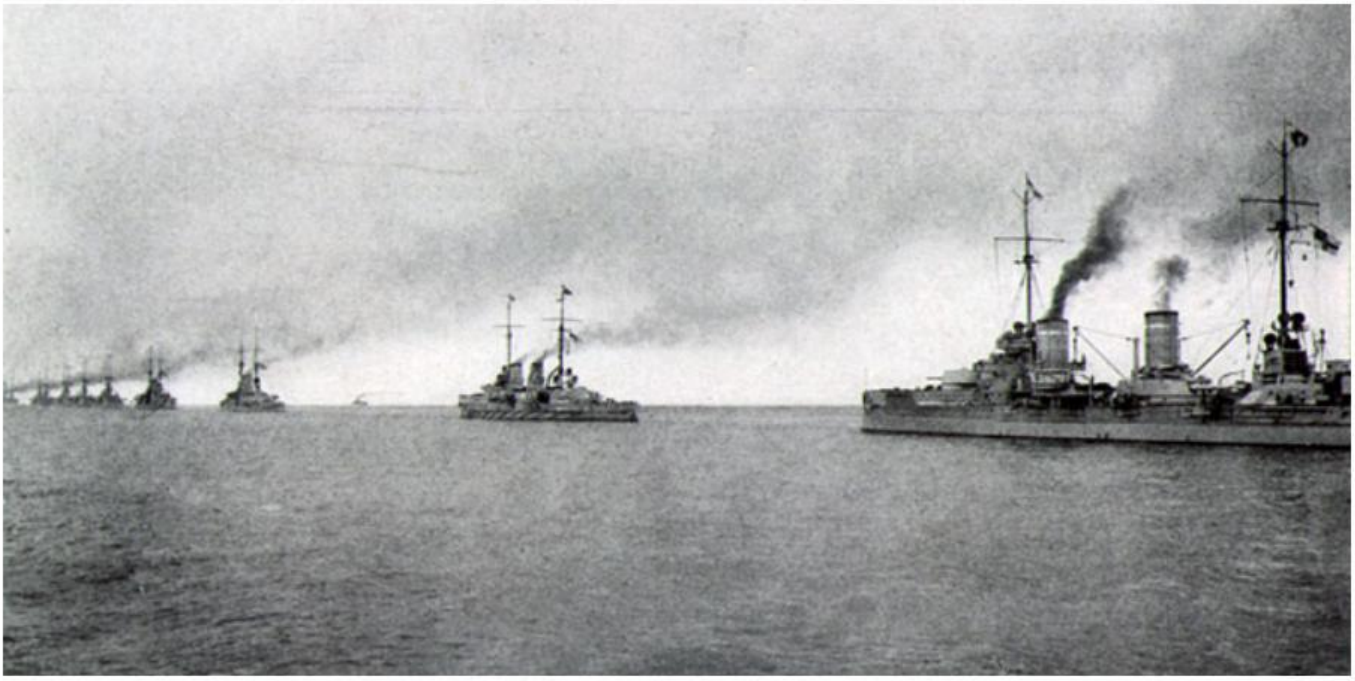
Even as the German Army sued for armistice, the German Navy planned one final thrust against their enemy. The plans caused a sailors' mutiny, which spilled over into revolution in Germany and heralded the end of the war.

The two navies met for a final time on 21 November 1918 as the High Seas Fleet traversed the North Sea towards internment at Scapa. Anticipation of great naval actions had been high in 1914: the war at sea had not followed the expected course, but it had caused 34,000 Royal Navy deaths, exclusive of the casualties sustained by the Royal Naval Division ashore, and almost 15,000 Merchant Navy sailors lost.

Heralded in Britain as a "bloodless Trafalgar", the internment of the High Seas Fleet was a fitting tribute to a force that had stood firm and shaped the Great War.

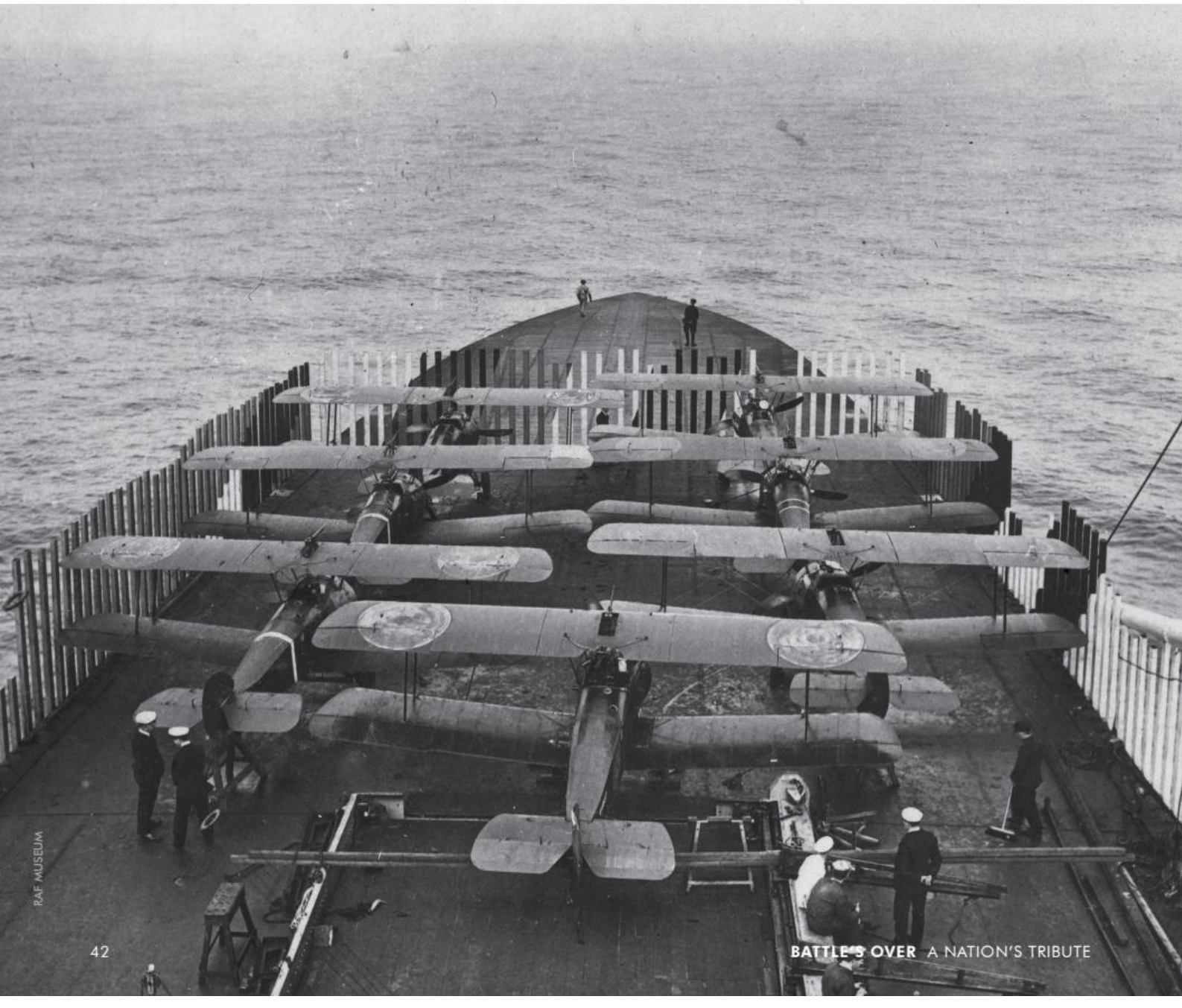
Lord Boyce is also a former Chief of the Defence Staff

BELOW : A battleship squadron of the German High Seas Fleet



THE ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Former Royal Navy Captain and naval historian and author Peter Hore describes the daring, innovative history of the Royal Naval Air Service in the First World War up to its merger with the Royal Flying Corps to form the Royal Air Force.



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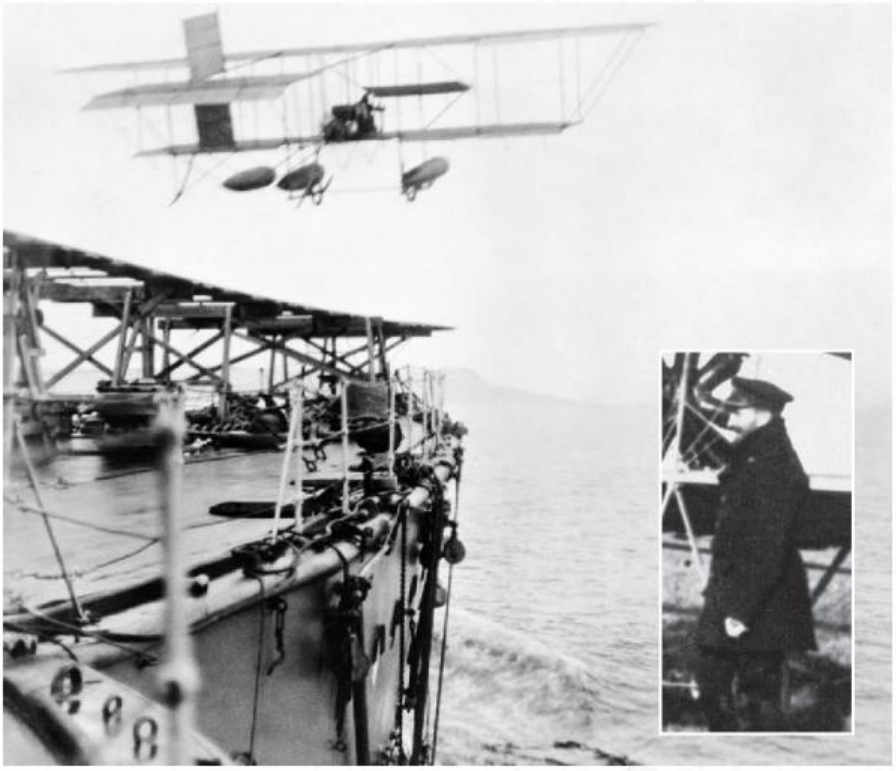

LEFT : Samson's historic takeoff from HMS Hibernia on 9 May 1912, and inset Samson alongside an aircraft in May 1914

OPPOSITE : Sopwith Camels on the deck of HMS Hermes before the attack on the airship sheds at Tondern, July 1918

In 1914-1918 Royal Navy, then the world's leading seapower, also led the world in the development of airpower.

The Navy had warmly embraced the concept of naval aviation, creating an Admiralty Air Department and sending officers for flying training in 1910. The first take-off from a ship was by Lieutenant Charles Samson, RN, who flew a Short S.27 biplane with a pusher propeller, from the forecastle of the stationary pre-Dreadnought battleship HMS Africa on 10 January 1912, using 100ft of specially constructed decking over a turret: within a few months further trials in the battleship HMS London showed that a much shorter runway was possible while London was underway.

In 1913 the cruiser HMS Hermes was converted to carry seaplanes, and by January 1914 the naval wing of the Royal Flying Corps had 135 aircraft of more than a score of types.

When, on 1 July 1914, this naval wing became the Royal Naval Air Service, HMS Ark Royal, the first ship ever to be designed as a seaplane carrier was already under construction. Ark Royal would take part in the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915, support British troops on the Macedonian front in 1916, and in January 1918 attacked a German battlecruiser when it sortied from the Dardanelles.

Once war broke out, other developments in naval aviation followed quickly. By 1914 Samson was commanding No 3 Squadron RNAS, and in August he led his squadron to Belgium to support the Royal Naval Division who were attempting to forestall the German capture of Antwerp.

Samson improvised an armoured squadron to reconnoitre the advancing Germans: one of the cars was a Rolls Royce belonging to his brother, armed with a Maxim gun and side-armour made of boiler plate.

When most of No 3 Squadron's mixed bag of aircraft became unserviceable, they fought from these armoured cars. From this stemmed the idea by another RNAS officer, Commander Tom Hetherington, for the tank (which was designed by naval architects in the Admiralty's Department of Naval Construction): Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, saw the tank as a 'land ship' for carrying the Royal Naval Division into action.

In October 1914 the first strategic bombing was by a single naval aircraft, a Sopwith Tabloid, on airship sheds at Düsseldorf, though the aircraft was damaged and crashed, and the pilot, Lieutenant Reginald Marix, RNR, returned to his base by borrowed bike and hired car.

In November 1914 the Navy ferried a flight of Avro 504s by rail, ship and road to Belfort in France in order to attack the Zeppelin sheds at Friedrichshafen on the shores of Lake Constance, several hundred miles from the sea.

Then, on Christmas Day, 1914, the Navy conducted the first combined sea and air strike, when three seaplanes tenders, HM Ships Engadine, Riviera and Empress, supported by the Harwich Force of cruisers, destroyers and submarines, launched nine seaplanes from the German Bight to bomb German Zeppelin sheds at Cuxhaven.

These raids, which portended strategic bombing and the air-sea battles of the future, showed the willingness of the admirals to adopt new technology.

In June 1915 Sub-Lieutenant Reginald Warneford, flying a French-built Morane-Saulnier parasol wing, one of the first successful fighter aircraft, singlehandedly attacked and chased a German Zeppelin from the Flanders coast to Ghent, where despite heavy return fire he succeeded in using his bombs to set it on fire.

BY 1918 THE ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST AIR FORCES IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD LEADER AND PIONEER IN EVERY FACET OF AVIATION

RAF MUSEUM

In the ensuing explosion Warneford's aircraft overturned and its engine stopped. Forced to land behind enemy lines, Warneford spent fifteen minutes repairing his plane before taking off to return to base. He was awarded an immediate Victoria Cross for his conspicuous gallantry.

Commander Richard Bell-Davies also won the Victoria Cross, on 19 November 1915 during the Dardanelles Campaign, for what is regarded as the first airborne search-and-rescue mission.

During a bombing attack on a railway station, one of two Nieuport 10 biplanes was shot down, and despite the approach of enemy cavalry Bell-Davies followed the aircraft down, landed nearby to pick up the pilot who squeezed into the cockpit, and they returned to base. It was a feat of airmanship that had not so far been equalled for skill and gallantry.

At the epic Battle of Jutland in May 1916, Lieutenant Freddie Rutland, flying a Short Type 184 from the seaplane tender HMS Engadine, spotted German warships and, when his observer, Assistant Paymaster George Stanley Trewin, wirelessed Engadine, it was the first time that an aircraft had successfully carried out reconnaissance against an enemy fleet and used wireless to report its position.

By 1917 the roles of the RNAS included the air defence of London, photo-reconnaissance, gunnery spotting, anti-submarine search and attack, and attack on airships and airfields, and several fighter squadrons were deployed to the Western Front where they distinguished themselves.

RNAS officers used naval ranks with prefixes (flight sub-lieutenant, flight lieutenant, squadron commander, wing commander, etc.) and wore naval uniform but with a cap badges where eagles replaced anchors. Like the Royal Naval Division, the RNAS kept up its naval customs including naval slang, such as "going ashore", cooking in a "galley", and keeping time by a ship's bell.

At sea, the battlecruiser HMS Furious had been converted to an aircraft carrier and on 2 August 1917 Commander Edwin Dunning landed a Sopwith Pup, becoming the first person to land an aircraft on a moving ship: sadly he was killed a few days later. Meanwhile an ocean liner was being converted to become the world's first purpose-built aircraft carrier, HMS Argus.

By 1918 the Royal Naval Air Service was one of the largest air forces in the world, and the world leader and pioneer in every facet of aviation, strategically, tactically, technologically and administratively, and its effect was felt from the North Atlantis to the Indian Ocean.

Every battleship carried several fighters, launched from ramps over the heavy-gun turrets, and ships as small as light cruisers carried a single aircraft launched into the relative wind from a rotating platform.

The Royal Navy was training to using carrier-borne torpedo-bombers to attack the German High Seas fleet in its lairs, over two decades before the air attacks on Taranto by the Royal Navy and on Pearl Harbour by the Imperial Japanese Navy.

All this came to a halt at the stroke of a pen on April Fools' Day 1918. The RNAS which had performed so gallantly and devised many innovative operations,

was amalgamated once more with the Royal Flying Corps to become the Royal Air Force.

A single air force had been advocated, for different reasons, by such eminent and influential figures as Churchill, by Admiral Sir David Beatty and General Jan Smuts, though probably none of these anticipated what the effect would be on the Navy.

