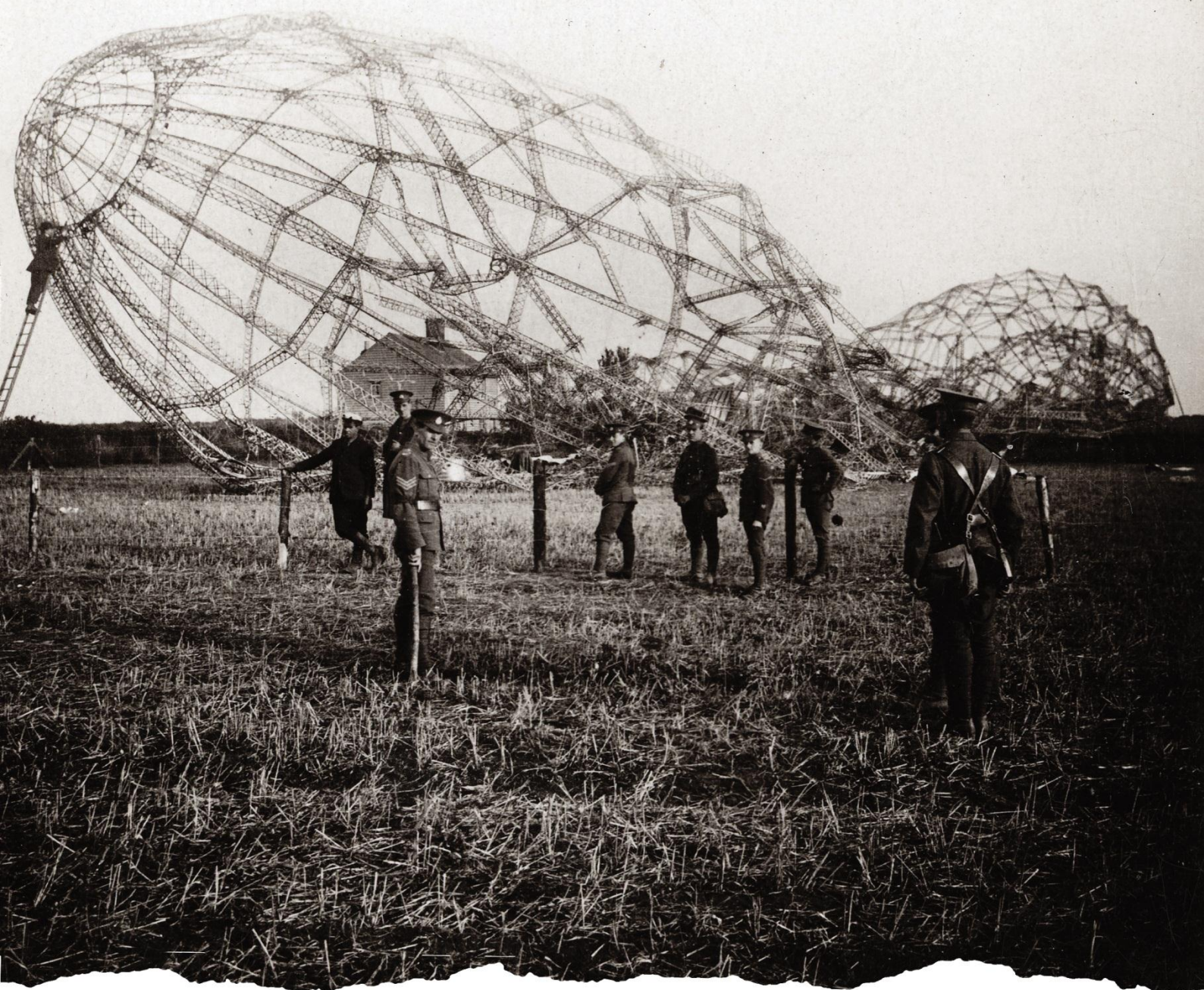


Essex at War

1914-1918

A resource pack from the Essex Record Office



LED BY IWM



Essex at War, 1914-1918: teachers' notes

This resource pack and teachers' guide has been designed as part of *Now the Last Poppy has Fallen*, a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to explore stories of Essex people and places during the First World War.

The pack consists of these notes and a PowerPoint presentation containing images of each of the sources referred to here, which could be used in a multiplicity of ways. These teachers' notes contain information on each of the sources, and suggested activities for History, Citizenship, English and Food Technology lessons.

The sources all relate to the First World War in Essex, and include the experiences of Essex people serving abroad in the military or nursing services, and what was happening at home. All of the sources are held by the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford.

We hope that you find this pack useful and that you and your students enjoy using the sources within it. We would love to hear what you think of it and how you use it – please get in touch with any feedback on heritage.education@essex.gov.uk

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Note on using the images in this pack

Many of the images of documents in this pack will be subject to copyright. This means that you can use them in the classroom and in internal displays, but if you want to use them online or in a publication you will need to contact us on ero.enquiry@essex.gov.uk

National Curriculum links

Activities are suggested in this pack for History, Citizenship, English and Food Technology, but you could use the sources as you wish in any subject area. Below are just a few examples of how these sources support National Curriculum aims.

History KS3

‘inspire pupils’ curiosity to know more about the past’

‘equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement’

‘understand the complexity of people’s lives’

‘know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world’

‘understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims’

‘gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts’

‘challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day’ – including the First World War

‘a local history study’

English KS3

‘develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually’

‘[adapt] their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences’

‘use discussion in order to learn’

Citizenship KS3 & KS4

‘develop pupils’ understanding of democracy, government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens’

‘debate and evaluate viewpoints’

‘present reasoned arguments’

Notes on the sources and suggested activities

Images of each of the sources detailed below are included on the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

For each source we have suggested some activities or points for discussion, but for all sources students can be encouraged to think about:

- How people's experiences of the First World War differed
- Why do people's accounts of the War differ?
- The strengths and weaknesses of different sources

Where are these sources from?