Several thousands of fixed-wing aircraft, hundreds of balloons and airships, and some 55,000 men were transferred to the new RAF. The most serious effect was the loss of nearly every experienced aviator to the RAF, which seriously impacted on the Navy's readiness for the next war.

Existing flying units serving with the fleet were given the ungainly titles of Air Force Contingents, which in 1924 the Navy re-named as the Fleet Air Arm, and the Navy was not to regain full control of its own aviation until 1937, but that is another story.

The RNAS has one last hurrah, when on St George's Day, 1918 one of its officers, Commander Frank Brock, an excellent pilot, drew on his family's expertise as manufacturers of fireworks, to create the dense smoke screens which covered the raid on the German U-boat base at Zeebrugge. Churchill wrote that the raid on Zeebrugge ranked as the finest feat of arms in the Great War, and an episode unsurpassed in the history of the Royal Navy.

The last surviving pilot of the RNAS, and of the First World War, was the Canadian, Henry 'Nap' Botterell who died in 2003 aged 106. Botterell flew with the famous 'Naval Eight' squadron, commanded by Commander Christopher Draper. Draper was a flying ace whose exotic career included being an actor, stuntman, film star, and secret agent, and in 1939 he re-joined the Royal Navy.

In his flying career he logged over 17,000 flying hours on 73 types of aircraft, earning the nickname 'Mad Major', and in 1953, to highlight the plight of veterans, he flew up the Thames under London's bridges.

However, the oldest veteran of the RNAS was air-mechanic Henry Allingham who died in 2009 aged 113. He was also the last survivor of the Battle of Jutland, where he had served onboard the naval trawler HMT Kingfisher which carried a Sopwith Schneider seaplane.

In old age Allingham strove to ensure that awareness of the sacrifices of the First World War was not lost to modern generations, saying, "Veterans have given all they have got for the country ... we all owe them".

Peter Hore is the author of a number of books on naval warfare including *The Habit of Victory: the history of the British Navy from 1545 to 1945 (2005)* and *Battleships of World War 1 (2007).*

ABOVE : Royal Aircraft Factory FE.2b of 100 Squadron about to set off on a night raid, January 1918

THE BRITISH ARMY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Former Secretary of State for Defence Lord Hutton takes a detailed look at the British Army in the First World War from the early death of cavalry charges, an absence of mortars and hand grenades to the great innovations which helped carve out victory – the birth of the tank and military air power.

EVERETT HISTORICAL / SHUTTERSTOCK

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LEFT : British WW1 machine gun crew in a front line trench.

OPPOSITE : King George V inspects new recruits of the British Army who will soon be sent to the Western Front in France. At right is the Secretary of War, Field Marshal Horatio Kitchener. Ca. 1914-1916.

BELOW : Maxim gun was the first self-powered machine gun, invented by the American-born Briton Sir Hiram Maxim in 1884

When war was declared on 4 August 1914, the British Army was a small force of professional soldiers about 235,000 strong. It was an Army built on a traditional social structure. The officers were from the upper classes, the soldiers drawn mainly from Britain's urban and rural poor.

By 1918 much of this had changed. Officers were often commissioned from the ranks and were no longer exclusively "gentlemen" in the old style. The face of the Army would change during the Great. War.

In size, however, Britain's land forces were a tiny fraction of the size of the armies of the main belligerents. The German Army was over 2 million strong and the French Army even larger.

The Reserves, made up of the Reserves and Special Reserves of recently demobilised soldiers and the much bigger Territorial Army, added vital additional resources which could be called upon to increase the size of any deployable forces.

All of these would be called into service over the duration of the war. But on their own, they would never have met the demand placed on the Army by the battles to come.

By the end of the war, nearly 6 million men would have served in the British Army – two million more than in the Second World War. And conscription would be introduced to ensure the need for more and more soldiers could be satisfied.

BY THE END OF THE WAR, NEARLY 6 MILLION MEN WOULD HAVE SERVED IN THE BRITISH ARMY – TWO MILLION MORE THAN IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

This was, without doubt, the biggest and probably the most complex organisation this country has ever brought into existence. An army of this scale had never been part of Britain's plans to fight a European war. Its eventual deployment and victory in the field represent perhaps our greatest military achievement as a nation.

Although initially small in number, it was reasonably well equipped with modern weaponry. The infantry had the small magazine Lee Enfield rifle – a weapon which would prove its worth in the extraordinarily difficult conditions of the Western Front.

But there were too few machine guns – only two to each battalion. In a war where automatic weapons would predominate on the battlefield this would prove to be a serious weakness. The machine gun of 1914 was also an extremely heavy weapon requiring a crew of 5 to operate.

The British Army began the war with no light automatic weapons which could be quickly brought up and deployed in both defensive and offensive conditions. During 1915, the Lewis gun – an American designed and manufactured weapon – began to be deployed in significant numbers which added considerably to the firepower of an infantry battalion. Machine gun companies were formed as separate units to bolster the effectiveness of the rapidly increasing number of Vickers guns in the front lines.

The Army lacked two other key weapons necessary for trench warfare. The Army had no grenades and no mortars. The troops had to extemporise with metal cans stuffed with gun cotton and lit by a naked fuse.

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William Mills, an engineer from Sunderland would design the standard Army grenade in 1915, and during the war over 70 million would be produced for use in the front line.

The famous Stokes mortar began arriving later in 1915. These two weapons also added considerably to the fighting strength of the infantry. Both of these weapons are now fundamental to modern infantry tactics.

The artillery had modern quick firing guns. The difficulties experienced by the Army during the Boer War a decade or so earlier – where enemy forces had the new German supplied guns – had exposed a serious deficiency in equipment.

A new howitzer and field gun were rapidly brought into service immediately before the Great War started and this equipment would also prove its worth in France and elsewhere during the heavy years of fighting.

But the British Army lacked sufficient heavier calibre guns capable of destroying fortifications and reaching far behind enemy lines to disrupt troop movements and logistics.

In a war where the artillery would play a vital role, this was another serious problem for the Army to solve. But the scale and intensity of the fighting to come had not been anticipated by pre-War planners.

So the artillery was seriously short of ammunition for the first 18 months of the war. The ammunition shortage was eventually addressed by the mass mobilisation of industrial capacity.

Consequently, when the Battle of the Somme ended in November 1916 the British Army had fired more shells in four months than it had in the previous two years of fighting put together.

The Great War would prove to be not only a trial of strength on the battlefield, but a contest between the industrial strengths of the combatants.

Over the course of the war British factories would produce four million

rifles, 250,000 machine guns, 170 million rounds of ammunition, and over 25,000 artillery pieces.

Artillery tactics underwent a sea change during the Great War. Early strategy would have been recognisable to Wellington and Napoleon. Guns were regularly deployed right up alongside the attacking infantry, often placed in exposed positions and firing over open sights in a direct line of fire at the enemy.

As the war developed tactics evolved to use indirect fire methods, and barrages were developed to smother enemy lines with gun fire.

The Great War would prove to be a war of artillery. Britain started the war a long way behind its opponents, but ended it with the best guns and the best tactics – both of which were crucial to eventual victory in the battlefield.

THE DEMISE OF THE CAVALRY WAS TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY ONE OTHER REMARKABLE MILITARY INNOVATION – THAT OF ARMOURED FIGHTING VEHICLES AND THE TANK.

The Great War saw the total demise of the cavalry as an effective means of conducting land warfare, ending a military tradition that extended back to the beginning of human conflicts. Horses could not survive machine gun bullets or escape unhurt from the devastating effects of high explosive.

The demise of the cavalry was to be accompanied by one other remarkable military innovation – that of armoured fighting vehicles and the tank. Tanks first appeared during the later stages of the Battle of the Somme.
Technically unreliable at first, equipment and tactics soon developed and at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917 demonstrated their potential to break the deadlock in trench warfare. Tanks would revolutionise military doctrine in the decades following the end of the Great War.

Tanks were a British innovation – pioneered ironically by Winston Churchill when he was First Lord of the Admiralty as the Army were reluctant to develop this unproven weapon.

But perhaps the greatest innovation of all was the development of air warfare. At the beginning of the conflict aeroplanes were new machines with no proven role in military operations. They were originally employed in small numbers in a reconnaissance role helping to spot enemy positions for the artillery.

Gradually this evolved into the development of fighter aircraft to deny air space to the enemy and bombers to destroy enemy troop concentrations, logistic hubs and related infrastructure.

By the end of the war Britain alone had produced over 52,000 aircraft. The RAF had come of age.

The Great War, with all its terrible casualties and human misery, was however a turning point in military history. New tactics and new weaponry would lay the foundations for the advent of modern warfare. Nothing would ever be the same again.

Lord Hutton is the author of several books on the First World War, including *Kitchener's Men (2008)* and *Gunners of August 1914 (2014)*

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ABOVE : One of the larger British tanks, the Mark I, spanning an enemy trench. The tank was introduced by the British in 1916, during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette

LEFT : British soldiers getting artillery in position at night – it was often moved to new positions under the cover of darkness

OPPOSITE : English women and men working in storage shed for large shells of a munitions factory. Artillery was the deadliest weapon of WWI, responsible for an estimated 60% of casualties

AIR POWER IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

In the early years of the First World War, Britain's embrace of air power lagged behind that of Germany and France, but as former **Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Glenn Torpy** writes, the imbalance was later redressed by the production of increasingly powerful aircraft and the rapid rise in the size of the Royal Flying Corps – and 100 years ago this year the world's first independent air force was created: the Royal Air Force.

EVERETT HISTORICAL / SHUTTERSTOCK

One hundred years on from the end of the First World War and the creation of the Royal Air Force (RAF), in an age where air travel is now an everyday feature of modern life, it is easy to overlook the excitement – and dangers – that attracted the intrepid individuals who first sought to defy the laws of gravity.

It is still only 115 years since Orville and Wilbur Wright succeeded in coaxing their Wright Flyer into the air to record the world's first manned powered flight; this lasted 59 seconds and covered just short of 300 yards!

In the meantime, men have walked on the Moon (only 66 years after the Wright brothers' first flight), B2 bombers have flown missions of over 40 hours, supersonic fighters are the mainstay of most modern air forces, and unmanned air vehicles have become an essential component of modern warfare. There are few capabilities that have advanced so rapidly and have had such a profound impact on our day-to-day lives – and the way we fight.

So how did it all start – and how did the First World War shape the development of the RAF, the world's first independent air force?

British military aviation started life in April 1911, some 8 years after the Wright brothers' first flight, with the formation of an army air battalion of the Royal Engineers at Larkhill in Wiltshire. This small unit consisted of aircraft, airship, balloon and man-carrying kite companies. Nine months later, in December 1911, the Royal Navy (RN) formed the Royal Naval Flying School at Eastchurch in Kent.

Sir David Henderson
Commander of RFC
circa 1915

The following year, on 13 April 1912, the King issued a Royal Warrant for the creation of a new Service, and a month later, on 13 May, the embryonic aviation units of both the army and navy were combined into the newly-created Royal Flying Corps (RFC), commanded by Brigadier General David Henderson.

IT IS EASY TO OVERLOOK THE EXCITEMENT – AND DANGERS – THAT ATTRACTED THE INTREPID INDIVIDUALS WHO FIRST SOUGHT TO DEFY THE LAWS OF GRAVITY.

The new Service consisted of a military wing, a naval wing, a Central Flying School and a reserve. The intent was to maintain a unified capability serving both the army and the navy, but when Winston Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty he exploited his personal enthusiasm for flight to insist that the RN should have a separate force.

As a result, in July 1914, the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) was created to deliver the specialised requirements of the navy. This bifurcation of capability was to lead to endless friction between military and naval aviation, and at the outbreak of World War I saw the operation of two relatively independent air forces.

Both the navy and the army understood that aircraft were likely to become an indispensable part of their operations, but for a variety of reasons development in Britain lagged behind progress in some of the other European nations, not least Germany.

When war broke out in August 1914, the RNAS possessed only six airships and 93 aircraft, many of which were unserviceable, and could only field one squadron. The RFC arrived in France with just 4 squadrons, totalling some 60 aircraft; there were 105 officers and 755 other ranks. By contrast, the French army put 23 squadrons in the field, the German army 29.

The first two years of war provided a steep learning curve for air forces on all sides. Aircraft technology improved all the time, but aircraft remained fragile, and were subject to frequent damage and repair. Flying was exceptionally hazardous, with few base facilities, primitive navigation and aircraft instruments and the constant threat posed by sudden changes in the weather – and then, of course, there was the enemy!

TOP : A Sergeant demonstrating the operation of a Type C aerial camera fitted to a Royal Aircraft Factory BE.2c, circa 1916

OPPOSITE : Aircrew planning the day's operations, standing beside an Armstrong Whitworth FK.8, circa 1918

Crashes and accidents were routine occurrences to the extent that British air forces lost 33,973 aircraft through accidents and combat during the war, with the loss of 16,623 airmen, either dead, severely injured or prisoners of war.

The situation was exacerbated in the early years of the war by poor training of novice pilots, many of whom had only achieved some 20 hours flying time before being posted to operations, where only two hours would be spent learning to fly their frontline aircraft.

Despite these challenges, events of the war led to dramatic changes in the evolution and impact of airpower over land and sea. The RFC became the eyes of the British army, directing artillery gunfire and undertaking reconnaissance and artillery observation missions over the frontlines in France.

This led quickly to fighter combat – initially with pistols but later with machine guns – and the development of air superiority and tactical ground support missions.

For much of the war RFC pilots faced an enemy with superior aircraft. The 'Fokker Scourge' of 1915/16 saw German Fokker monoplanes, with forward-firing machineguns, synchronised with the propeller, dominating the skies over France.

However, the rapid expansion of the RFC and development of high-performance aircraft gradually redressed the imbalance. Needless to say, the media quickly propelled into the limelight some of the fighter pilot 'aces' (those with five or more victories) who were involved in these aerial 'dogfights'.

The likes of Albert Ball (who was awarded a Victoria Cross, Distinguished Service order with 2 bars and a Military Cross), and the German ace, Manfred von Richthofen (the Red Baron), swiftly captured the imagination of the British public and became household names.

Whilst the RFC focused on operations over France and Belgium, the RNAS championed long-range bombing, carrier-borne operations, torpedo attacks and anti-submarine warfare.

It was also responsible for the defence of Britain's coasts and inland towns, although air defence was not yet a recognised air capability.

This changed in early 1915 when Germany used Zeppelin airships to attack the coastal towns of Great Yarmouth, Sheringham, and King's Lynn, killing 4 people and injuring 16 others.

Although the physical impact of these operations was severely limited by technology, the continuing use of Zeppelins in 1915 and 1916, and a year later long-range Gotha bombers to attack London, outraged the British public. The attacks and resulting civilian casualties led to calls for revenge and a justifiable frustration at Britain's own capabilities.

This factor, along with the increasing demand for the most up-to-date aircraft, experienced pilots and observers, maintenance personnel, and the supply of much needed new aircraft and engines made it apparent that Britain's two competing aviation organisations were inefficient and damaging the overall war effort.

There was little effective coordination of the naval and military air programmes, little standardisation, and a persistent war of words between the two sides over allegations of privileged access to manufacturers.

As a result, in the summer of 1917 the Government invited South African Lieutenant General Jan Smuts to examine British air defence and the overall organisation of air operations.

Supported by Sir David Henderson, the first commander of the RFC in France, Smuts produced two reports in quick succession, the second of which recommended the amalgamation of the RFC and RNAS into a single unified 'Air Service'. Given the circumstances, the recommendations were immediately accepted by the Government.

After a short period of turmoil, marked by a succession of dramatic and controversial senior personnel changes, the RAF was established on 1 April 1918.

Lord William Weir became Secretary of State for Air and Major General Sir Fredrick Sykes became the Chief of the Air Staff. This was despite Hugh Trenchard – often known as Father of the RAF – being the more obvious choice, having previously commanded the RFC and played a major role in developing the use of air power.

It was not until 1919 that Trenchard became Chief of the Air Staff, although in the intervening period, as commander of the Independent Air Force in France, he led the development of air power

for offensive operations and the tactical support of the army, both of which were key factors in bringing about the eventual defeat of Germany.

Although operations on the Western Front tended to grab the limelight, air power also played an important role in the Middle East, the Balkans and Italy, and in many respects set the scene for the RAF's future role in policing the Empire.

By the war's end, in November 1918, the RAF was nearly 300,000 strong and had more than 22,000 aircraft.

BY THE WAR'S END, IN NOVEMBER 1918, THE RAF WAS NEARLY 300,000 STRONG AND HAD MORE THAN 22,000 AIRCRAFT.

Technology had delivered immense improvements in capability, and operations over the four years of the war had convincingly demonstrated the game-changing impact of air power through strategic bombing, tactical support of ground forces and aerial reconnaissance.

It had also highlighted the vital importance of gaining air superiority over both the homeland and frontline. It was, therefore, clear to everyone that the use of air power had changed the face of warfare, and that this new capability would be an essential component of any future military force.

That did not, however, guarantee the future of the RAF; indeed, in the immediate post-war years, it had to fight for its very survival as an independent service against sustained attacks from both the Army and RN.

Fortunately, Trenchard's dogged determination, with the support of Winston Churchill, won the day and the RAF managed to maintain its independence and in doing so set the template for other independent air forces around the world.

Today, air and space power is recognised as a vital capability in its own right and has played a prominent role in every conflict since the First World War – it has come a long way since Orville and Wilber's first flight!

Air Chief Marshal Sir Glenn Torpy GCB CBE DSO is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the RAF Museum

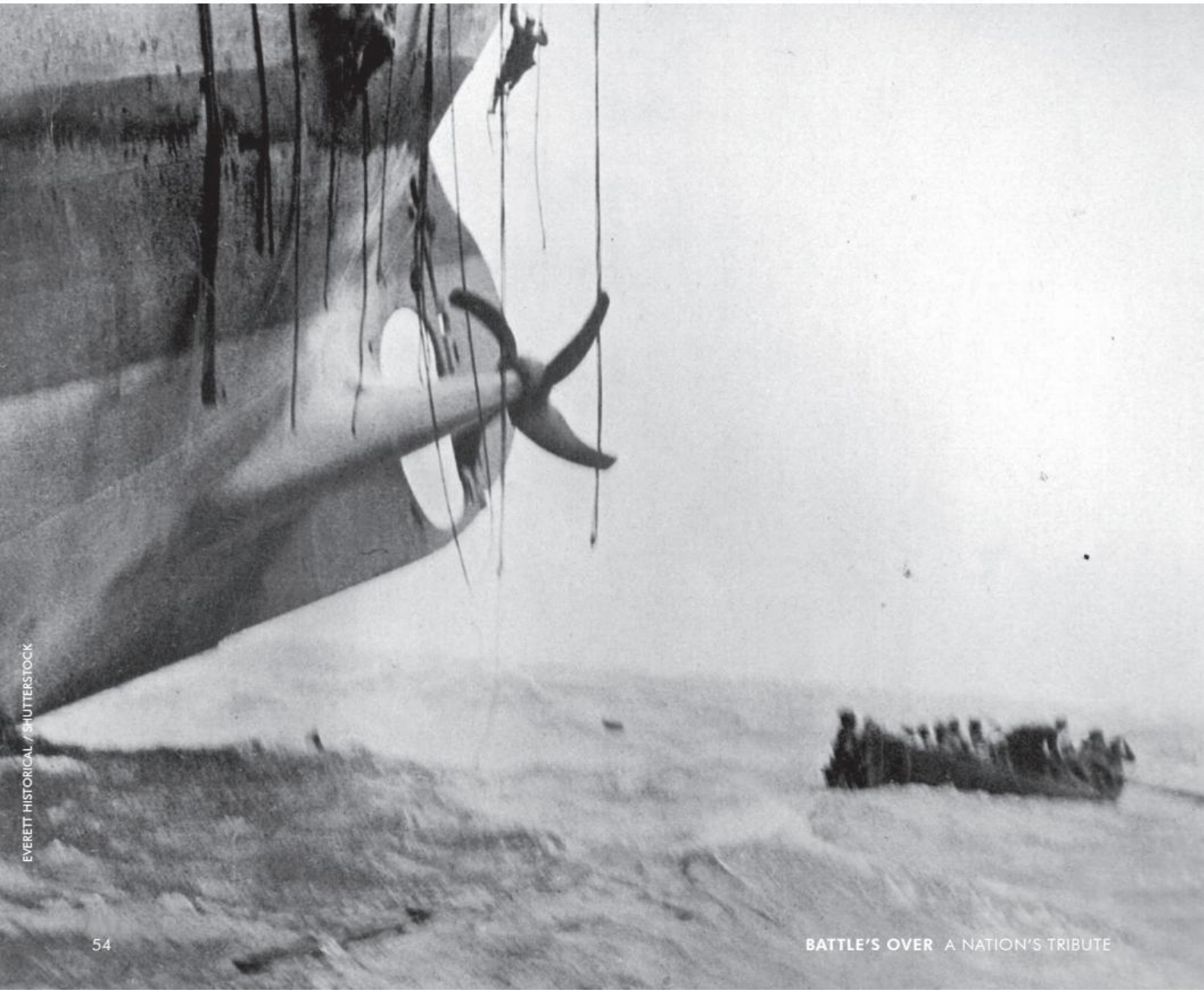
TOP RIGHT : General Hugh Trenchard, often known as Father of the RAF.

TOP LEFT : General Jan Smuts, recommended the amalgamation of the RFC and RNAS.

OPPOSITE : Captain Albert Ball sitting in his Royal Aircraft Factory SE.5a fighter, London Colney, 1917; he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

THE MERCHANT NAVY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

In both World Wars merchant seafarers and fishermen fought the enemy, as well as their constant opponents since time immemorial - the weather and the seas. **Captain John Sail, National Chairman of the Merchant Navy Association**, describes how, in so doing, they kept the Nation and the Armed Services supplied with food and other strategic materials, playing a critical role in the country's eventual victory in 1918.



EVERETT HISTORICAL / SHUTTERSTOCK

The way of life and conditions of service in the merchant marine during the First World War were austere, unpredictable and often highly dangerous with seafarers sometimes not returning home for over two years, after being sunk, surviving and then transferred to other ships to maintain lines of supply and support.

With both Germany and Britain highly dependent on imports of food and other key raw materials, often from distant countries thousands of miles away, it was calculated that sea warfare, involving sustained attacks on long supply lines and blockades, would be highly likely, especially if any land war was prolonged.

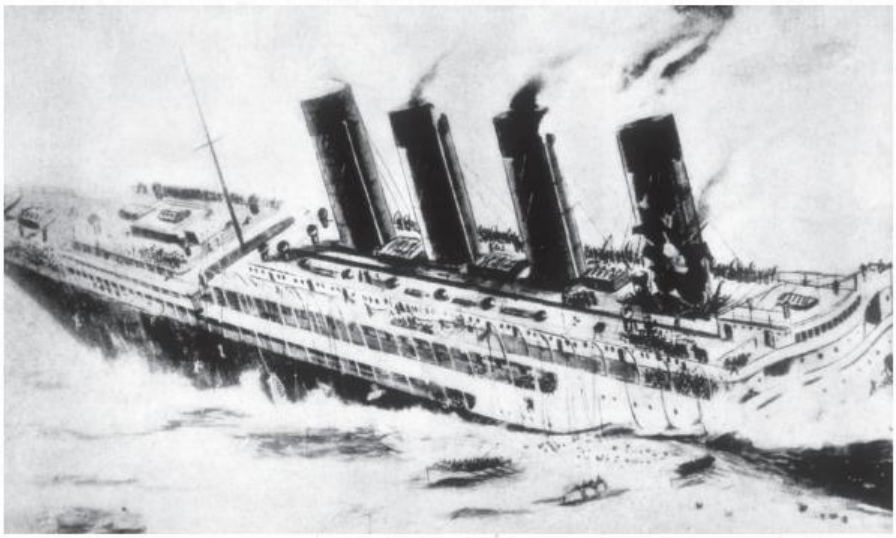
Germany's military planning was predicated on a strategy – the so-called Schlieffen Plan – designed to knock France out of the war within a matter of weeks, ideally before Britain could get involved. Whilst in Britain there was much talk of the war being "over by Christmas".

Both countries were soon to realise that such plans and ideas had been a tragic miscalculation as, by late 1914, the stalemate of trench warfare gripped the Western Front, making a cruel sea war involving vast numbers of defenceless merchant ships and seafarers inevitable. There were also discussions at the time of whether merchant seafarers were combatants or non-combatants.

In the years immediately prior to the First World War there had been increasing concern in the British Merchant Marine, as well as the Admiralty and the Government in general, about the potential treatment of British merchant ships and their crews in the event of war spreading to the high seas.

There was some hope that the two Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, designed to "humanise" warfare might moderate the strategy and tactics deployed against merchant ships, but ultimately, they fell victim to the cruel calculus of total conflict.

In Germany the main drivers of its policy towards the merchant shipping, both British and neutral, were the extent to which they could blockade Britain's critical supply lines without provoking



the United States to enter the war on the side of the Allies due to US losses of ships, supplies and personnel as a neutral country.

THE STALEMATE OF TRENCH WARFARE GRIPPED THE WESTERN FRONT, MAKING A CRUEL SEA WAR INVOLVING VAST NUMBERS OF DEFENCELESS MERCHANT SHIPS AND SEAFARERS INEVITABLE.

In this theatre of war Germany's weapons of choice were the U-Boat and the mine, partly due to the Royal Navy's success in mainly bottling up Germany's surface fleet, either in home or neutral ports. A further driver was the Royal Navy's success in intercepting merchant shipping heading for Germany in the North Sea, mainly between Scotland and Norway and down through the North Sea.

To begin with Germany's policy of tackling merchant ships was mixed. There were appalling precursors of the unrestricted warfare to come with the sinking of the unarmed SS Falaba, belonging to the Elder Dempster Line, on 27th March 1915.

Much worse, on 7th May 1915 the unarmed Cunard liner *SS Lusitania* was sunk without warning off the Irish coast a few miles from the Old Head of Kinsale.

Of the vessel's 2000 passengers and crew, 1198 were killed, sending a chill throughout Britain and causing outrage around the world, particularly in the US – the *Lusitania* had 139 American passengers on board, only 11 of whom survived.

Controversy continues to surround the tragic loss of the *Lusitania* to this day over whether or not she had been formally enlisted to ship arms and munitions. This, however, does not alter two facts: she was unarmed and not warned.

Prior to the outbreak of unrestricted U-Boat warfare commanders operated, at their discretion, internationally accepted "prize rules" which meant that a U-Boat would surface and give the crew of the merchant ship time to leave the vessel before sinking her.

This action was exercised under the strict understanding that members of the crew would not in any way impede or resist the U-Boat's actions, nor in any circumstances radio for assistance - and for those who broke this grim code of honour retribution could be severe.

Merchant ships were attacked by torpedo and then, after the U-Boat surfaced, the vessel, its lifeboats and those in the water may be raked by gunfire from its deck. There was also the fearful possibility of seafarers being tied to the deck of the submarine before it descended into deep water.

ABOVE : The Lusitania sinking off the coast of Ireland after being torpedoed by a German U-boat, May 7, 1915.

OPPOSITE : Sailors escape from vessel torpedoed by German submarine in WWI. Men can be seen sliding down ropes as a life boat leaves. Circa 1917

A Heroic Captain

On 28th March 1915 Captain Charles Fryatt's vessel SS Brussels was confronted off the Dutch coast by German U-Boot U33. Although he knew the risks, he broke the code by trying to ram U33, which had to crash dive. Over a year later the SS Brussels was captured by German destroyers, and he and his crew arrested. Fryatt was accused of being a civilian involved in hostile military action, stood trial and was executed in July 2016.

Amazingly, his was only one of three bodies repatriated after the war… the other two were those of The Unknown Solider, which has lain in the "Tomb of the Unknown Warrior" for almost 100 years in Westminster Abbey, and Nurse Edith Cavell executed by the Germans in Brussels on 12th October 1915 and buried in Norwich Cathedral. Captain Fryatt's funeral took place in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Many German commanders, however, were also less inclined to operate under "prize rules" due to one of Britain's responses to the U-Boat threat – the use of Q Boats.

These appeared as merchantmen with their armaments concealed behind metal flaps and designed to lure U-boats towards them on the surface. When in close range, the flaps would crash down, and the guns open up without warning. The Germans also adopted this practice of concealment with their merchant ships, even making some look like British merchant ships

Generally, attacks on merchant and fishing vessels began quite slowly, but increased significantly as the enemy sought to tighten its attempted blockade of Britain.

In 1914 and 1915 a total of 342 merchant vessels were lost to enemy action with 2,471 men, women and boys losing their lives and in 1916 396 ships were lost and 1,217 seafarers killed. Dreadful as these figures were, they were about to get dramatically worse.

By 1917 Germany was increasingly feeling the impact of the British blockade. At the Battle of Jutland, the previous year, the German navy had failed to break the power of the Royal Navy, and there seemed little possibility of a further epic clash of the two countries' great fleets that might change the situation. The German Navy never put to sea again after the Battle of Jutland.

Meanwhile, on both the battle front and the home front supplies of essential food and other goods continued to collapse. So much so that it was decided in February 1917 to gamble on unrestricted U-boat warfare bringing Britain to its knees before America was stung in to declaring war and subsequently transporting troops and equipment to Europe.

The outcome was that in 1917 ship losses were so severe that shipyards could not match them with new vessels. Indeed, had the loss of men and merchant tonnage continued at this rate, the war would have been lost for want of food, fuel, timber, arms and ammunition.

Between February and April 1917 ship losses stood at 500 with a daily average of 13 vessels during the second half of April, amidst demands from all sides in Britain for new measures to counter the crisis – the latter underlined by the fall in Britain's grain stocks to just six weeks' supplies – 42 days.

For some months a convoy system had been under consideration whereby merchant ships would be escorted in close formation by Royal Naval destroyers for protection. The near catastrophic losses of early 1917 triggered its introduction with the first experimental convoy leaving Gibraltar in early May.

Though there were many, including in the Admiralty, who questioned its workability and worried about concentrating a "target" for a U-Boat or a pack of them, the system worked, and losses began to decline. It was, however, the skills and abilities of merchant seafarers to master anti-submarine warfare techniques that made the difference.

Although the overall number for the year was still 1,197 ships and 6,408 seafarers lost, this marked a significant reduction in the rate at which vessels were being sunk, and the system's impact was clearly evident in 1918 when losses dropped to 544 with 4,122 seafarers lost.

Even so, the Battle of the Atlantic had been a close-run thing – with Britain still needing to introduce rationing in January

John W Davis, American Ambassador

"It is no exaggeration to say that whether in war or peace the British Mercantile Marine has rendered more service to more men of more nations than any other human agency."

February 1921

1918, starting with sugar and followed by fresh meat.

These figures do not, however, tell the full story as they do not include the many who died back on dry land of wounds sustained at sea. To be officially included in the losses a seafarer had, bizarrely, to die at sea which, in a further cruel twist of fate, meant his or her name would not be included in the list of those to be officially commemorated.

IT WAS, HOWEVER, THE SKILLS AND ABILITIES OF MERCHANT SEAFARERS TO MASTER ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE TECHNIQUES THAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE.

Moreover, wounded seafarers whose ships had been sunk would have their pay stopped when the vessel was lost.

Seafarers' livelihoods, and those of their families, depended on the money they earned working the world's shipping routes or trawling the fishing grounds of the North Sea and elsewhere. They didn't join up as combatants; they were brave volunteers. Circumstances frequently cast them as heroes often with little or nothing to defend themselves, not knowing if they would see the morning of a new day.

But beyond these seamen of normal working age there were others facing the same conditions and dangers: women, boys and men long past the age of retirement also served on cargo, passenger, ferries and hospital ships. Meet some of them:

Redan Sydney Jeffries, aged 13, was a cook aboard the fishing vessel Vanguard from Lowestoft. Following an attack on the vessel, he was presumed drowned on 24th October 1917. Around 30 boy sailors lost their lives in the War.

Martha Jenkins died on SS Aguila when it was torpedoed and sunk on 27th March 1915 and **Hannah Owen** on RMS Leinster when it was torpedoed and sunk on 10th October 1918. There were 58 women members of the mercantile marine killed at sea – many of them stewardesses.

Able Seaman Patrick Casey, aged 73, was killed aboard SS Dotterell when it hit a mine off the French coast on 29th November 1915. He was typical of a group of older seamen who believed they should "do their bit".