Slides 2-6

All of the sources in this pack are stored and looked after at the Essex Record Office (ERO).

The ERO is the county archive for Essex, and looks after nearly 1,000 years' worth of Essex documents, maps, images and sound and video recordings.

The ERO Headquarters (slide 2) are in Chelmsford. There is a large public Searchroom (slide 3) where members of the public can come in and look at the records that we look after. Visitors might be interested in researching their family tree, the history of their house or local area, or any number of other topics for which we hold sources.

The ERO has several special storerooms for our records (slide 4). If we laid all of our shelves end-to-end they would stretch over seven miles. The storerooms are kept cold, like big fridges. This helps to slow down the deterioration process of the documents, just like fridges do for your food.

The ERO is also home to the Essex Sound and Video Archive, which comprises some 30,000 sound and video recordings (slide 6).

Resource 1: Poster warning of potential German invasion (L/P 3/6)

Slides 7-8

When Britain entered the First World War on 4 August 1914, one of the first responses in the country, especially on the east coast, was fear of a German invasion. The German army had already invaded Belgium and France, and Britain saw no reason why they should not attempt to invade here too. Horror stories circulated about the treatment of Belgian and French civilians at the hands of the German forces, and the British worried that they may very well be next.

Essex was considered one of the places most vulnerable to invasion, with its long coastline and proximity to London. Plans were hastily drawn up for the county's defence and evacuation of its civilians in case of an invasion.

This poster was circulated by Witham District Emergency Committee, and gives instructions to the local population on what they ought to do in the event of an invasion.

Any invasion was expected to come from the sea, and civilians were ordered to move away from the coast as quickly as possible. The main roads were to be left clear for the army to move to the coast, and civilians were strictly instructed to use back roads and fields. The ultimate destination for the refugee Essex population was Oxfordshire.

Civilians were also ordered to destroy food supplies, livestock and fuel to attempt to hamper the progress of the invading army.

Suggested activities

- Analyse the instructions to civilians in the poster – what were they ordered to do? What could they take with them/not take with them? Do you think this sounds like a good plan? Why/why not?
- Imagine your local area is about to be invaded. How would you organise a response and evacuation effort? Think about where the evacuated population will go, and how they will find food and shelter. How would you communicate this plan to the local population?

Teaching points:

Information retrieval, empathy, relating events of past to present society – population numbers and previous experience of war, transport, development of communication technology, morale

Resource 2: Photograph of Special Constables (D/DU 1359/4)

Slide 9

The organisation of home defence centred on the police. There were just 450 men in the Essex Constabulary in 1914, and so Special Constables were recruited to help with wartime duties. Large numbers of men volunteered; in Southend, for example, there were 120 men in the Special Constabulary in 1914, and 571 in 1915. This did tail off later in the war, however, as more men were conscripted into the armed forces.

The Special Constables did not have uniforms, only armbands, and were equipped with a length of rope to use as handcuffs. It was 1915 before they were issued with torches.

The Special Constables were instrumental in drawing up plans for the evacuation of civilians in case of an invasion, and would have been key in implementing the plans had an invasion come to pass.

Resource 3: Poem by Special Constable 353 (D/Z 137/1)**Slide 10**

This poem was written by Special Constable 353 (unfortunately his name was not recorded), and copied into the notebook of his colleague Special Constable Herbert Gripper. A transcript of the poem is below.

The poem reflects the duties of the Special Constables, which included guarding places liable to attack or sabotage, such as bridges, reservoirs, and lighting works. They also enforced blackout rules and had duties during air raids, and were empowered to stop and challenge anyone they were suspicious of.

The New Year Bells are ringing
A note of peace to all
And soon the poor red Specials
Will have their final call

No more the Hooters Siren
Will sound its shrilling screams
No more the Generals whistle
Will rouse us from our dreams

No more in icy blackness
The Reservoir to guard
Or tramping round the viaduct
And the smelling railway yard

No more in midnight watched
We wait the Zeppelin's hum
Or watch the bursting shrapnel
As the raiding Gothas come

No more our worthy Sergeant
Will send us out at night
To watch and ward the Borough
And see the lights too bright

We may not get a medal
We cannot win VC
We have only done our duty
Without reward or fee.

Suggested activities/discussion points

- What impression do sources 2 and 3 give of the life and duties of a Special Constable?
- Write a diary entry for a Special Constable, it could describe both the long, cold hours of a Watch and the fear/excitement of a raid. Include the date of your entry, research when and where was a Zeppelin raid if you include this in your entry.

Teaching points:

Information retrieval, technical terms and duties. Empathy, writing in the style of the time.

Resource 4: Reports on speeches made at recruitment meetings**Slides 11-13**

Throughout Essex, as everywhere else in Britain, men were strongly encouraged to volunteer for the armed forces. The European powers had large conscript armies, but Britain relied on a small professional army. The government was unwilling to introduce conscription, but enormous pressure was put upon men to ‘join up’.

There has been much made of the idea of ‘war enthusiasm’ – the idea that men were keen to go to war and flooded recruitment stations in their desperation not to miss out on the excitement. You can use the sources in this pack to think about how true a reflection you think this is of people’s responses to the call to arms.

Men of military age were invited (and strongly encouraged) to attend recruitment meetings, which were often reported by local newspapers in great detail. These sources give examples of just a few of the many speeches made at these meetings to persuade men to join up. The arguments made include:

- The perceived threat of a German invasion of England
- Stories of atrocities reportedly committed by the German army in their invasion of Belgium
- A struggle for national survival
- Duty and honour – not standing by while others fight (including men joining up from the British Empire)
- The idea of soldiering as a healthy lifestyle
- Appealing to women to persuade their loved ones to join up

Resource 4a: Percy Laurence, J.P.

‘He particularly appealed to the ladies to impress the young men with the fact that it was England that needed them – their cottage homes, their women and children. The most dreaded danger of invasion that ever hung over Essex homes was now apparent, and could not be avoided unless enough men were enlisted to crush that danger before it reached England’s shores. It might be hard to part with husband, son, or lover, but no true English woman, when she knew what was at stake, would keep a man back. Therefore he asked the women to urge the men to take their places in that wall of living men which was now standing between the homes of England and the horrors of invasion. (Applause).’

Recruitment meeting at Witham, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 13 November 1914

Resource 4b: Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C.

‘Sir Evelyn Wood, whose rising was the signal for long-continued cheering, said:- I am here by the invitation of your esteemed chairman, Mr. Percy Laurence, to appeal to all young men who are physically fit to enlist in some unit of the King’s forces for the duration of the war. I am told that Essex has done well in furnishing men in this time of peril to our race, but I doubt whether any part has done better than your adjoining parish of Rivenhall, where my father lived, for with a total population of 620, 54 men have enlisted since the outbreak of war.’

Recruitment meeting at Witham, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 13 November 1914

‘So far the numbers enlisted are not sufficient to maintain our Empire, nor even to safeguard our homes. If Germany were to win in this war, we should have to endure even more than our gallant Allies have suffered. Our Allies have put every able-bodied man into their ranks, and if we are to exist as a nation we shall probably have to do the same.’

Recruitment meeting at Witham, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 13 November 1914

‘The consequences [of the German invasion of Belgium] have been the destruction of priceless sacred and other buildings, and libraries hundreds of years old. The Germans have killed thousands of Belgian soldiers, and slaughtered inoffensive old men, women, and children. (Shame.)’

‘...our turn [to be invaded] would have come next, and many of you now here might have lived to see Oxford, Cambridge, Birmingham, and Liverpool suffer like Mechlin, Louvain, Liege, and Antwerp have done, and your families treated as the Germans have treated the Belgians. (Hear, hear.)’

Recruitment meeting at Witham, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 13 November 1914

‘The British Colonies were sending men, and the Motherland must not be behind. England must rise as the Colonies have done – fight as the British race could – and then victory would be ours. (Applause.)’

Recruitment meeting at Witham, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 13 November 1914

Resource 4c: Lt-Col Fred Taylor speaking in Witham:

‘Men did not realise that the situation was pressing, and that men must be obtained. It should not all be left for the agricultural labourers; tradesmen, farmers, and professional men should enlist, and not leave it for the working classes and mechanics to fight the country’s battles. (Hear, hear.) The soldier went to battle and risked his life that the tradesman’s business might be carried on, or the wealthy man’s property might be protected.’

Recruitment meeting at Witham, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 13 November 1914

Resource 4d: Lt-Col Fred Taylor speaking in Colchester:

‘Col. Taylor, addressing the farmers, said some of them were not only not doing their own bit, but were keeping other men back. Thousands of young men from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand had come to fight our battles: why the dickens should not some of the Englishmen at that meeting bear their part in the war? They might say they had wives and had a business to look after. Well, he had got a business, and it was gone. He had a wife, and, thank God, she was not gone. (Laughter.) He had a family, and so had other officers in the 5th Essex, but they put their country first. In one village he asked some farm labourers to enlist, and they replied – not without reason – “Why should I go while the governor’s sons stop at home?”’

Recruitment meeting at Colchester, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 14 May 1915

‘If they wanted to know what soldiering was like, let them ask any of his men, and they would say that they felt better in health, better in temper, and better physically for having joined.’

Recruitment meeting at Colchester, reported in the Chelmsford Chronicle, 14 May 1915

Suggested activities/discussion points

- Pull out and analyse the arguments which were used in recruitment speeches to persuade men to join up. Which do they think are the most successful? How might the men and women who heard these speeches have felt?
- Draw a causal web investigating why men might have joined the army. This could be used as the basis for a discussion or an essay.
- Half the class write an argument to persuade men to join the army; the other half write an argument to persuade men *not* to join the army. The arguments can then be compared to see which is the most persuasive

Teaching points:

Information retrieval, writing an argument from a particular point of view, persuasive writing.

Resource 5: Chelmsford Military Tribunal records (D/B7 M3/2/1)**Slide 14**

With the number of volunteer recruits dwindling throughout 1915 the government introduced conscription in early 1916. Men did have the opportunity to appeal against their conscription to a local tribunal, and their case may even then have been referred up to a county tribunal. There was a limited range of reasons men could use to appeal, and most appeals were rejected.

Those appealing had to give details of why they could not be spared from home or from work, or of their conscientious objection. These minutes from the Chelmsford local tribunal are a rare survival as these records were ordered to be destroyed in 1920 as they were potentially extremely socially divisive.

Resource 6: Report on tribunal hearing of John Pawson, *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 7 July 1916**Slide 15**

One of the men who appeared at the meeting of the Chelmsford Military Tribunal on 3 July 1916 was J.O. Pawson. He was appealing his conscription on the grounds of Conscientious Objection. His case was referred on to the county tribunal.

More can be learned about Pawson from a report in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* on the Tribunal's meeting that day. John Pawson was a lawyer, who absolutely objected to the war. The newspaper extract records the discussion between Pawson and the Tribunal panel.

Suggested activity/discussion

- Do the students agree or disagree with John Pawson's arguments as a Conscientious Objector?
- If one objects to a war, is there any work it is acceptable to undertake? E.g. work in a munitions factory, or farm work that would release another man to go and fight. What about medical work caring for those injured in the hostilities? Or is the only logical conclusion to totally refuse any part in it even if it means time in prison or hard labour?
- How much should a citizen have to put their life on the line to defend their country? How much should the state ask of people?