The merchant marine arguably made as big a contribution to ultimate victory in 1918 as any of the Services – without it the country would have starved and run out of critical military supplies. Their strategic role has for many years been undervalued and insufficiently acknowledged, particularly at the highest levels.

Moreover, recognition and remembrance had, up until more recent times, been a mixed affair. Immediately after the war, the nation's appreciation was led by King George V, who in 1919 made a point of publicly praising "my Merchant Navy" in recognition of its role, service and sacrifice during the War.

Later in 1928, he formalised this recognition by making the Prince of Wales Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets with the Merchant Navy increasingly adopting standard uniforms, protocols and training regimes in line with its status as a "Navy" and being part of the defence forces of the Crown.

Meanwhile, whilst four British Monarchs and many of their subjects have been unwavering in their support and appreciation for the Merchant Navy in both World Wars, and other conflicts since 1945 as well, such as the Falklands War, it was not until 2000 that it was invited to participate in the Nation's formal act of annual commemoration at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.

After further years of campaigning Merchant Navy Veterans became part of H M Government Covenant with HM Forces and their families in 2015, giving them, at last, the same special acknowledgement as all the forces Veterans. We will remember them ALL now the Battle's Over.

The total British losses for the First World War were 2,479 ships and 14,287 seafarers, plus 675 vessels of the fishing fleet and 434 seafarers. The fishermen, in their thousands, swept the channels to clear the mines, but suffered serious loss of life and limb.

Captain John Sail is National Chairman of the Merchant Navy Association

We will remember them ALL now the Battle's Over.

During the "Battle's Over Tribute" the Merchant Navy Association organised the reading of all the 12,201 names on the plaques placed on the walls of the First World War memorial at Tower Hill in London - heroes every one of them.

WOMEN IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Nina Hadaway tracks the story of Britain's women during the First World War from dangerous munitions factories and driving trams to non-combatant military roles on the Western Front – culminating in the passage of the Representation of the People of Act of 1918, the commencement of women's emancipation.

RAF MUSEUM

When war was declared in 1914 the news was met with cheers. When the 'Great War' came to an end in 1918 the bells rang out in celebration. The years in between brought a myriad of experiences for men and women alike.

The First World War has been described as a watershed. As the country marks a hundred years since the guns fell silent and the men began to come home, it is a good time to reflect upon the experiences of women during the war and the impact this conflict had on them.

It is undeniable that with millions of men either killed, missing or permanently scarred, grief and loss was a significant experience shared by innumerable women. The impact of the war upon brothers, fathers, husbands or sweethearts for example was certainly absorbed by their families, not only during the conflict, but in the years which followed.

These heart-breaking and life-changing aspects of the war have often defined the woman's experience of the First World War, but they form just one facet.

At the beginning of the war the pride and support for the country's duty in going to war manifested itself in different ways. Posters of the period depict women encouraging and supporting their male relatives to join up.

ABOVE : Women were expected to encourage their male relatives to join up

RAF MUSEUM

OPPOSITE : On 1 April 1918 both the Royal Air Force and Women's Royal Air Force were formed

Some women full of patriotic fervour handed out white feathers to men perceived as not doing their duty. Throughout the war mothers, wives, girlfriends and friends provided vital support to those serving. This often took the form of sending regular parcels of food or clothing to them. The morale of many a serviceman was sustained by receiving letters from home.

The female population of Great Britain also experienced the war first-hand. The conflict brought an intensity to the running of a household and caring for a family. It was a challenging time with the main bread-winner serving in the war.

The introduction of rationing and rising prices certainly made life difficult. With bombing raids taking place across the country, such as those in London, Folkestone, Hull and Dover, injuries were sustained and hundreds of civilians were killed – and fear was a real battle for those on the home-front.

Loneliness, too, had to be fought, and to help combat this many organisations were set up, such as the Tipperary Rooms in 1914, to bring women together. The Women's Institute for example was established in 1915 to revitalise rural communities and encourage women to become more involved in producing food.

The necessity of earning money significantly motivated an increasing number of women to find work. Others were keen 'to do their bit' and the First World War witnessed an evolution in how this was undertaken.

ABOVE : Southport tram crews during the First World War

Initially many of the roles available were those considered to be within the traditional sphere of 'women's work', for example domestic duties and nursing.

THROUGHOUT THE WAR, MOTHERS, WIVES, GIRLFRIENDS AND FRIENDS PROVIDED VITAL SUPPORT TO THOSE SERVING.

At the beginning of the war multiple volunteer groups were set up and organised to support the country's forces. Organisations like the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) and Volunteer Aid Detachments (VAD) utilised women in non-medical roles from an early stage in the war.

In 1915 the Women's Legion (WL) was created to 'help the army with its cooking and cleaning'. As an experiment, the War Office agreed that the men undertaking these and other domestic duties would be substituted by women.

This was the first time that the concept of substitution was put into practice. The value of this approach was soon realised and the scheme extended from one convalescent camp to others, and in the following year to general military camps in the UK.

RAF MUSEUM

During the war, a variety of new and diverse roles became available to women. In 1916 women were employed to drive service motor transport for the first time. 1917 proved a turning point. In February, the War Office laid down the conditions of service for women drivers in the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Army Service Corps. The previous month a report investigating the possibility of substituting women for men in every suitable occupation outside of the front-line fighting area had been sent to the War Office.

An Army Council Instruction, signed in March 1917, set out the terms and conditions of service for women in specified occupations along the lines of communication and at bases in France.

In July, another Army Council Instruction set out a scheme for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) – the first uniformed women's service. Women were to be enrolled, not enlisted, for one year or for the duration of the war, whichever proved longer.

The critical nature of the man-power problem led to a consideration of women being employed with the Navy and reports examining how women could be employed at home stations, including those of the Royal Naval Air Service were called for.

On 4 February 1918 Admiralty Weekly Orders were issued giving the regulations for the formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service (the WRNS).

Like the WAAC, it was organised into two branches – mobile and immobile. Mobiles would be posted where required either in the UK or overseas. Immobiles were to be employed locally and they would continue to live at home.

With the formation of the Royal Air Force (RAF) on 1 April 1918 it was thought necessary to constitute a separate corps for women because of the specialised knowledge and skills that were required, and which had been acquired.

Substitution continued to also be an important factor. The Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) was established at the same time as the RAF with the RAF Nursing Service created in June. Those women serving with the air arm of the WAAC, WL and WRNS were invited to transfer to the WRAF. Recruitment was also extended to the public. Approximately 32,000 women served with the WRAF during its two-year existence undertaking 50 different trades from pigeon-keeper to meteorologist.

Prior to the war women had been working within factories or had been subject to a rigorous and disciplined work life. After conscription had been introduced in 1916 the sheer number of women taken into the national workforce was unprecedented.

The type of work being undertaken was both ground-breaking, varied and vital. Women became tram drivers, bricklayers, coal heavers and shipyard workers. By 1918 more than 65,000 were employed in the railway industry.

EVERETT HISTORICAL / SHUTTERSTOCK

RAF MUSEUM

Munition workers 'fed the guns' of war which included the building of aircraft and the manufacturing of explosives. The Women's Land Corps, established in 1917, covered three areas, including agriculture, timber cutting and forage.

Within all of these areas multiple examples of hard work, bravery and sacrifice can be cited. Amongst the recipients of the Military Medal and the Order of the British Empire were factory workers and nurses.

THE TYPE OF WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN WAS BOTH GROUND-BREAKING, VARIED AND VITAL. WOMEN BECAME TRAM DRIVERS, BRICKLAYERS, COAL HEAVERS AND SHIPYARD WORKERS.

With the restoration of peace, the prevailing view, that the involvement of women in the war effort had been a necessity, prevailed. The contribution of many women was no longer required.

The British Government, for example, focused on fulfilling its promise to find returning service-men jobs which resulted in women being promptly dismissed. With the downturn in the economy, cut-backs strengthened this viewpoint and curtailed many of the developments which had taken place. By 1921 the majority of the uniformed services had been disbanded. For a significant number of women, a return to a normality which involved running their home and looking after their family was welcome. Others were disappointed to leave their service behind.

Despite the circumstances many had enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to the nation's effort, as well as the new-found freedoms this had afforded them.

They remained committed to helping again should any future conflict take place. In spite of this contraction the post-war period continued to witness an increase in the number of women working in certain professions, such as accountancy. New professions also became available to them.

The impact of the First World War upon women was certainly complex. In many ways experiences were unique while others shared a commonality.

And, of course, the big breakthrough in terms of the rights of women did take place during the war with the passing of the Representation of the People Act in February 1918, which gave women of property and over the age of 30 the right to vote.

This was a major step on the road to full enfranchisement for women. It has long been considered that the Act was, in part, a 'reward' for the bravery and service demonstrated by women during the war and their vital contribution to the war effort.

However, others have argued that it reflected Government concern about a possible return to the pre-war Suffragettes unrest as well as some MPs believing their support for the Act could enhance their electoral support. Whatever the deciding factors the full emancipation of women had begun and was a lasting legacy of the First World War.

Nina Hadaway is archive, library and research manager at the Royal Air Force Museum London

OPPOSITE : Aero-engine production at the Royal Aircraft Factory, Farnborough, circa 1916

ABOVE LEFT : Female Salvation Army worker writing a letter to the home folks for the wounded WWI soldier. circa 1917

ABOVE RIGHT : An Officer of the Royal Flying Corps at home on leave, circa 1917

REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION

RAF Museum CEO and President of the Museum Association Maggie Appleton MBE explores military museums' increasingly emerging role as story tellers exploring collections within a social as well as military context to help understand the people they represent and breathe life and meaning into them.

RAF MUSEUM

WILLY BARTON / SHUTTERSTOCK

BATTLE'S OVER A NATION'S TRIBUTE

Handley Page Hampden TB.I (P1344), Rotary Farm, September 1991.

RAF MUSEUM

Academics and museum professionals have debated the role of museums since they were first founded, and that conversation has broadened and deepened as the years have passed.

Are museums a temple for academics, a club for enthusiasts, a visitor attraction or a community space? The answer is that, depending on their collections and governance, most museums support some or all these functions to a greater or lesser degree, and none are mutually exclusive.

But what has come to the fore over the last decade is the museum as a storyteller. Collections are our raison d'etre – without them a museum is not a museum – but a collection on its own means very little without an understanding of the people they represent and the experiences that breathe life and meaning into them.

For military museums, this approach has meant a shift in purpose. Many now describe their role within a framework of social as much as military history.

Our collections do open up, represent and explore the context of campaigns and war, and that is important, but metaphorically scratching away the layers of paint on our aircraft at the RAF Museum also reveals the love, loss, commitment and sacrifice of the men and women whom we are remembering.

When we pause to reflect at this time of year, we are commemorating people. People who hail from every stratum of society, from our own four nations and internationally, and the physical representation of their stories through museum objects in our inspiring spaces are an emotive facilitator to that.

I cannot count the number of times that I have seen the power of a museum object spark memories and bring long-buried emotions to the surface.

Twenty-five years ago, there was a worry among museum people that the digital revolution would render museums redundant. But that has been far from the case.

LEFT : Interior of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Museum hangers at the Hendon Aerodrome in London.

AT THE RAF MUSEUM'S MICHAEL BEETHAM CONSERVATION CENTRE (MBCC) IN COSFORD IN THE WEST MIDLANDS, OUR CONSERVATION TEAM CARES FOR OUR LARGE OBJECT COLLECTION.

One of its major projects over the last ten years has been to restore a Handley Page Hampden TB.1, the most original surviving example of the Hampden anywhere in the world.

The aircraft was recovered from the Kola Peninsula in 1991 after being shot down during its delivery flight to Russia in September 1942, where its mission would have been to provide aerial protection for Arctic convoys.

But the Museum's approach is broader than the purely physical one of restoring the aircraft; over the last decade the team has tracked down the stories of its final crew and welcomed Hampden veterans, their families and those who built the aircraft to the Museum to visit and remember.

Of the five crew of the Museum's Hampden, three were sadly killed when it was shot down, but Pilot Officer Perry and Corporal George Shepherd, an engine fitter, survived.

Sixty years after the crash, George visited with his daughter, granddaughter and great granddaughter, Beth, who was at primary school at the time.

Beth was studying the Second World War and George surprised the whole family by sharing in some detail what had happened during the last flight of our Hampden on 4 September 1942, something he had kept from the family for over 60 years.

Ten years later, Beth was on the look-out for a hands-on, engineering work placement and the RAF Museum Cosford was her number one choice.

Plt Off E.H.E. Perry and crew beside a Handley Page Hampden.

Beth spent five days in the MBCC working alongside the Museum's technicians and apprentices to help restore the wing box section and the seat where her great grandfather sat on that ill-fated flight in 1942.

George and Beth's story is just one example among many of how museums support people to remember the past, strengthen intergenerational understanding and encourage us to think about choices – military, political and personal - that are made now, whilst contemplating what the future might look like.

MICHAEL R EVANS / SHUTTERSTOCK

THE PHYSICAL SPACE OF A MUSEUM AND ITS COLLECTION CAN BE A POWERFUL EMOTIONAL STIMULUS TO MEMORY

Even though augmented and virtual reality are enabling incredible flight simulation experiences in historic aircraft, and 3D printing will soon be able to reproduce historical artefacts to the same quality that digitisation has achieved for documents, the genuine object retains its allure.

Standing in front of the RAF Museum's Spitfire and Hurricane, which flew in the Battle of Britain, has an impact that only the real thing can evoke. Equally, hearing the last post on Armistice Day at Hendon, beneath the RAF Museum's Lancaster, survivor of 137 sorties, has an emotional resonance that powerfully marks the sacrifice of the 55,000 members of Bomber Command who lost their lives. Particularly in this era of fake news, people are yearning for the authentic.

This impact of the object in recalling memory has given museum collections a significant role in supporting dementia programmes.

Across the UK, museums are working in partnership with dementia and mental health charities and support groups to run programmes both within museums and in the community to engage and connect people living with memory loss.

One woman whose husband is part of a programme at the National Football Museum in Scotland, supported by Alzheimer's Scotland, described the impact of his weekly visits to the Museum: 'I drop off a sad old man with dementia and take home my husband'.

Museums remain among the institutions most trusted by the public. Helping people to understand more recent conflicts through the experiences of those who were there provides a rounded view which speaks with integrity.

Just as historians invariably have multiple – often conflicting - perspectives on historical events, museums have the opportunity and the responsibility to reflect the fact that history is not a binary continuum.

That can be challenging enough for more distant historical milestones, but for recent military events and campaigns, in an ever more complex world where we are portraying conflicts without the benefit of time and reflection, museums play an important role in supporting public understanding.

Moreover, the opportunity for people to reflect honestly about their experience in a museum context enables the individual to be heard and provides a platform for them to share their stories, often for the first time even with those close to them – as well as giving families and loved ones their own voice to share how it impacted on them too.

And for our visitors, witnessing events first hand gives a direct and personal connection that cannot be gained from reading a book, a document or an information panel on the wall of a museum or gallery.

So the physical space of a museum and its collection can be a powerful emotional stimulus to memory, but museums are also going further to collect and share the stories of those who cannot visit in person.

Thus, as part of the RAF Museum's transformation to mark the RAF's Centenary, RAF Stories was developed, an online collector of memories where anyone, anywhere, can upload their own stories and hear those of others. At **www.RAFstories.org** those stories can be listened to, alongside an invitation for the public to upload their own.

Keeping alive those stories of past commitment and sacrifice is critical to both our national understanding and the learning process. Equally critical is the need to gather contemporary stories now.

The RAF's outstanding men and women of today are the legacy of those at the forefront of the public consciousness on Remembrance Sunday; there must be no memory gap for future generations.

So as we stand and reflect, wherever we are, on 11 November, we remember all of those who have fought to ensure our freedom in the past. Moreover, we pay tribute to those who are defending our skies, land and sea, every hour of every day, in the present.

Maggie Appleton MBE is RAF Museum CEO and President of the Museum Association.

FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE AIR

LEST WE FORGET

FREE ADMISSION

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SSAFA

SUPPORTING THE ARMED FORCES, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

There then, here now – and always will be...
Battle's Over Editor Alan Spence examines the remarkable history and work of the UK's oldest tri-service military charity.