Teaching points:

Presenting an argument, empathy, looking at the wider questions and relating this to the 21st century. Comparisons with society 100 years ago.

Resource 7: Recollections of Alf Webb (SA 24/1011/1)**Slide 16**

Alf Webb was born in Hackney but moved to Essex in later life, which is why this recording is at the Essex Record Office.

Alf was a machine gunner on the Western Front. Born in 1897, he was just 17 when the war broke out, and he served in the army as a very young man.

This recording is an extract from a talk he gave to students at a primary school in 1992. Alf delivers his recollections of both the mundane detail and the harsh reality of the war in a matter-of-fact and unflinching way as he talks about mud and lice, tactics and trenches, the death of friends and colleagues, and his own unheroic attitude to the war as he did his best to 'try and survive and get out of this.'

It is sometimes said that oral history interviews are the closest we can get to time travel. Few things will bring us closer to understanding the reality of events than to hear the experiences, thoughts and authentic voices of people who actually lived through them.

You can access the extracts on the ERO SoundCloud page here:

<https://soundcloud.com/essex-record-office/i-didnt-want-medals-one-mans> If you have any trouble accessing SoundCloud please get in touch and we will try to arrange an alternative for you. The whole recording is 45 minutes long; if you would like to hear it, please get in touch or visit the ERO Searchroom.

NB The recording does include some graphic descriptions of Alf's experiences of trench warfare which may be considered unsuitable for younger students

Suggested activities/discussion points

- Write about or discuss what impression is given by the recording of Alf's wartime experiences. Did his opinion of war change over time?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this source for historians?
- Alf was talking to a young audience and some of his descriptions are quite graphic. Do you think children should be shielded from the realities of war, or do you think that young people need to know that war is a terrible thing?
- See what else you can find out about Alf's life using material available online, for example on Ancestry (Hint: records that can be found include Alf's birth, marriage and death records, and his medal index card. He also shows up on the 1911 and 1901 census returns, and in telephone directories; this could be personal research)

Teaching points

Comparing written accounts with a sound recording. Each resource gives us different information, making value judgements.

Resource 8: Photograph of bomb damage in Southend (TS 399/3)**Slide 17**

As well as being able to hear the gun fire from the Western Front, people in Essex were subject to attack in their own homes. In 1914 Germany attacked Britain with naval bombardments at Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby, and from 1915 they began bombing raids with Zeppelins. The intention was to destroy the morale of the British people.

Air raids killed over 500 people in Britain during the First World War. Many of these raids were carried out by Zeppelin airships. Airships had been used before the war to carry passengers, but in wartime the Germans decided to use them as bombers. They were more capable than the aeroplanes of the time, but were still dangerous to fly and navigation was difficult.

Lying between the coast and the capital Essex was in the firing line. Zeppelins would cross the North Sea to the Essex coast, and either follow the Thames from Southend or the Great Eastern Railway to London.

Bombs were dropped in several places in Essex, either deliberately or because the Zeppelin had not been able to make it into London and was unloading its explosive cargo. Sometimes they dropped relatively harmlessly into fields, but at other times they damaged property and caused injuries and fatalities.

There were also instances of Zeppelins crashing in the county, which became big sightseeing events.

Resource 8 is a photograph showing some of the results of the first Zeppelin raid on Essex which took place on 10 May 1915 over Southend. There was one fatality – Agnes Whitwell, aged 66, of North Road, Prittlewell, who died when an incendiary bomb crashed through the roof of her house and set the bed on fire. Her husband was unable to save her and was badly injured himself. A dozen houses were destroyed and other properties damaged.

Activities

- How do you think people felt about having bombs dropped on them?
- When people saw the bomb damage to their own town, how do you think their attitude towards the war changed? List some of the emotions people may have felt and the reasons, or actions which may have resulted after a Zeppelin raid.

Teaching points:

Empathy, effect of the war beyond the battle front, own research on extent of damage and numbers of casualties.

Resources 9 and 10: photographs and fragments of Zeppelin L33**Slides 18-20**

Zeppelin L33 crashed in Little Wigborough on the night of 23 September 1916. It was hit by an anti-aircraft shell over East London, and lost height as it flew over Essex. The crew jettisoned everything they could to maintain height, and many items were recovered from the fields of Essex over the next few days, including a machine gun and maps.

On reaching the coast at 1.15 am the commander, Kapitanleutnant Bocker, decided his ship wouldn't make it across the channel, and reluctantly decided instead to land at Little Wigborough. The crew survived the landing and set the ship on fire to prevent it falling into British military hands. There was, however, plenty of wreckage left that the British used to find out how the ships were built.

Bocker spoke good English and warned nearby residents of what he was going to do so that they could escape the fire. The crew then handed themselves in to the authorities and spent the rest of the war in captivity.

The crash was a big sightseeing event, with people coming from miles around to see the burnt-out airship. Some people also took bits of the aircraft away with them, and made them into souvenirs, such as these pendants, engraved with the number of the Zeppelin (L33) and the date it crashed (M55 and M56).

Resource 11: Burial of the crew of Zeppelin L32 (D/P 139/1/23)**Slide 21**

Zeppelin L32 also crashed in Essex on the night of 23rd September 1916. It was shot by a fighter plane, and crashed in flames at Great Burstead near Billericay. The entire crew of 22 men was killed. The crew were buried together at Great Burstead church (the bodies were later moved to the German military cemetery at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire).

Sergeant Wolverton of the Billericay Constabulary arrived while the airship was still in flames. The bodies of some of the 22 crew members were still inside the wreck, but several had fallen away from it and lay in fields within a 250 yard radius. Several other policemen arrived and they cordoned off the airship, but they had great difficulty in keeping sightseers away.