THERE THEN, HERE NOW

"TO RELIEVE NEED, SUFFERING AND DISTRESS AMONGST THE ARMED FORCES, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND DIGNITY".

FAR LEFT : Carra, 39 year old ex-Royal Navy, sustained a serious hip injury during her service. She is now mobile again thanks to SSAFA.

ABOVE LEFT : Joe, 79 year-old Royal Artillery veteran, enjoys his weekly visit to SSAFA's Southend Veterans lunch club

LEFT : SSAFA volunteers from Bristol distributing supplies to veterans in need and their families ready for Christmas.

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity has a mantra that rings so true – and ever more loudly: THERE THEN, HERE NOW!

But when was the first "THEN" for what is the UK's oldest tri-service charity?

Well, Queen Victoria was in the 49th year of her reign; Lord Salisbury swapped places with Gladstone in Downing Street; Gilbert & Sullivan's comic opera *The Mikado* premiered at London's Savoy Theatre; and notable first birthdays included D H Lawrence, author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and Clementine Hozier, later to become Sir Winston Churchill's adored wife "Clemmie".

The answer? 1885.

The reason? The death of Gordon of Khartoum. Well in a roundabout sort of way. Major-General Charles George Gordon's untimely death trying to defend Khartoum against the Mahdi resulted in more British troops being shipped to Egypt bound for the Sudan.

And as they left, a letter appeared in *The Times* appealing for support from the public for their wives and families left behind. It was from Major (later Colonel Sir) James Gildea and constituted, in effect, SSAFA's first-ever appeal for funds.

First known as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, SSFA moved with the times in 1919 when, following the creation of The Royal Air Force the previous year, Queen Alexandra, SSFA's President at the time, wrote to Sir James Gildea that "we might and perhaps ought, to add "Airmen" to the name of the Association and that in future our title should be: "The Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association". Or SSAFA.

And so, it was - until recent times when it was changed to SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity reflecting the all-embracing scope of its work.

Its official mission is "to relieve need, suffering and distress amongst the Armed Forces, veterans and their families in order to support their independence and dignity". To achieve this, it provides support to those on military establishments and in local communities throughout the UK, and also overseas.

Although the community of veterans and their families is forecast to fall from over six to well below five million by 2025, demand for SSAFA's services continues to rise, reflecting the UK's increasingly complex military engagements over the last two decades, the huge advances in medicine and therefore incredible survival of many those injured in combat and the military community's shifting demographics. SSAFA has had to evolve to ensure those in need are supported and enabled.

Moreover, SSAFA's research highlights other increasing challenges across all age groups – amongst them social isolation and concerns about the few who have difficulty transitioning from military to civilian life.

One thing though will remain completely unchanged whatever the need – the provision of personalised support delivered through SSAFA's network of over 5,000 volunteers, including trained caseworkers.

Indeed, SSAFA remains committed to providing emotional, practical and financial support to those who need it most; whether currently serving as a regular or a reserve in the Armed Forces, veteran community and their families.

Want to be part of something extraordinary?

SSAFA would be delighted to hear from you, visit **www.safa.org.uk/volunteer** to find out how you can help in your local area.

WORLD WAR ONE – THE GOVERNMENT COMES CALLING

"When the bugle rang out there were two types of recruiting going on. Men answering the country's call and the non-combatants who came in their thousands to serve under the banner of SSFA". Mrs. Wood, SSFA volunteer

100
FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY

When war broke out in 1914, the Government was amongst the first to need SSFA's (as it was then) help. The UK had no welfare assistance to support the wives and children of men killed, wounded or facing other needs, and this was quickly felt nation-wide.

With its network already partly in place SSFA was called upon to distribute the National Relief Fund with its volunteers, quickly boosted to around 50,000, visiting wives and dependant relatives to ensure help came to those who needed it most.

In 1914 alone, the charity helped over a million people. Indeed, at Christmas 1914, SSFA's network was the means by which a vast haul of toys shipped by Americans to the UK was distributed to children around our nation.

SSFA fought for housing for the wives and children forced out of garrison lodgings due to expanding army numbers. They challenged landlords claiming the absence of a worker living in tied accommodation.

It provided nursing services in all garrison towns and cities both in the UK and also at ports overseas.

SSFA also led the way forward on issues which continue to resonate to this day, including provision for "unmarried" mothers which some reactionary elements of the church and government opposed. This meant, in some cases, mothers with their children were living rough and on the streets.

It was a role which helped position SSFA as a major force in benefit reform, including the universal distribution of benefits regardless of circumstances including the introduction of a separation allowance.

To find out more about their history and role in the Great War, visit www.ssafa.org.uk/WW1

Support SSAFA

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity supports the person behind the uniform; those currently serving, veterans and their families, helping more than 73,000 people last year. Sometimes even the strongest among us need help. When anyone in our Forces family finds themselves in need, they can turn to SSAFA - providing professional, highly personalised support. Help is there for the youngest recruit to the oldest veteran – no one's service is ever forgotten.

To find out how you can make a difference, visit www.ssafa.org.uk/legacy

ssafa the Armed Forces charity

ABF

THE SOLDIERS'

CHARITY

ABF The Soldiers' Charity is the National Charity of the British Army.

Originally established as the Army Benevolent Fund in 1944, we provide a lifetime of support to soldiers, veterans and their immediate families in times of need.

HOW **WE** CAN HELP

We give financial assistance to individuals as well as make grants to a large number of specialist charities and partner organisations such as **Combat Stress**, **SSAFA** and the **NSPCC**, which provide support on our collective behalf.

The scope of our work is huge; from providing funding for specialist medical equipment for the 6-month old child of a serving soldier, to assisting with the care home fees of a 105-year-old veteran, our work touches the lives of around 80,000 people each year, sustaining the British Army 'family' both at home and around the world. We are The Soldiers' Charity: 'For Soldiers – For Life'.

HOW **YOU** CAN HELP

From abseils, skydives and 24-hour hikes across the Scottish wilderness, to cake sales, big curries and cycling challenges, there are many ways for you to get involved and support our work. However you choose to support us, your contribution will go a long way to making a difference to the lives of serving and veteran Army personnel, and their families.

We don't receive any statutory government funding, so we rely on the generosity of our supporters to ensure we can continue to be here, supporting the men and women of the British Army.

find out more at **www.soldierscharity.org**

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

As the nation concludes four years of First World War remembrance and commemoration **RBS chief executive Ross McEwan** examines the role and objectives of the Armed Forces Covenant in helping to ensure today's armed forces are treated with fairness and respect.

RBS / HOLTS

I URGE ALL ORGANISATIONS WHICH HAVE NOT YET SIGNED THE COVENANT TO CONSIDER DOING SO IN SUPPORT OF THOSE ON WHOM OUR FREEDOM DEPENDS – AS IT DID 100 YEARS AGO.

Becoming a signatory of the UK Armed Forces Covenant is not a commitment by communities, corporates, financial institutions or other organisations to provide donations on a regular basis to military charities and fund raising events.

It may involve that. Indeed it may involve in some cases organising the fund-raising events themselves. But it's not about enshrining charitable giving in some form of contract – it's about so much more than that….

The Armed Forces Covenant officially sets out the relationship between the nation, the government and the armed forces, recognising that the nation as a whole has a moral obligation to the armed forces and their families which:

- **Ensures members of the armed forces community should not be disadvantaged financially or commercially as a result of the circumstances in which its members live and work.**

- **Recognises that in some cases, such as severe injury or bereavement, they may warrant special consideration.**

In short, that's the over-arching framework of the Covenant. The essential warmth and humanity needed to achieve these moral imperatives are breathed in to it by the 2000-plus signatories, large and small, from all walks of society, industry and commerce and, of course, the armed forces themselves.

When I signed the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of Royal Bank of Scotland, Holts Military Banking, NatWest and Ulster Bank in September 2015, it wasn't just to formally pledge these institutions' support for the Covenant's moral imperatives as they translate into our banking relationships with military personnel – indeed they were already being applied in over 80 per cent of cases.

It was also to document an existing relationship in which both sides could more closely engage and benefit from each other's personal and professional experiences, develop mutual trust and explore together common challenges, such as, perhaps, doing more with less!

The Armed Forces Covenant is taken very seriously by the military and, whilst signatories are under no legal obligation to deliver their promises, there is a firm expectation that all pledges will be met.

To help fulfil its obligations under the Covenant, RBS created its own Armed Forces Network comprising reservists, veterans, dependants and interested employees. It acts as a support mechanism to its members and communicates news about the Group's latest armed forces support initiatives while promoting the Group's military banking services to the armed forces.

RBS has traditionally been a well-established armed forces-friendly institution with many members of its staff benefitting from engagement with the Armed Forces. We constantly strive to do more.

We take our own military heritage very seriously with over 300 branches displaying war memorials in honour of the 1,582 members of the Group's constituent banks who lost their lives in the First World War.

Moreover, we actively seek to perpetuate professional links between RBS and the armed forces by strongly supporting reservists in our own ranks, whilst always keeping a watchful eye out for veterans whose military leadership and other talents could be deployed by the Group.

I am proud to lead an institution which has served the military for over 200 years and so fulsomely pursues the pledges it has made under the Armed Forces Covenant.

And at this time of remembrance and commemoration of great sacrifice, I urge all organisations which have not yet signed the Covenant to consider doing so in support of those on whom our freedom depends – as it did 100 years ago.

As for the work of the armed forces themselves in these challenging times, my admiration and that of my colleagues, is, quite simply, limitless.

THE ORANGE INSTITUTION IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

How loyalty and commitment mobilised 200,000 Orangemen and women in support of the British Empire's struggle.

MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE

During this last four years of First World War Commemoration scarcely the 100th anniversary of a major battle or campaign has gone by in which members of the Orange Institution did not fight and most probably die – such was the commitment and loyalty of the organisation's members to the British Empire's struggle against Germany and its allies.

Initially founded in Ireland in 1795 for the mutual defence of Irish Protestants and in memory of the Glorious Revolution which saw Prince William of Orange replace James II as monarch, the fraternal organisation subsequently spread to the rest of the United Kingdom, especially Scotland.

A strong military tradition and economic migration from Ireland would go on to see Orange Lodges became established around the British Empire in, amongst other places, New Zealand, Australia, parts of Africa and Canada.

Thus when the First World War broke out in August 1914 the appeal to Orangemen to join up and defend democracy issued by Sir James H. Stronge, Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, echoed not just across Ireland, but to Orangemen around the world:

"It is not for Orangemen to limit their patriotism to service on our shores or to wait until the law compels them to take up arms. It is for us to do our duty betimes and with a good will as citizens of a great Empire…."

The outcome was that up to 200,000 Orange men and women from around the world enlisted in the British Empire's armed forces, and its military nursing and medical units – fighting and dying on land, sea and in the air.

Sir James H. Stronge
Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland

MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE

"It is not for Orangemen to limit their patriotism to service on our shores or to wait until the law compels them to take up arms. It is for us to do our duty betimes and with a good will as citizens of a great Empire…."

August 1914

In 1914, all of Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom and the outbreak of the First World War added another layer of complexity to a political crisis which potentially threatened civil war with the recent passage of the Third Home Rule Bill.

Some Orangemen were initially unwilling to sign up to fight overseas, given the perceived threat from nationalism at home, but they largely relented when John Redmond, the Irish Nationalist leader, pledged that the majority of the Irish National Volunteers would fight for the freedom of Belgium.

So with men inspired by patriotism, and often enthused by a sense of adventure, the speed of enlistment in the early months of the war was such that some Orange Lodges were soon unable to organise their usual meetings for want of attendees.

Tragically though, like the families and friends of all men fighting overseas, those of Orangemen were on their way to discovering the First World War's geography of unimaginable slaughter – as names like the Somme, Passchendaele, Ypres, Thiepval became the common currency of conversation in market places, church gatherings and Orange Lodge meetings.

But it wasn't just these and other Belgian and French names that dominated anxious exchanges. There was Gallipoli and the Dardanelles in Turkey; Beersheba, Gaza, Damascus in the Middle East, locations across Persia and Russia……not to mention wherever the Royal Navy steamed in pursuit of the enemy, and ensured vital supply lines were kept open for food and other essential materials.

Kitchener, as Minister of War, was one of the few in 1914 who anticipated a long conflict of three or more years and the consequential need to recruit a huge British Army to fight it – hence he was supportive of the creation of "Pals Battalions" built on existing local links and camaraderie to encourage men to enlist in large groups. The Ulster Volunteers, many of whom were Orangemen, were a welcome addition to Kitchener's new army.

The Ulster Volunteer Force, formed in 1913 had created a disciplined and well equipped force in opposition to Home Rule with a membership of up to 100,000 men.

Assimilation into the new army saw the Ulstermen keep their local identity with the creation of the 36th (Ulster) Division. Localised units such as the 11th (Donegal and Fermanagh) Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers would see local men, who had grown up together, fight and very often die together.

MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE

By far the biggest single source of volunteers was Canada, where between 60,000 and 80,000 members enlisted – encouraged by the fact that the Minister for Militia and the founder of the Canadian Expeditionary Force was **General Sam Hughes**, an Orangeman from Ontario.

OPPOSITE : An Ulster Division Orange Lodge, Nov 1915

When Kitchener inspected the 36th (Ulster) Division in Sussex on 27 July 1915, he told the Irish Unionist leader Sir Edward Carson, "your Division of Ulstermen is the finest I have yet seen." But a further factor which assisted recruitment from the membership of the Orange Order was the influential positions occupied by several key Orangemen overseas – some at the highest levels.

Canada's General Hughes mentioned above was not alone. In 1914 the Prime Minister of New Zealand was an Orangeman, W. F. Massey, or "Farmer Bob" as he was affectionately known, who personally appealed for his fellow Orangemen to fight for the British Empire.

The First World War raged for over four years. When the fighting was over the Orange Institution surveyed with great pride the massive contribution they had made to victory: but it was pride heavily laced with grief and sorrow as the rolls of honour began to be erected on the walls of Orange Halls and the full extent of the organisation's tragic loss became apparent.

W. F. Massey
Orangeman and
Prime Minister of New Zealand

MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE

THE SOMME – AND FAR BEYOND

The first day of the Somme ranks as one of the darkest moments in British military history with 60,000 British casualties, around one-third of them killed. And for the Orange Institution the first day of the Somme – and the 146 days of the Battle that followed it – came to define the bravery and sacrifice of its members in the First World War.

Death visited the 13th Battalion (1st Co. Down Volunteers) Royal Irish Rifles three days before the Battle had even started as a German shell crashed down on the Ulster Division's forward command position at Martinsart, killing 14, amongst them a number of Orangemen, including Thomas Bell, Thomas Brown and William Darragh from the small market town of Dromore in County Down.

On the first morning of the Battle – July 1, the Anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne - many hundreds of Orangemen were among the thousands who charged the German trenches only to discover the prolonged artillery barrage had not achieved its objective of destroying the German defences and in particular the barbed wire that protected them.

The Germans emerged from their dugouts and within moments the air was filled with unrelenting machinegun fire. Amongst those who went over the top that first day were two brothers, Orangemen William and Jonny Logan from Crumlin. William was never to be seen again, but Johnny survived. North Antrim Orangeman Robert Quigg won a VC for his actions on July 1 and 2. Orangemen would go on to win a further 4 VCs during the Great War.

Describing the actions of the Ulster Division at the Somme, the renowned novelist and historian John Buchan said –

"Nothing finer was done in the war. The splendid troops drawn from those Volunteers who had banded themselves together for another cause, now shed their blood like water for the liberty of the world."

But whilst the Somme became emblematic of the Orange Order's commitment and sacrifice in the First World War this went far further than that notorius killing ground – and, indeed, the Western Front as a whole.

It was said that Orangemen served on every battle ship in the British Fleet. HMS Warspite, which fought in the thick of the Battle of Jutland, had an active lodge on board. So, too, had HMS Defence when it was lost at Jutland, whilst Stoker Richard McMaw an Orangeman from Carrickfergus died when HMS Queen Mary was sunk in the same battle.

In July 1916, Lord Kitchener himself was drowned when HMS Hampshire hit a mine in the North Sea. Less well known is that an entire Orange Lodge drowned with him.

Orangemen also signed up for the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). Indeed, an Orangeman, Lieutenant James Alexander Donnelly, was the last person to be killed in the RFC in the Somme area on March 31 1918, the day before it was subsumed, along with the RNAS, in to the newly-created Royal Air Force.