Many took away souvenirs, including pieces of the aluminium superstructure, but things were also taken from the bodies of the airmen, including an Iron Cross, a silk waistcoat,

buttons, and fur gloves. The penalty for taking items of potential military importance was a £100 fine or six months hard labour, but people were undeterred.

Suggested activities:

- Examine the wording used in the burial register, and the information the vicar has chosen to include. What might this reveal about local feeling towards the dead airmen at the time?
- How do the students feel about the crowds of sightseers and the collection of souvenirs from the wreck site?

Resources 12 and 13: Eyewitness accounts of crash of L32

Slides 22-26

The first eyewitness account (resource 12) is a letter from Sergeant James McDiarmid (T/B 560/1) of the Glasgow Yeomanry. It was sent from the Field Post Office, Woodham Mortimer, to James's brother Hugh. McDiarmid and his troop were sent to investigate the wreckage and retrieve bodies. A transcript of his letter is below.

The second eyewitness account (resource 13) Catherine Brown, who was working in the Kynochtown munitions factory (TS 54/1). She wrote this account in her memoirs in 1977, and includes a description of girls she worked with visiting the wreck site the day after the crash.

Resource 12: Sgt James McDiarmid

Field Post Office
Woodham Mortimer
Essex
25/9/16

Dear Hugh,

This is Monday, this time, I generally find time to write on a Sunday, but we were out from Saturday night till Sunday night.

As you would see by the papers two Zepps were brought down in Essex. We were lying fully dressed in our tents waiting to be turned out. Only one troop was out. At 1.15 a.m. yesterday the picket gave us a shout and we all turned out and saw the Zepp bursting into flame and coming down. It took much longer than the one a week ago. It hovered in the air for at least two minutes and then dived nose downwards.

Well, yesterday morning at 7a.m. we were sitting at breakfast when the adjutant [sic] came in and told us to be ready as soon as possible full marching orders – that is horses

and men with everything on. The first twenty who were ready were sent off with Lieut. Young (I was one of them) to where the wrecked Zepp was. We had ten miles to go and we travelled hard. There was a mark along the road of the sweat off the horses. We trotted every step of that ten miles. We picketed our horses, left three men to guard them, and fixed bayonets and down about 20 yds to where the heap of wreckage was lying. We had to keep the people back from it. Everybody wanted a souvenir & most of them got it too. There must have been an explosion after she landed for there were bits found a mile away.

The heap of twisted bars of alluminium [sic] was about 40 ft high. A tremendous pile, unless you saw it you would hardly credit it. Then the work of pulling out the bodies commenced. It was a gruesome job. The RAMC and the R Flying Corps did that. They got twenty two bodies. The commander was not badly smashed but some of the others were in an awful mess. The commanders two legs were broken at the thighs and blood oozing from his ears, his clothing was burnt, also his moustache & hair but there was not a mark on his face.

I got a lot of wee bits of Zepp but we were not supposed to take them away altho' there wasn't a man there who hadn't a bit. This is a piece of it I picked it up near it. The cloth is a piece of the commanders clothing.

The crowds were immense during the day but very orderly, altho' quite annoyed at not getting closer. During the day there were six British aeroplanes and a British airship came along to see the wreckage. One of the aeroplanes landed not twenty yards from where I was standing. It was an airman who brought it down but so far I don't know his name.

There were thousands of soldiers arrived during the day. We relieved the Irish Guards in the morning and then three regiments of cavalry arrived and relieved us in the evening at 6 p.m. The cyclist corps were relieved by the Royal Scots & the KOSB. The infantry were there all night they had their tents with them. Neil got a lot of pieces too. I told him I would sent a bit home.

I am orderly N & O at the telephone we got that job five days now. It is an easy one. We are both keeping clear of the cold only a bit tired this morning however that will wear off all right. The Colonel is coming back today he has been away for a few days. Well I think this is all the news so I'll stop.

Love to all,

Your affec. brother
James

PS The Zepp log book was found on it quite intact, with everything entered in it up to where one of the men threw himself overboard when he felt her going. She was one of their newest type and was only finished in June of this year. She cost 2 ½ million pounds and was 850 feet long

Resource 13: Catherine Brown

Whenever there was an air raid, we had to take refuge on the marshes. We were out there when a Zeppelin was brought down at Billericay. Of course we saw it falling. The next morning, some of the girls who lived that way went to view the wreck. They also saw some of the poor lads who had been shot down; they only looked about 16 years. We could not help but feel for their mothers in Germany.

Activities/discussion points

- Cross reference the sources – what are their similarities and differences?
- Is one source more useful than the other for historians? (Think about the content and their reliability)
- Compare the styles of writing of Catherine and James. Create a chart to list the differences such as style, gender bias, content, fact and opinion etc.

Teaching Points:

Authorial style, empathy and personal opinion, impact in rural Essex, reactions on experiencing war on their own doorstep.

Resource 14: Photograph and memoirs of Catherine Brown (TS 54/1)**Slides 27-31**

The War presented new opportunities for women, they worked as bus conductresses, post-women, in agriculture, in industry and in munitions factories. Many more worked as nurses in military hospitals both at home and at the Front and did voluntary work with the Red Cross.

Catherine Brown worked at the Kynochtown munitions factory near Corringham on the Thames, along with her sister Doll (in the photograph Catherine (known as Kit) is standing, Doll is sitting. In 1977 she wrote up her memories of her time there. She describes their shift patterns, where she lived, what food was available, and industrial accidents. She also describes, however, the fun that the workers had.

Activities:

- Write about or discuss what impression Catherine's memoirs give of her wartime experiences. Does it sound like she enjoyed her time at Kynochtown? What were the high and low points of her experiences?

- Why do you think Catherine might mention food as often as she does?
- Catherine's memoirs were written in 1977. How do you think this might have affected how they were written?