John Cassidy, an Orangeman from near Kilkeel served in the RNAS aboard HMS Hibernia which was amongst the first naval vessels to be converted to carrying aircraft. And later Orangemen who served in the new RAF included three from Bangor – William Eddis, Frank Hardy and William Carson.

Many Orangemen from Australia and New Zealand were inevitably part of the Gallipoli landings in 1915 with the Anzacs at the forefront of an operation doomed to fail for reasons totally unassociated with the bravery and tenacity of those who became stranded on an untenable Turkish beach-head.

In 1917 the United States entered the War opening up another avenue for Orange members to become involved – and many took the opportunity. Amongst them was Sergeant Thomas Armstrong from Brooklyn who in September 1918 was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions near Ypres.

OPPOSITE : A ration party of the Royal Irish Rifles in a communication trench during the Battle of the Somme.

FAR LEFT : Orangeman Lt. James Alexander Donnelly, was the last person to be killed in the RFC in the Somme area on March 31 1918

MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE

MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE

North Antrim Orangeman Robert Quigg

Awarded a Victoria Cross for his actions on July 1st 1916

MESSAGE FROM
MOST WORSHIPFUL BROTHER EDWARD STEVENSON B.Agr
GRAND MASTER, GRAND ORANGE LODGE OF IRELAND

Most Worshipful Brother Edward Stevenson B.Agr
Grand Master, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland

One hundred years ago, the guns fell silent across the Western Front.

The Armistice of 11th November 1918 ended one of the greatest calamities of the modern age. As the smoke cleared, and political leaders began to formulate a peace settlement, millions of families reflected on the human tragedy. The Orange family was no exception.

As a worldwide organisation, the Loyal Orange Institution contributed significantly to the Allied War effort. In total, an estimated 200,000 Orangemen and Women from across the British Commonwealth served in the armed forces or medical and nursing units during the Great War.

The service and sacrifice of Orangemen in all theatres of the War, on land, on sea and in the air, was immense. Many received recognition for their gallantry and at least five Orangemen were awarded the Victoria Cross.

At the close of the War, Orangeman Sir Edward Carson, (First Lord of the Admiralty 1916-1917) stated …

"I have had reports from Canada, from Australia, and from other parts of His Majesty's Dominions, and I believe that throughout the whole of this war, wherever Orangemen have been found, they have been in the forefront of duty, ever willing to give a hand to bring about a successful conclusion of the war….. Many of them were the best we had….. We know they are sleeping their last sleep in France and in Flanders, and another thing we know - that they have left behind them an example which we will try to follow."

1914 1918 SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

On behalf of the Orange Institution, we pay tribute to those Brethren and Sisters who served, and remember with pride, those who laid down their lives in the cause of freedom. Their selfless devotion to duty should be an inspiration to us all.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Once Navy, Always Navy

The Royal Naval Association is proud to be associated with 'Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute'

With over 16,000 members across 300+ branches in the UK and overseas, we are a family of current and former Naval Service personnel, relatives and supporters of our country's Royal Navy.

Whether we are catching up with friends at our regular social events, fundraising, advising on welfare and employment matters, or just providing an arm around the shoulder, our natural willingness to help others stems from the tradition and camaraderie that only Naval Service life can instil.

Everything we do is inextricably linked to our core values:

Unity

Shared backgrounds and equality in rank. We share the same bonds, the same mindset, and even the same language (Jackspeak!). We are all equal. We are the heart and soul of the RNA.

Comradeship

Friends in fun, fellowship and need. Your shipmates will always be here for you, whether it's about a job, ideas for a fun day out or just an arm around the shoulder. We will never leave you or your dependants in despair.

Loyalty

To each other and our dependants. We will always support and look out for each other. Our loyalty is to all our shipmates, our local communities, the personnel and dependants of the Naval Service, along with other charities or organisations with naval connections.

Patriotism

We are proud to serve and proud to represent our country and the Naval Service. Our pride in serving our country never leaves us. Nor do we forget those who have fallen for our country or who fight now. We are deeply honoured to represent them on both a national and international level.

The RNA has been involved with many aspects of commemoration of the First World War:

- Our National Standard led the parade at the National Event at Lyness cemetery on the Orkneys for the Battle of Jutland, our members have been part of many events.
- We have lent the Chapel door of HMS WARSPITE to the National Museum of the Royal Navy - for their Jutland Exhibition running in Portsmouth from 2016 to 2020.
- We are the lead sponsor with the Woodland Trust in the establishment of the Jutland Wood as part of their WW1 Centenary Wood Project. The wood will consist of 6,094 trees - reflecting the number of Royal Navy sailors who lost their lives on that day in May 1916.

visit **www.royal-naval-association.co.uk**

RNA Central Office, Room 209, Semaphore Tower, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LT

THE ROYAL MINT IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Medals and the coinage of commemoration.

THE ROYAL MINT

When Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 it was a game-changer in more ways than one. Bonaparte was finally finished and Britain, and much of Europe, was heading for a 100 years of comparative peace and calm - but there was something else.

The Iron Duke decided to mark this momentous occasion with the production of Britain's first-ever military campaign medal – one for every man who had fought under him at Waterloo. Another game-changer – this time for The Royal Mint.

Throughout its 1000-year history The Royal Mint had mainly, to that point, concentrated on coinage, bullion and the minting of limited quantities of medals marking a monarch's reign or an individual's great deeds – some of them commissioned and produced privately using The Royal Mint's facilities.

But Wellington's decision created a new product line which persists to this day – and definitely kept The Royal Mint busy through the 19th Century with campaign medals struck for, amongst others, veterans of the Anglo-Afghan Wars, the Crimean War and the Boer War.
But this was only a fraction of the demand about to be unleashed by the forthcoming conflagration – the First World War.

Through the War The Royal Mint itself was responsible for producing various military medals, including the Military Cross introduced in 1914.

But by the time it was all over the shocking requirement for war and campaign medals of various sorts had risen to around 15 million, over twenty times the amount produced for those who fought in the Boer War a generation before.

For a manufacturer only capable of producing 200,000 medals a year this was a daunting task. The answer lay in the creation of a new medal factory at the Woolwich Arsenal, where a workforce appropriately comprising many wounded veterans was trained up to produce up to four million medals a year – primarily the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

The Royal Mint, however, remained responsible for the all-important production of dies used in striking the medals, and also played an important role in determining the design of the medals.

The design of both was by Aberdeen-born sculptor William McMillan. He, himself, had seen service on the Western Front, and when it came to explaining the face of the British War Medal he didn't hold back.

THROUGH THE WAR THE ROYAL MINT ITSELF WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PRODUCING VARIOUS MILITARY MEDALS, INCLUDING THE MILITARY CROSS INTRODUCED IN 1914.

He described it as "an allegory of the physical and mental strength which achieves victory over the forces of Prussianism: the horse tramples on the Prussian shield and the skull and crossbones which is the emblem of piracy".

Contracting out these medals to Woolwich Arsenal and, additionally, to Wright & Son in Edgware, North London was not without its problems - primarily the difficulty in achieving a good finish.

Indeed Winston Churchill, then Secretary of State for War, was disparaging of the initial Victory Medal, deeming it a "disgraceful production worthy of a Christmas cracker". The problems were duly sorted.

The First World War's first direct impact on The Royal Mint was the Government's decision in 1914 to terminate the circulation of gold coinage, including that of the iconic gold sovereign.

Within days of war breaking out the Government was printing one pound and ten shilling Treasury Notes to replace the liquidity of gold coinage, and issuing dire warnings that privately hoarding gold was tantamount, according to Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George, "to assisting the enemies of his native land…..more effectively probably than if he were to take up arms".

The public were encouraged to give up their gold coinage, which by 1915 had almost ceased circulating. Production of half-sovereigns ended that year and that of gold sovereigns in 1917.

But in order to fuel the wartime economy huge additional amounts of bronze and silver coinage had to be produced. Indeed, the rise in output from a total of 188 million coins in 1914 to 267 million by 1918 put heavy pressure on metal supplies – necessitating, for example, imports of silver shilling "blanks" from Canada.

In turn, spiralling demand for domestic coinage was a key factor in the decline of The Royal Mint's production of colonial coinage, which fell away dramatically during the War, driven also by aspirations in Australia and elsewhere to produce more coinage locally.

LEFT : Many wounded veterans were trained up to produce our million medals a year – primarily the Victory Medal (pictured) and the British War Medal.

OPPOSITE : This coin is part of a 6 coin set for Stories of War and is not sold separately.

THE ROYAL MINT

During the War, The Royal Mint was also called on to carry out high-precision munitions work drawing on skills developed over the centuries for producing coinage to high levels of accuracy – skills much needed, for example, in the manufacture of precision gauges for cartridges or artillery dial sights.

Tragically, though, that was not to be The Royal Mint's only involvement with munitions in the War. In the summer of 1917 The Royal Mint was bombed by the Germans causing loss of life, serious injuries and much damage, particularly in the mechanical and electrical branch. Amongst those killed was Henry Crabb, a recent recruit to the Mint who was still a few months short of his 18th birthday.

THE ROYAL MINT

Years later the daughter of Sir John Cawston, the Master of the Mint when the bombing took place, recounted how he had come home that night badly shocked by events. "He was violently sick and could not eat his dinner", she recorded in a letter.

Nor was the bombing the only way that the war directly affected the workforce: almost half of The Royal Mint 's 300 employees were recruited in to the Armed Forces causing an acute labour and specialist skills shortage at a time when the Mint was already well over-stretched.

In all eleven workers died, whilst others endured serious injuries. For a tightly knit community this was a heavy blow.

THE ROYAL MINT

TOP : Munitions workers at The Royal Mint in 1915.

ABOVE : Damage caused by German bombing in the summer of 1917.

LEFT : Sir John Cawston, the Master of The Royal Mint when it was bombed.

100 YEARS LATER .....

What a remarkable piece of historical symmetry that The Royal Mint of today, now located in Llantrisant, South Wales, has spent the last five years of First World War Centenary Commemoration telling the story of a conflict in which it itself played such an important role – and in which some of its own employees tragically died, both in battle and at The Royal Mint's own bombed premises.

Working with Imperial War Museums, it has skilfully integrated people – famous and anonymous – and events in to precision designs exploring the changing moods of the war years. From the initial euphoria and recruitment stampede to the horror and despond of total war, and onwards to the joy, relief and reflective sadness of the Armistice. Here are some examples:

First World War Centenary 2018 UK £5 Silver Proof Six-Coin Set, available from The Royal Mint.

Each coin comes with specifically sourced accounts and imagery produced in partnership with Imperial War Museums – who receive a donation from each coin purchased.

View The Royal Mint's First World War Collection at
www.royalmint.com/FWW100

The Royal Mint | Established *for* Tomorrow™

REMEMBRANCE
AND REMEMBERED RESPONSIBILITIES

The Nationwide Building Society's Graeme Hood, a former serving officer in 9th/12th Royal Lancers, and current reservist in the Royal Wessex Yeomanry, explains how the building society movement helped lead the national mood in support of the armed forces a century ago – and how the Nationwide helps perpetuate that tradition today.

NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY

Like many military veterans I feel a personal connection to the First World War through remembrance of my own friends and colleagues who did not return from current conflicts, or those who have come home bearing lasting physical and mental scars.

Although we can only imagine the enormous grief borne by the families of those who lost loved ones in the First World War, that is sufficient for us to remember society's responsibility to support all those who serve in today's armed forces, along with reservists and veterans and all of their families.

The Centenary of the First World War Armistice is a poignant historical milestone for us to commemorate the many millions on all sides who lost their lives in that dreadful conflict – and specifically those from the United Kingdom and today's Commonwealth who never made it back home to their families.

Whilst the poppies and other symbols we use to help us in our commemorations seem so small, temporary and fragile, the personal stories they represent are powerful and permanent reminders of those who sacrificed everything in the service of others, and the defence of our freedoms.

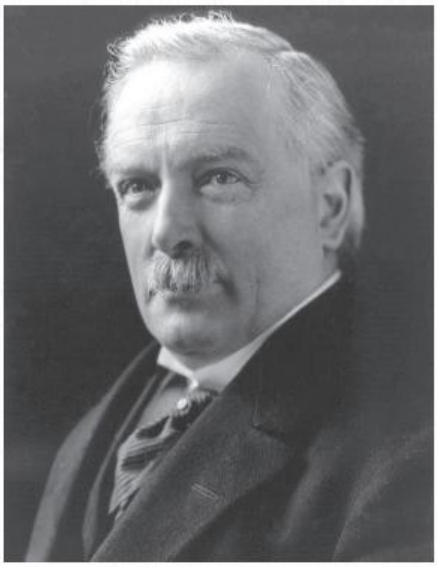
Some of those personal stories, those reminders, are woven in to the history of the Nationwide Building Society.

At the outset of the First World War Nationwide's parent building society, the Co-operative Permanent Building Society, was a much smaller organisation with a permanent staff of seven people based in London, a network of agents around the country and around 6,000 mortgage holders, who we called our members.

We have found records of three of our team who joined the Army to serve in France. Board minutes from late 1916 record with great sadness the deaths of our colleagues Mr W S Hughes, our Brockley agent, and Mr F Poole, our Tadcaster agent – both killed during the Battle of the Somme.

Mr Harry Score survived the conflict and returned to the building society at the end of the war, but more of him later.

NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY



ABOVE : Prime Minister David Lloyd George.

LEFT : The Co-operative Permanent Building Society, London 1918.

OPPOSITE : Graeme Hood, a former serving officer in 9th/12th Royal Lancers.

I personally feel the building societies were leaders in the national mood to support our armed forces. Building societies helped staff who were called up to join the forces by topping up their military pay to previous civilian levels, keeping jobs open for them, and often giving a period of paid leave before they joined their regiments.

LIKE MANY ORGANISATIONS, THE BUILDING SOCIETIES OPENED UP ROLES TO WOMEN DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

Moreover, our own board decided to help reduce the costs of our members who were on active service. We did this by allowing them to change their mortgage repayments so they were only paying off the interest on their loans during the war. Interest-only mortgages were non-existent at this time so this was very much a departure from how mortgages normally operated.

Like many organisations, the building societies opened up roles to women during the First World War. Records from the Northampton Town & County Building Society, one of the constituent societies of the Nationwide of today, show a vote by all the board of directors supporting two new women joining the team.

Like many others, one of these, Miss Orbell, remained in their building society roles long after the war. Incredibly, Miss Orbell's great nephew subsequently became and remained a Nationwide colleague until 2015!

Returning to Harry Score. He was deeply impacted by his service during the War and was inspired to make the world a better place for all.

Like the Nationwide of today, he believed that everyone deserved a place fit to call home. He was instrumental in creating our network of branches which helped more people to save and borrow money, and build or buy their own homes.

These branches helped to support Prime Minister David Lloyd George's campaign of post-war house building throughout Britain.

In 1918 The Co-operative Permanent Building Society had just 6,500 members – many of whom were mortgage members who were building or buying a home of their own.

By 1930, this number had risen to an astonishing 73,000 – a leap in membership which demonstrates how the Society assisted many thousands of people to buy their own homes, and supported private building firms to expand housing supply throughout the country.

I am extremely proud to say that Nationwide's support for our armed services forged during the First World War continues to this day in line with our commitments as a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant.

We have an internal military network of ex-regular and serving reservists to support service leavers who join Nationwide.

We also offer advice and guidance at military careers fairs and our mortgage and branch teams regularly attend military career transition and financial wellness events across the country.

Echoing our support to those mobilised during the First World War, Nationwide is an active advocate of our reserve forces. Not only do we help our colleagues in the reserves by providing two additional weeks of paid leave for annual training periods, but we also protect the jobs of anyone mobilised for active duty.

The Nationwide is proud to support the Forces Help to Buy Scheme, which allows military personnel to use an interest free loan from the Ministry of Defence as a deposit for a home of their own.

And we recognise that frequent house moves are an integral part of service life, hence we enable military personnel to rent out their own homes when posted.

Further we ensure that applications with a BFPO address history are reviewed by our specialists so that serving overseas doesn't affect accessing a mortgage.

Just like 100 years ago, we understand that the special circumstances of military service deserve special treatment, and we continuously strive to ensure that this is the case.