Teaching points:

Speculating on life style changes, empathy, further research to support own views.

Resource 15: papers of Sister Kate Luard

Slides 32-38

Katherine Evelyn Luard was aged 42 when the First World War broke out, but she headed straight to France arriving on 9th August 1914. She had previously served as a nurse in the Boer War in South Africa in 1900 -1901. She joined the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Reserve as a Sister. She worked as a nurse on the Western Front until December 1918, in field hospitals, clearing casualty stations, and on ambulance trains. She was awarded a Royal Red Cross and bar for exceptional service in military nursing.

- 15a Photograph of Kate Luard outside her home, Birch Rectory (*in private hands; reproduced courtesy of Caroline Stevens*)
- 15b A drawing by Kate Luard of her tent, sent home to her family (D/DLu 55/13/4)
- 15c Photograph of one of the hospitals that Kate worked in (D/DLu 55/10/5)
- 15d Extract from one of Kate's letters home, written from the Hospital Ship Carisbrook Castle (D/DLu 55/13/4)
- 15e Letter from Mr R. Udny to Kate, regarding the death of his nephew (D/DLu 61)

Suggested activities

- Analyse Kate's drawing of her tent; what is included in the drawing? Does this look like it would have been a comfortable place to live? Why might she have sent this home to her family?
- Read the extract from Kate's letter written on the Hospital Ship Carisbrook Castle. What can you learn about her life as a nurse, and her attitude towards the war?
- Read Mr Udny's letter to Kate regarding the death of his nephew. This is part of a bundle of similar letters kept by Kate from relatives of men she had nursed as they died. How do you think Kate found the time and emotional strength to read and reply to letters such as this?
- WW1 was different from previous wars as it used more mechanical methods which resulted in complex and severe injuries. What were the particular problems this caused for the hospitals and nurses? What happened at the Field Hospital when the soldiers arrived from the battlefield?

- Carry out some further research to find out about the specific illnesses and injuries caused by trench warfare, and how they were treated. Did new medical practises develop during the First World War? If so, why?
- How significant were the changes brought about in medical practise during the First World War? Which areas of treatment advanced, and which were neglected and why?

Teaching points:

Evaluating skills beyond nursing skills, thinking about support services beyond the battle front, own research.

Resource 16: Photograph of wounded troops at Southend Station (TS 512/4) Slide 39

This photograph shows wounded men on stretchers being loaded into ambulances outside Southend station. The men would have been transported from France by ship, and then by train to places such as Southend where many public buildings and large private houses had been converted into hospitals.

Temporary wartime hospitals sprang up throughout Essex (and the rest of the UK). The Red Cross was main organiser of medical services in Britain and on the battlefields. Hospitals were staffed by a combination of trained medical staff and members of the Voluntary Aid Detachment, who were trained in basic nursing and first aid.

Suggested activities

- Look closely at the photograph. Why do you think there might be crowds of people watching?
- Use the photograph as the basis of a creative writing piece imagining a journey of a wounded soldier from Western Front to a hospital in Essex. This could be extended to examine their recovery, and life after being wounded.
- What long-term impact might the War have had on people who were physically or psychologically afflicted by their experiences?
- Undertake some further research – can the students find out whether there were any wartime hospitals in your local area?

Teaching points:

Using primary resources for own research, empathy with wounded individuals and the lives of the medical staff.

Resource 17: Memories of food shortages (T/Z 25/1904)**Slide 40**

This extract is from an essay by Mrs W Hewitt (b.1900) recalling her personal memories of life during the First World War. Here she focuses on food shortages. She was writing in 1984, aged 83.

My 4 brothers had joined up and I remember my mother saying “Thank God, my next one is a girl.” (myself) I went to domestic service in Ilford for the princely sum of 5/- weekly (5 shillings). I was paid monthly and always sent 2/- of that to my mother to help with the parcel she sent the P.O.W. (Prisoner of War) camp to my brother in Germany...

One thing I well remember is seeing in big letters high on a building, ‘Eat Less Bread’.

I still remember having to stand and wait as long as two hours at the greengrocers for potatoes and only allowed a pound, or in a queue for sugar and butter. Only the very rich could afford to buy it and I assure you they looked after themselves. I had to learn to eat my oat-meal porridge with salt and pepper and a very little milk and to be thankful.

Margarine was introduced in place of butter as that was almost unobtainable, but the margarine was not very palatable, but when you are very hungry it’s surprising what you can eat.

Life was hard, food was scarce and rationing should have been introduced very early on instead of towards the end of the war. But we were glad when rations were the order, everybody had their share and money didn’t mean you could have plenty as the rich did. I was told, when the war ended, there was only seventeen days rations of food left in the country.

Suggested activities

- Why were there food shortages during the First World War?
- How would you feel if you had to queue for two hours to buy essential food items?
- Imagine you are in charge of the Ministry of Food during the First World War. How will you go about making sure that everybody gets enough to eat, and that food is shared out fairly?
- How useful are individual’s memories about an event which happened over 50 years ago? Can we trust our memories to be accurate?

Teaching points:

Evaluating the value of individual’s accounts, empathy and comparing their own lives with the lives of people in the First World War

Resource 18: Wartime recipe for oatcakes**Slide 41**

This extract is taken from a government booklet of suggested recipes using substitute ingredients. This recipe is for Savoury Oatmeal Rissoles, suggested as a substitute for potatoes.

Suggested activities

- Use a food technology lesson to make this recipe. How does it taste?
- Why is this recipe a substitute? Why have the bacon or ham not been included in the main ingredients? What foods became scarce at the end of the war?

Teaching points:

Relating information about rationing to the basic ingredients in this recipe, research into food shortages during and after the war.