Graeme Hood is a Project Manager in Nationwide's transformation team helping Nationwide meet the needs of its members now and in the future.

Key Points of the Forces Help to Buy Scheme

- The most difficult part of buying a home is often securing a deposit which can take a long time to save up for and is not always easy when you have other things to budget for such as legal fees and moving costs.
- The larger your deposit then, generally, the lower the interest rate you may qualify for.
- The Forces Help to Buy Scheme FHTB scheme is a government scheme offering Armed Forces Service Personnel an interest-free loan towards a deposit to buy a property.
- Eligible applicants can apply to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to borrow up to 50% of their salary, up to a maximum of £25,000.
- Eligible applicants can use their FHTB loan towards their deposit amount, on Help to Buy Equity Loan or Shared Ownership applications if they are also providing a deposit from our current acceptable sources.

You can find out more by calling us on **0800 30 20 10** (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 9am-5pm) or visiting your local branch or via our web site **www.nationwide.co.uk**

You can find out if you are eligible for Forces Help to Buy via
www.gov.uk/guidance/forces-help-to-buy

Nationwide
Building Society

RAF CADETS SHINE
IN TWIN CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS

Air cadets have been much more in evidence than usual this year as the Royal Air Force celebrated its 100th Anniversary and the UK concluded four years of First World War Commemoration and Remembrance.

These two iconic occasions have presented many opportunities at official RAF and First World War events and civic and religious gatherings for RAF Air Cadets to demonstrate the excellence of their musical talents, form slick guards of honour and chaperone dignitaries and members of the public to their seats at formal functions.

And, as this article is appearing in the official publication of legacy and commemoration for *Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute* marking the Centenary of the Armistice, it should be recorded that they were selected to play a major role in the day's events – including piping the Scottish lament "*Battle's O'er*" at 6am on the morning of November 11.

Indeed, the Cadets' Pipe Major Fergus McClintock was selected to play Battle's O'er at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey - a focal point of remembrance for Battle's Over events.

At Tower Hill beacon, RAFAC Warrant Officer Mike Jefferies, the Corps Bandmaster, was selected to play the bagpipes at 6am and Flight Sergeant "Izzie" Hughes, of 1211 (Swadlincote) Squadron ATC, the Last Post and Reveille at 1900.

The Royal Air Force Air Cadets (RAFAC) is a nationwide youth organisation that promotes fun, adventure, incredible experiences and new – and often lifelong – friendships.

Boasting more than 40,000 members between the ages of 12 and 20 years old, RAFAC is sponsored by the Royal Air Force and offers hands-on experience in activities and courses built on experiential learning.

The RAFAC has long been an essential part of the RAF, supplying well-trained and experienced personnel during the First and Second World Wars, and evolving in to the largest air cadet organisation in the world.

The RAFAC comprises the Air Training Corps (ATC), with more than 960 community-based squadrons around the UK and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) (RAF), located in 220 schools. The CCF (RAF) is growing under the Government sponsored Cadet Expansion Programme.

The mission of the RAF Air Cadets is to promote and encourage a practical interest in aviation and the RAF among young people; provide training that will be useful in the services and civilian life; and encourage the spirit of adventure and develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship.

The origins of cadet forces go back to 1859, when several schools around the country began to form armed, uniformed units of adults and older boys to protect Britain in the event of an attack from overseas. By 1900, units had been established in more than 100 schools.

During the First World War, many ex-cadets and officers served with distinction.

Later, with the Second World War approaching, Britain was tasked with preparing for airborne combat on an altogether different scale to that of the First World War when air power was in its infancy.

BOASTING MORE THAN 40,000 MEMBERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12 AND 20 YEARS OLD, RAFAC IS SPONSORED BY THE ROYAL AIR FORCE AND OFFERS HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN ACTIVITIES AND COURSES BUILT ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.

The RAF of the Second World War required a vast number of combat-ready pilots and competent support crew to keep them in the air.

It was thanks to Air Commodore J A Chamier – renowned as the father of the air cadets – that a corps was formally established. Having served in the Army, the Royal Flying Corps and the RAF, Chamier was determined to make British people aware of the RAF's crucial role in any future conflicts.

His vision was to encourage young people to consider a career in aviation, and in 1938, he got his wish: the Air Defence Cadet Corps (ADCC) was founded.

The Second World War saw numerous instructors drafted into the RAF, and cadets were sent to work on RAF stations. They played an invaluable role in the war effort, carrying messages, handling aircraft, moving equipment, filling thousands of sandbags and loading miles of belts of ammunition.

As the Second World War raged on, the British Government recognised the value of the cadet force and took control of the ADCC, reorganising and renaming it.

On 5 February 1941, the Air Training Corps (ATC) was officially established with King George VI as the Air Commodore-in-Chief.

It was during this time that many school-based Officer Training Corps (OTC) Air Sections were absorbed into the Air Training Corps. In 1948, the OTC was renamed the Combined Cadet Force, and the majority of the original OTC Air Sections became CCF (RAF) Units. This structure remains in place today.

By the end of the war – just seven years after the ADCC was founded – almost 100,000 cadets had joined the RAF.

For today's cadets, it's still a serious business, but the RAFAC is not a recruiting organisation for the RAF.

There's more focus on fun, self-challenging activities, citizenship and discovering new spheres of knowledge such as cyber. The RAFAC is a world-leader in the provision of the latter.

New cadets are gradually introduced to activities, allowing plenty of time to make new friends and become familiar with basic training on a raft of subjects including the principles of flight.

Cadet life is, of course, about becoming airborne, and there are opportunities to take to the skies, from gliding (involving three-stage training with the goal of taking a solo flight) and air experience flights in the RAF's Tutor two-seater aircraft and in Puma and Chinook helicopters - and occasionally Hawk and Tornado aircraft.

The new Cadet Aviation Offer gives ground school training on 25 flight simulators (known as part task trainers) all sponsored by the RAF Charitable Trust.

Completion of offer can see cadets move onto winning flying scholarships and winning their wings.

It's fair to say that many cadets do go on to flying commercially or joining the military because of their interest in aviation and their outstanding ability. Yet while flying is a key part of cadet life, it involves so much more. It's also about learning through practical experience and adventurous training, especially in the great outdoors.

RAF Cadets enjoy rock climbing, abseiling, high-level hill walking, mountain biking, kayaking, high-rope work and sailing amid stunning scenery at the RAF's two centres at Windermere in the Lake District and Fairbourne in coastal Wales.

There are also regular camping trips, where cadets develop their survival skills and build individual strengths for working as part of a team. At overseas camps in Cyprus and Germany, cadets swim, sail, and take to the skies in helicopters.

Expeditions to all four corners of the Earth are also part of the package with numerous challenges from building schools in remote African villages to climbing to Everest base camp.

And the RAFACs is part of the International Air Cadet Exchange with cadets visiting 20 different countries each year including Australia, Hong Kong, South Korea and Canada.

Opportunities also abound for qualifications which hold weight outside the services. Cadets can gain their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, BTECS and City & Guilds. They can also access leadership training, which builds confidence and fosters essential life skills, and crucial First Aid training – and all cadets receive heart-start training.

As the services look back at 100 years since Armistice Day and celebrate a century of the RAF, Air Cadet units around the country are keeping their doors open to welcome new recruits.

To find out more about what you can gain from joining as a cadet or an adult volunteer, visit the RAF Air Cadets website at **www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets**.

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

The RAF Benevolent Fund is the RAF's leading welfare charity with a proud tradition of looking after its own. We are there for all serving and former members of the RAF as well as their partners and dependent children.

HOW WE CAN HELP

We provide a range of support aimed at serving and former RAF personnel and their dependants. This includes welfare breaks, grants to help with financial difficulty and getting about inside and outside the home, specialist advice on benefits and support with care needs, as well as support for young people through our Airplay programme.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are lots of opportunities for getting involved with the RAF Benevolent Fund. You can raise money by organising your own fundraising event, completing a charity challenge event and by taking a chance at winning our lottery. Or if you have some time to spare, you could volunteer. You can also get your employees or colleagues involved through one of our corporate partnership opportunities.

We always welcome your support and whatever you decide to do will make a difference – transforming the lives of RAF personnel past and present, and their families.

visit **www.rafbf.org**

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund (RAFBF),
Registered charity in England and Wales (1081009) and in Scotland (SC038109)

THE ARMY CADET FORCE

FUN, LEARNING & CAMERADERIE IN THE RANKS

The Army Cadet Force (ACF) is a place for action and adventure, fun and friendship; open and welcoming to all. Its mandate includes preparing young people for all walks of life and encouraging their active involvement in local communities.

As the Armed Forces help mark the Centenary of the Armistice, the ACF is resolute in its aim to inspire young people to succeed in life, and to help them develop the qualities of a good citizen.

Army Cadets receive fun, progressive training designed to foster confidence, self-reliance, initiative, loyalty, and a sense of service to other people. The training gives them practical leadership skills, and the ability to work successfully as a member of a team.

Today's ACF is radically different from when it first began back in 1859. It equips youngsters with essential, modern life skills, with new emphasis on fostering togetherness – essential at a time when more children are feeling alone than ever before. There is also a focus on mental health, and on helping young people to develop their individual identities.

Yet the ACF's history has positioned it where it is today: at the heart of communities. The ACF was established at a time when Britain was under threat of a French invasion. With most units of the British Army serving in India following the Indian Mutiny, the Volunteers were formed – a forerunner of today's Army Reserve – and many Volunteer units formed Cadet Companies.

But it was a non-militaristic initiative that saw cadet units established in inner cities. Social reformer Octavia Hill believed that poverty-stricken young people living in urban areas could be given opportunities and prevented from committing crimes if they joined a cadet unit. Current data suggests that being a member of the ACF does indeed keep young people out of trouble.

THE ACF DURING WARTIME

Over the years, the ACF has grown and developed to become one of the largest voluntary youth organisations in the country. Sponsored by the UK's Ministry of Defence and the British Army, the ACF is part of the Community Cadet Forces.

It also played a significant role in recruitment for both World Wars. In 1914, the Cadet Force underwent a massive expansion, and the War Office assumed responsibility for the administration of the organisation. It was during the First World War that the War Office extended the earning of Certificate 'A' – a military proficiency award denoting the level for basic training – to cadet corps. To earn the certificate, volunteers engaged in various aspects of infantry training, including drill, map reading, shooting and weapon training, battle drill, command instruction and fitness.

THE ACF IS RESOLUTE IN ITS AIM TO INSPIRE YOUNG PEOPLE TO SUCCEED IN LIFE, AND TO HELP THEM DEVELOP THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD CITIZEN.

The Second World War saw another large expansion of the Cadet Force, and the War Office re-assumed administration in 1942, introducing the title Army Cadet Force for the first time. That year, an estimated 100,000 Army Cadets attended camp for a week that summer.

The ACF annual camp is a tradition that continues to this day. Packed full of exciting and challenging activities, Cadets have the opportunity to try new things, live with their friends out in the field – plus make new friends for life, with numerous detachments meeting in one place – and become equipped with military tactics and fieldcraft. But it's not all military focused, with adventurous options such as abseiling, mountain biking, clay target shooting and kayaking among the exciting activities on offer.

In the intervening years between the end of the Second World War and today, the ACF has come a long way. In 1957, following a government review, the nature of cadet training changed and the ACF, as the modern youth organisation seen today, started to take shape. In 1960, the ACF celebrated its 100th anniversary in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, with Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh in attendance.

BOOSTED MEMBERSHIP

The mid 1980s marked the first time girls were formally enrolled into the ACF. This followed pilot schemes in a number of counties, and today, around 30% of Army Cadets are girls.

Its growing membership numbers – especially among girls – are testament to the enjoyment Cadets experience from working together, developing crucial skills that last a lifetime, and growing in confidence among new friends. Many Army Cadets achieve things they never imagined they could; others take the ACF's emphasis on self-discipline and apply it to different areas of their lives.

Army Cadets have the opportunity to try out an enormous range of activities. While its focus rests on fun, adventure and community, the ACF follows a structured syllabus that can lead to valuable vocational qualifications which are recognised by employers and educational institutions. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award; the Army Proficiency Certificate, which involves being tested in skill at arms, military knowledge and first aid; and vocational qualifications such as BTEC Certificates and Diplomas.

THE MID 1980S MARKED THE FIRST TIME GIRLS WERE FORMALLY ENROLLED INTO THE ACF. THIS FOLLOWED PILOT SCHEMES IN A NUMBER OF COUNTIES, AND TODAY, AROUND 30% OF ARMY CADETS ARE GIRLS.

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

As we celebrate 100 years since Armistice Day, the ACF is actively encouraging more young people to join in the fun and experience a world of new opportunity.

Whether you're applying for college or university, or searching for your first job, the skills you gain as a cadet help you to stand out. For teens, the ACF is an unparalleled opportunity to enjoy experiential learning that looks great on their CVs, regardless of whether or not they want to pursue a military career. The syllabus is broad, delivering crucial life skills that can be applied to diverse areas.

New cadets need to be aged at least 12 and in year 8 at school to join the cadets. In Northern Ireland, cadets must be aged at least 12 and in year 9 at school.

>>> To find out more and register, visit the Army Cadets website at www.armycadets.com

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WHEREVER YOU SERVE, WE SERVE

Julian McElhinney, Head of Business Development at Holts Military Banking, traces the bank's 200 year-old relationship with the UK's armed forces. He explains how today, as a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant and an armed forces-friendly bank, Holts puts fairness and simplicity at the heart of its banking relationship with military clients.

The creation of Holts Military Banking can be traced back to 1809 - four years after the Battle of Trafalgar and six years before the Battle of Waterloo. It was the year when two British cabinet ministers, Viscount Castlereagh and George Canning, fought a duel on Putney Heath to settle their differences over a disastrous military venture against Napoleon in the Netherlands. For the record, four shots were fired between them: three missed and the other hit Canning in the thigh.

At this time, William Kirkland was fully occupied establishing his new business in London as an Army Agent. This entailed taking over the accounts of regiments, distributing pay and subsidies, administering the acquisition of clothing and equipment, and handling pensions and injury claims.

The business quickly became renowned for the banking services it provided to soldiers, and their families, and the Holts we know today started to emerge.

During the First World War Holts held the accounts of around 65,000 army officers and the number of employees of the bank rose from around 40 to 850.

In 1915 Holts purchased navy agents Woodhead & Co. of Charing Cross – itself also dating back to the Napoleonic Wars – and when the Royal Air Force was founded three years later, Holts became responsible for handling a substantial part of the new service's pay agency.

The Armed Forces Covenant

On 15 September 2015, the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, Holts became a signatory of the UK's Armed Forces Covenant, formally recording its pre-existing commitments to the Armed Forces and pledging stronger ever greater support.

It was acquired by the Royal Bank of Scotland in 1939, but retained separate premises in the prestigious Whitehall area and traded as a separate entity until the 1960s.

Through the 20th Century the bank's reputation and ethos appealed to new generations of military personnel. In 1975 Holts opened a new office in Farnborough, in close proximity to a concentration of military bases belonging to all three services. It was here that the bank created Holts Centre of Excellence for Military Banking.

Holts Military Banking's operational mantra is "Wherever you serve, we serve". It aptly conveys the bank's core aspiration for all its clients – to be there for them, wherever they're deployed. There's always the possibility that a client or would-be client will have an appointment with a Holt's banker in Cyprus, Gibraltar, Hong Kong or Singapore – just some of the places they've visited on banking business in recent years.

Holts' banking principles directly reflect those of the Armed Forces Covenant which Holts signed in 2015. Prior to signing it had already been applying over 80 per cent of the Covenant's pledges, befitting of the banks obligation to its clients.

In essence, Holts ensures that no member of the armed forces community is disadvantaged by the nature of their work or circumstances.

In the challenging times in which we now live, banks need much more information about someone seeking a personal loan, mortgage or just wanting to open an account.

However, if their address is not in the UK and not even overseas but on the seas in, say, a Type 45 destroyer and additionally there's no readily accessible electoral register to check out, a member of the armed forces may already have presented an ordinary high street bank with one too many problems.

And that's before they mention that their income can also be a bit like a Type 45 at sea – up and down – due to Joint Personnel Administration pay variances from post to post.

Service recruits from outside the UK, for example the Commonwealth, can be especially affected by account opening difficulties. A problem compounded by the fact the military will only pay salaries in to UK bank accounts. To help here, Holts possess the expertise and experience to set up new-to-the-UK bank accounts.