Resources 19, 20 and 21: Wartime teenagers**Slide 42-45**

These three extracts are from essays by three different people who were all teenagers during the war. They recall taking on new responsibilities, and in one case the death of a father. All of these essays were written in 1984.

Resource 19: Miss G Baker, born 1900 (T/Z 25/1937)

In November 1916 I started my office career. I had just had six months tuition at a Business College. My Mother and I were driven by my Father with the horse and cart to interview my prospective employers. They informed us that they were losing a clerk and the office boy to the War and I would be required to do some of the work of each. I was engaged and started early on my six mile journey to the Office on my bicycle the following Monday.

I was shown how to despatch goods, that is, to write labels with the addresses to which the goods were to be sent and fill up railway consignment notes until about 4 o'clock and then I gathered up the letters, that had been typed during the day, and took them to be signed by the Writer. Afterwards I copied the letters into a book by means of damp clothes [sic] and a press. I then put the letters into envelopes, which I stamped and recorded in a book. Finally I took these to a red pillar box across a busy road. I usually left the Office at 5:30pm although with an extra lot of letters to get away or even letters, which had had to be written late I was occasionally delayed until 6 o'clock. Although we were never paid extra for over time none of us ever felt aggrieved. We knew that it was

expected of us to stay late when required. Our reward was to be given a fortnight's holiday with pay each Summer.

Resource 20: Mary Smith, born 1901(T/Z 25/1911)

I was 13 when the war started so was still at school. I was also a Girl Guide and had been taught both Morse Code and Semaphore, so to my amusement and no doubt some pride, I was dispatched to the local Drill Hall to teach semaphore to the WVR (Women's Volunteer Reserve) among whom were the Vicar's elder daughter and one of my own older sisters.

As the war years went on and I grew older I did a certain amount of land work. I can remember picking crab apples for cider, hoeing a field of carrots and worst of all, harvesting a field of oats full of thistles. The pay for such work was 2d (2 old pennies) per hour. Partly I wanted to help the war effort but chiefly I wanted the money to buy a wedding gift for a friend. It was a fine handbag made of real leather, silk lined and it cost £2 10/- (2 pounds and 10 shillings) all earned at 2 pence per hour!

I also recited Kipling's poem "If" to great applause, at a concert in aid of comforts for "Our Boys".

Resource 21: Ken Matthams, born 1905 (T/Z 25/1902)

The saddest experience of this war came on the day in 1917, when Mother received a telegram to say that Dad had given his life for his King and Country. Mother lost two brothers also. Of course, after the loss of Dad, Mum had only a widow's pension to maintain herself and three children so from then on it meant "all hands to the pump". Mum went cleaning at the County High School and I took a variety of jobs after school hours to help swell the funds.

Suggested activities

- What impressions do these accounts give of these people's experiences of the war? Compare and contrast them.
- Create a chart listing and comparing ways in which these teenager's lives changed because of the war and the effect it might have had on their characters growing up.

Teaching points:

Empathy, comparison of events in these young people's lives and the consequences for them, citizenship in times of war,

Resource 22: End of the War celebrations (T/Z 25/1887)**Slide 46-48**

In this essay, Mr P Bamberger (b.1910) recalls his father returning home at the end of the war, peace celebrations, and the dedication of the local war memorial. Again, this piece was written in 1984.

Although I cannot remember the war beginning I clearly remember the excitement and relief which followed the talk of an 'Armistice'; a word which I quickly learned to mean that the fighting was coming to an end. It also meant that the men were coming home again and those glamorous, high-spirited beings who had occasionally and briefly appeared amongst us bedecked in navy blue or khaki [sic] were becoming ordinary men working at the mill or on the land or were associated with a new style of life known as 'being on the dole'.

My father came home too. I had seen very little of him for the last 3 – 4 years and maybe I resented his homecoming at first, for as the eldest of the family, I had been 'acting' man of the house for so long, but we readjusted into our new regime in due course.

The day of my father's return home from the war holds special memories for me and not merely because he was returning to the family circle. In view of the importance of the occasion my mother had hired a taxi to meet him at Ardleigh Railway Station. It was a model T, open topped Ford car which is easy to remember because at that time it was the only car in the village.

With the end of the war activities connected with it did not entirely cease, for after a time preparations were being made for the Great Peace Celebration. Evidence of this event soon became visible with the commencement of the gathering of huge amounts of material for a bonfire on Hewittes Meadow where the annual flower show was usually held. It must have been the biggest pile of combustible material in the area since the Spanish Armada.

At last the day of the celebration came and very early I was down in the street to make sure I missed nothing. I cannot remember what the day's programme involved but I do recall seeing the ex-servicemen of the village gathering in the Square, some in fancy dress, and with a collection of musical instruments some of them mere 'Kazoos or comb

and paper, before setting off on a round tour of the village, ostensibly to emphasise the glad news that they were safe home and Peace now reigned. The main motive I suspect was to collect enough money to permit an un-inhibited drinking spree later in the day.

As well as calling at every house all the pubs on the way round were visited.

...

The excitement of the tremendous burning bonfire, the frequent explosions of fireworks and the occasional squeal as a Chinese Cracker found its way in the centre of the onlookers may have given us a feeling that something unpleasant and sinister was being purged by the fire and the gaiety of the crowds, where for the first time for many years, the whole village was gathered together – wives, husbands, children the old and the young of all classes.

Meanwhile the bonfire raged, the fireworks earned frequent ‘oooghs’ as they decorated the night sky and the joy became less confined. The bonfire contained at least one barrel of tar and the effect was tremendous.

The barrels of beer brought from the proceeds of the day’s collections were in constant use.

There was a sudden flurry of excitement and alarm when Uncle Bert (my father’s uncle actually) was pushed at great speed round and round the perimeter of the bonfire propelled by another ex-soldier equally well intoxicated, in the wheelbarrow that had been provided to bring up the beer barrels and tar. Aunt Flo (Uncle Bert’s wife) yelled and screamed for him to desist especially when the barrow sometimes approached within a few feet of the burning material but Uncle Bert was oblivious to any danger, deliriously happy in his alcoholic haze and had every reason to be so.

He had survived several years of active service in the war but was now back home with his family, with a job in the village, with the opportunity to meet his mates down at the pub or on the allotment and once again become a normal citizen.

But there was one more event connected with the war. This was the unveiling of the War Memorial in the Square – where it still stands today – with, sadly, the addition of several more names to follow those that lost their lives in the ‘War to end all Wars’.

All the villagers attended the ceremony of dedication, everyone dressed in their Sunday Best clothes, the whole affair being very decorous and vastly ... different to the wild day of rejoicing of the previous year. Perhaps a fitting conclusion.

Suggested activities

- Visit your local war memorial. Can you find out anything about it being built? Try old newspapers or parish magazines.

Teaching points

Research; empathy

Resource 23 – Shellshock (T/Z 25/1896)

Slide 49

This extract from an essay by Mr C. Russell (b.1907) recalls his father telling him about the appalling realities of trench warfare. He also recalls a teacher at his school remarking that shellshock ‘was merely cowardice’, and how he felt this ‘bore no relationship to the experience my father related’.

The War dragged on with its inevitable gains and losses, both personal and national, on balance mostly the latter. One relief, however, was father home on leave from France, perhaps 7/14 days every six months or so. It was then that I began to learn the grim realities of war. Appalling conditions, trenches deep in water, incessant shelling, battles that continued for weeks on end resulting sometimes in advances or retreats but always in terrible carnage, losses of limbs and lives. Father would recount the battles of the Somme, Ypres and Passchendaele, either that he himself was engaged in or his comrades retold.

(the family later moved from London to near Portsmouth where it was safer)

Schooling at Portsmouth was new and strange and although I was still quite young my intake of lessons continued, however there was one bit of teaching I could not accept. Sitting comfortably on a chair in a classroom the schoolmaster pronounced his judgment on an aspect of the war. “Shellshock”, he said, “was merely cowardice.” Somehow I felt that whilst this might be true in a comparatively few cases, it bore no relationship to the experience my father related. Four years of war with its heavy toll of havoc and misery finally revealed that the enemy was being pushed back decisively and at last in November 1918 they surrendered and peace was declared. What a glorious homecoming for those who survived, except of course for the seriously injured and those who sorrowed in bereavement. However, shouting and singing echoed throughout the roads and streets of our land but best of all for the children our elders prepared for us a very enjoyable Victory tea.

In our home we awaited the confirmation they my dad had been awarded a medal for bravery. The citation read “For taking a message across enemy lines under heavy shell fire”. Soon we, my parents and I, were off to Woolwich Garrison to see Field Marshall Haig decorate my father with the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Years later as I observed my dad’s nervous disposition I reflected on his courage and the Portsmouth teacher’s remark.

Activities:

- How much should a front line soldier tell his family about his experiences during the war? Would it be better to put the past behind them or should their family have an understanding of what they have been through? This could be a subject for a group debate with many different points of view being presented.

Teaching points:

Understanding that war brings great social changes, both during and after it ends. Individual research could include medical treatment for shellshock, the role of working women after the war, the lives and problems facing disabled soldiers.

Follow-up ideas

- Visit your local war memorial, and research the lives of the individuals named upon it. Advice from the ERO on researching First World War servicemen can be found [here](#). Do get in touch with us on heritage.education@essex.gov.uk if you would like any further guidance.
- Students could build a website or blog with the findings of their research. See www.chelmsfordwarmemorial.co.uk for inspiration.
- Students could find out about what members of their own families did during the war. Begin by asking relatives and looking for family photographs, and then search records as advised above. The findings could be made into displays, posters or even short films.
- Research findings on men on local war memorials or on family members could be added to the Lives of the First World War website from the Imperial War Museum – a huge project which is aiming to document the lives of all men and women from the Commonwealth who took part in the War. <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/>
- Most men who died as a result of the war were buried abroad, but those who died in the UK were buried here. There are a number of Commonwealth War Graves in Essex graveyards – find out if there are any nearby and visit them. You can use the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website to do this <http://www.cwgc.org/>
- Suggest your students read some of the books listed below
- Have a look at the Now the Last Poppy has Fallen project blog to see what other First World War activities are taking place across Essex <http://lastpoppyproject.wordpress.com/>
- Bring your students to visit the Essex Record Office to see the originals of some of the documents included in this pack, and to see how we look after them. Visits can be booked by contacting heritage.education@essex.gov.uk

Further reading

There are, of course, thousands of books about different aspects of the First World War. Here are a small selection of books which focus on Essex and personal experiences of the War.

Books on Essex during the First World War

Rusiecki, Paul, *The Impact of Catastrophe: The people of Essex and the First World War (1914-1920)*

Crowe, Ken, *Southend and the Great War, 1914-1918*

Swan, Jonathan, *Chelmsford in the Great War*

Biographies/diaries

Stevens, J., and Stevens, C., Eds., *Unknown Warriors: The Letters of Kate Luard, RRC and Bar, Nursing Sister in France, 1914-1918*

Luard, K., *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front, 1914-1915*

Brittain, V., *Testament of Youth*

Miller, M., *A Fine Brother: The Life of Captain Flora Sandes*

Works of fiction

Faulks, S., *Birdsong*

Barker, P. *Regeneration*

What did you think?

We would really appreciate your feedback on this resource pack. Did you find this resource pack useful? What worked well and what could be improved? Could you sum up briefly how you used the resource pack?

If you could send any feedback to heritage.education@essex.gov.uk it would be much appreciated.

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