BFBO addresses are accepted by Holts as if they are UK addresses and the Bank even assists service personnel with electoral role registration - without which personal credit scores can suffer.

Meanwhile, letting mortgaged properties is often a frequent and necessary requirement for service personnel, but it can be both complicated and expensive given tighter government and mortgage company regulations. Holt's military mortgages have been provided with free permission to let for around 20 years, greatly simplifying life for members of the armed forces and their families at hectic times, and at no cost.

These are only a few of the issues which military personnel can face if their financial affairs are not in the hands of a bank which understands the machinations of service life. A bank that has the structures and, more importantly, people in place to respond to them.

In an era which has seen the decline of account-dedicated managers and in their place the rise of call centres, Holts prides itself on having bank personnel available during UK business hours who know a customer's account, are well-versed in military banking and will personally take the call.

Holts believes in "through life" banking. The process starts early with the bank encouraging new recruits and officer cadets to set up accounts at the earliest opportunity – in the latter before transitioning from civilian to military life.

While all ranks receive Holts' high level of personal service, there are additional services available to senior military personnel who may, for example, need the assistance of a personal financial advisor or specialist investment advice.

As an Army Reservist, I feel a great sense of privilege and pride to work for an organisation which takes its responsibilities towards the UK armed forces so seriously. From the provision of specialised military banking services based on simplicity and fairness, to wider support. This includes staff involvement in community events on Remembrance Day, corporate sponsorship of the UK's Armed Forces Day and active encouragement and backing for reservists.

The bank's in-house forces network is drawn from veterans, reservists, dependants and other interested employees from across the group. These individuals further strengthen and deepen a relationship which aspires to even greater achievements.

Lt. Colonel Julian McElhinney is the most senior reservist employed by Holts. Commissioned into The Black Watch in 1997, he served in Northern Ireland, the Balkans and Iraq. In 2007 he took up his commission in the Army Reserves where he has occupied a series of senior positions, most recently as Commanding Officer of the 6th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

HOLT'S
MILITARY
BANKING

PHIL NORTHEY
MANAGING DIRECTOR
HOLTS MILITARY BANKING

Phil Northey
Managing Director
Holts Military Banking

The last four years of official First World War Commemoration and Remembrance, culminating in the Centenary of the Armistice on November 11, serve as a reminder of the great sacrifices that our Armed Forces are called upon to make in time of conflict, and the debt and respect we owe them for defending our country and the freedoms and liberties we are privileged to enjoy.

In paying tribute to the Fallen of the First World at this poignant time, I am also conscious of the suffering and losses which our Armed Forces have endured through the 100 years since the guns fell silent on the morning of 11 November 1918.

And how our service men and women continue to daily face high levels of risk in dangerous deployments around the world – for which they require our unremitting support and respect.

L Holding Limited

TAI WEE KUANG
MANAGING DIRECTOR
L HOLDING LIMITED

World War 1 pitted the allied powers, including Britain, France and Russia, against Germany. After years of fighting, the male populations were depleted. Soldiers were hunkered in trenches carved into the countryside of Europe. The allies needed help, and it came from China.

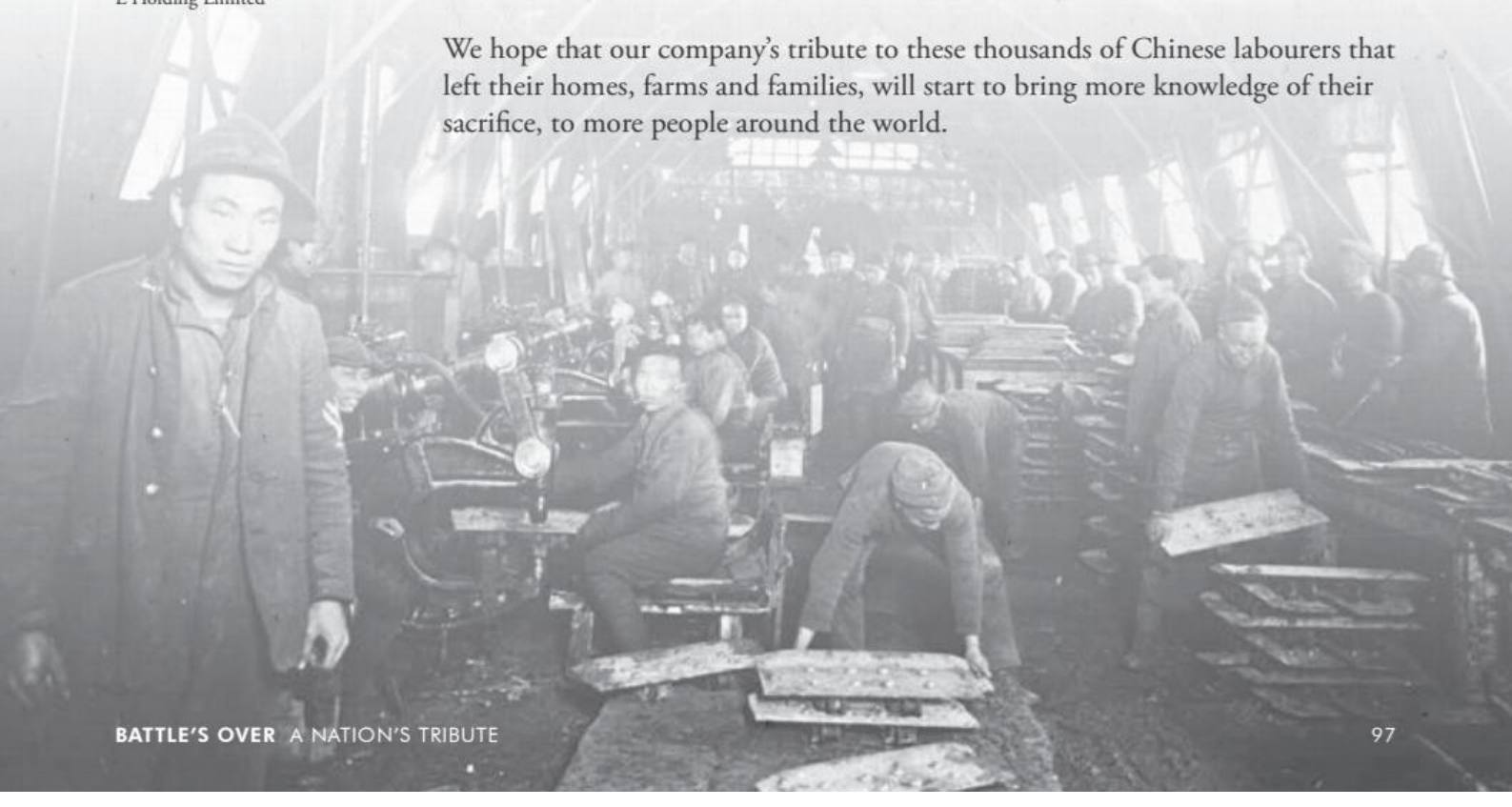
British recruitment began in November 1916 in Qingdao China. By trains and ships, the Chinese made their way to Europe, with thousands dying along the way.

Chinese workers dug trenches, repaired tanks in Normandy, assembled shells for artillery as well as transporting munitions, unloading supplies and war material. They ventured farther afield, too.

The story of the largest and longest-serving non-European labour contingent in the war has largely been forgotten but is slowly being rediscovered in recent years almost a century later. It is the story of farmers, intellectuals and young students assisting the war effort during the dark and dreadful days of war.

We hope that our company's tribute to these thousands of Chinese labourers that left their homes, farms and families, will start to bring more knowledge of their sacrifice, to more people around the world.

Tai Wee Kuang
Director
L Holding Limited



THE ARMED FORCES AND UNIVERSITIES

The Armed Forces and the University of Wolverhampton have forged a strong partnership centred on the provision of high quality, relevant courses for serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families.

The University's educational mission is "to support serving Armed Forces personnel, Veterans, Reservists and their Families by providing quality courses designed to enhance personal and professional development, translating their knowledge and experience in to nationally and internationally recognised qualifications that can be transferred in to their role in the Armed Forces and future careers".

The list of undergraduate and post graduate courses on offer to the military speaks well of this mission. In addition to such subjects as mechanical engineering and business administration, it also includes a BSc Honours Course in the Armed Forces studying, amongst other subjects, Britain's military capabilities and the history of warfare.

And amongst other highly relevant subjects are postgraduate certificate and MSc courses in Emergency Planning, Resilience and Response.

With the world's experiences of natural, man-made and terrorist emergencies clearly demonstrating the need for advanced level understanding of this critical area, these courses have been designed to help maximise the effectiveness of planning, response and recovery frameworks.

Such courses, delivered to members of all three services, often take place in association with nearby RAF Cosford, where the University continues to build a close relationship, sponsoring the base's annual Spring air show which this year marked the Centenary of the Royal Air Force with a 100 aircraft display in front of more than 50,000 spectators.

But the University's relationship with the military extends substantially beyond its core educational role. A signatory of the Government's Armed Forces Covenant, the University provides a wide variety of assistance to the military community, including support for sick or injured service leavers or veterans seeking to develop new skills, find work placements and seek out new careers.

THE UNIVERSITY'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION IS TO SUPPORT SERVING ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL, VETERANS, RESERVISTS AND THEIR FAMILIES BY PROVIDING QUALITY COURSES DESIGNED TO ENHANCE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The University is part of Universities In Support of Wounded, Injured and Sick (WIS) Service Personnel, a national network of universities which supports service leavers or veterans who are wounded, injured or sick or facing other barriers to employment.

As with the other members of the network UoW helps those qualifying for the WIS Service with customised visits to the University to be become familiarised with both job and educational opportunities which will help them successfully return to civilian life. Similar opportunities are also available to military wives facing barriers to employment.

The University has also launched a business start-up programme for the "unsung" heroes of the armed force's community – dependants of those serving in the forces (see Box: Do you want to be your own Boss?).

Add a very active student Army Reserve Platoon and areas of cutting edge research and development across the University of direct relevance to national security, and the overall relationship between UoW and the Armed Forces takes on a very holistic feel – and is a tribute to the aspirations of both parties as they aspire to maximise support for Armed Forces personnel and their families, as well as leavers and veterans.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

DO YOU WANT TO BE YOUR OWN BOSS?

For the wives of armed forces personnel finding work or pursuing the same career can be difficult as they move with their husband and children from one base to another – not just within the UK, but often around the world where there can also be other factors that come in to play, for example security considerations.

So, as the University says in its introduction to its business start-up programme, "Do you want to be your own boss?" – the idea being that dependants develop skills to run their own business which can counter the negatives of constantly shifting geography and help support the family finances.

Depending on the nature of the business and the level of involvement of others, running a business can additionally help dependants build new friendship and social circles.

The 10-month business start-up and mentoring courses are run by experienced mentors and have been developed in association with HSBC. Participation is free, with the exception of travel and subsistence expenses.

Subject areas include business planning, market research, marketing, finance and sales/networking skills, and the programme has resulted in the creation of a range of new businesses covering, for example, design, photography and public relations.

Whilst originally aimed at dependants, the programme is also open to veterans and reservists

THE UOW ARMY PLATOON

Another strong connector between the University and the Armed Forces is the UOW Army Reserve Platoon, which the University actively encourages students to join not only as part of its strong partnership with the Armed Forces, but also for the many personal benefits and life skills it brings to students.

These include boosting fitness, confidence, organisational abilities and experiential learning both in the UK and overseas Summer Camps where accelerated training can help students qualify for the Army's Reserve.




CENTRE FOR CYBER SECURITY

The Armed Forces and National Security are inseparable. So are, these days, National Security and Cyber Security. UoW already has a Cyber Security Research Institute dedicated to this fundamentally important area, and is in the process of expanding and broadening its operations through a joint venture with Herefordshire Council.

In July this year the two organisations were jointly awarded funding totalling £9m to set up a new Centre for Cyber Security in Hereford offering high quality research facilities through the University's Cyber Security Research Institute, as well as providing offices for cyber businesses and advanced cyber training facilities designed to counter cyberspace threats.

Roughly half the funding comes from UoW and Hereford Council with the balance from the European Regional Development Fund and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and the Centre will be located at Skylon Park in the Hereford Enterprise Zone.



"The new centre will organise, facilitate and support the development of cyber security on a global scale, whilst at the same time present us with opportunities to develop high quality academic and vocational education and training programmes to address the digital skills shortage being experienced nationally"

Professor Ian Oakes,
Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University,

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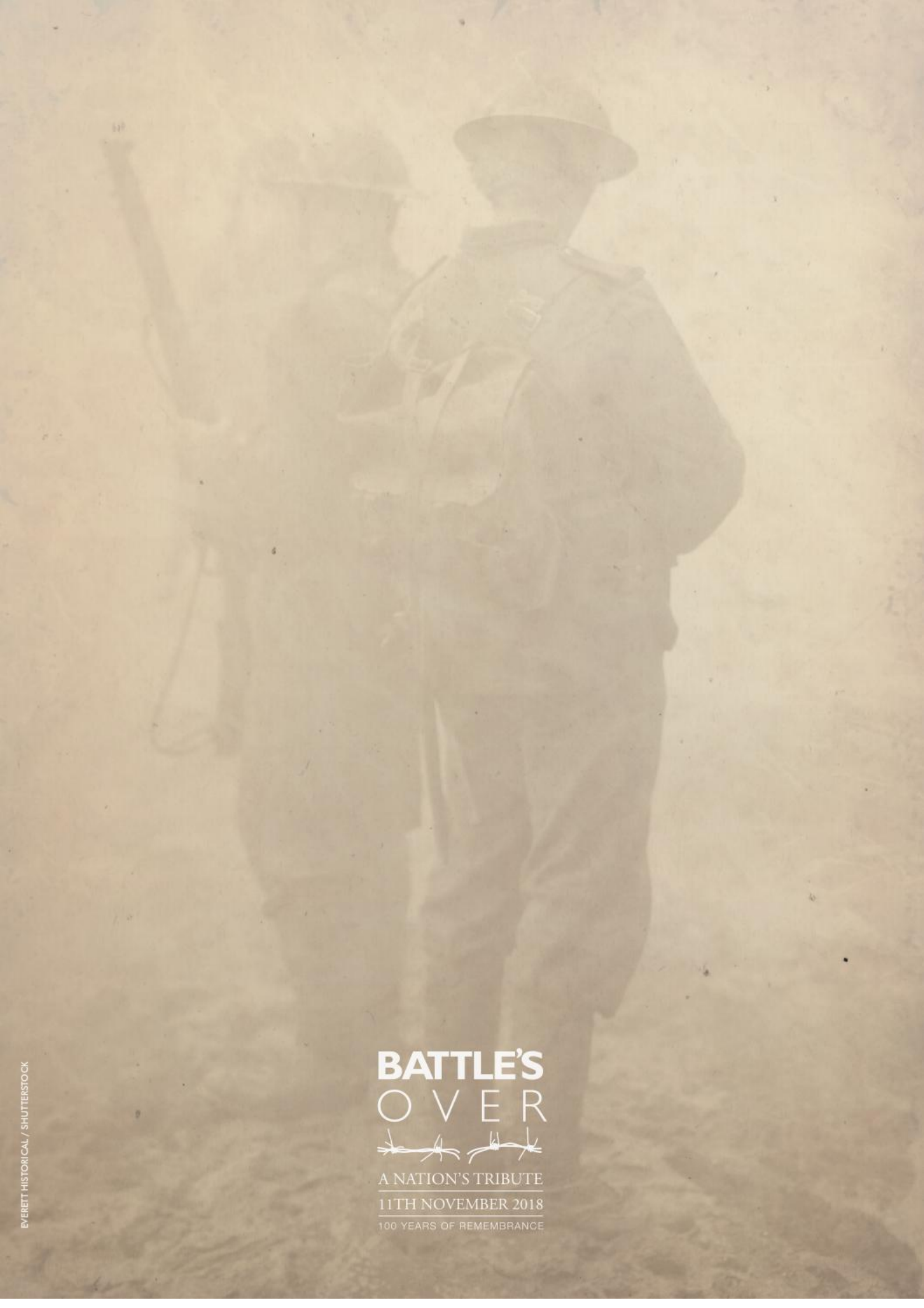

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