

Key stage 2

Pupil A – Piece E: a newspaper report

Context: after studying broadsheet newspapers, Pupil A selected their own topic to research and write about in a 'special report'. This piece is transcribed on the next page.

THE GREAT WAR: A YEAR LATER

A year on from the conflict that shook the world, we look back on the Great War in this special edition report.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, an Austria-Hungarian heir, and his wife, Sophie, was the catalyst that began the trajectory towards war. "The murder of the Duke was politically motivated and saw fractious rifts begin to form between Austria-Hungary and neighbouring Serbia," explains Joseph Allison, a World War analyst, commissioned by Prime Minister David Lloyd George. "This action was the demise of amicable relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, ultimately resulting in Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia."

This decision set off a chain reaction: political agreements and alliances meant that other countries were to step up and fight in support of their allies and this meant that the UK was now also at war in support of Serbia.

"I remember it well," Doris James, author of 'How The Great War Changed Our Nation' recounts. "My family were gathered around the wireless when we heard the announcement that our country was to be at war. I remember feeling numb, in shock. Even now, I can still feel the hope and pride I felt for our country that has never wavered."

Realisation set in for our nation when our men were called up to fight. All within the 18-41 age bracket were tasked with saying goodbye to their loved ones and stepping up to protect our country. At the time, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith had addressed the nation, stating, "We Britons are strong. We are united. And we will be victorious. I am calling on all men across our nation to come forth and fight."

700,000 courageous men formed our army and moved forth into a war which brought with it a raft of challenges: hard labour constructing trenches; heinous living conditions which brought with it a plethora of illnesses and diseases such as trench foot; continuous shell fire day and night; and mental endurance above and beyond anything ever required before.

But all of the suffering was not in vain on 28th June 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed signalling the end of the war. "This was a great relief to all Britons," Joseph Allison explains. "The war really had sent shockwaves across the country on its announcement but the public were incredibly receptive to the demands of the Prime Minister and it is testament to all that this hard battle was won. One of the biggest issues we still face a year on from the conflict is a financial one: the war came at a huge cost to our budgets."

The Chancellor, Austen Chamberlain, has expressed expectations that the recession will last at least another year with the government needing to make cuts across services in order to pay for outgoings from the defence budget. Rationing on most items is due to stay in place for at least another six to eight months whilst stock supplies are replenished.

Our European counterparts are also feeling the damage in their own countries. With most of the conflict having taken place in France, France is having to focus a large proportion of its budget on rebuilding infrastructure torn down in the crossfire. "We are awaiting reparations from Germany in the form of money in order to support us in getting our great country back to its former glory," stated France's Prime Minister in a press conference earlier this week.

Italy meanwhile are currently (cont. p.2)

SPOTLIGHT: What was life like for soldiers in the war?

"When we first arrived, we first noticed how terrible the conditions were. The trenches were full of mud and had rat scurrying all around the place. These conditions caused some of the soldiers to get trench foot."

"We quickly made friends with each other and in the rare time we weren't fighting, we were playing games-like card-or getting to know each other. And on Christmas Eve 1914, we all put down our weapons and met the enemy. Together all of us sang Christmas carols and enjoyed the Christmas truce. The comradery in that moment was something I truly will never forget."

"Watching our friends die in battle affected our mental health drastically. We all knew that one day that could be us. We often went to sleep worried about each other and our family's that we had to leave behind."

SPOTLIGHT: What was life like for wives of soldiers?

"When he first got called up to war I was so scared. I didn't know whether he was going to come back. When he did come back, all of the stress I was feeling quickly escaped my body."

"Every week I wrote him letters, letting him know how the children were, telling him we were all praying for him to safely return. Getting letters back from him helped me worry less."

"It was hard raising my children with little to no help. I had to write a letter to my sister to ask her to help with the children as it was very hard for me to work and look after children."

"I shall never forget the day my husband came back home-the children's happy faces, my whole body filled with excitement and for the first time I could remember I was feeling completely stress-free."

GERMANY IN TROUBLE

Germany is now facing financial turmoil as a result of the war. "Their economy is abominable at the moment," explained analyst Sally Metcalf. The cost of the war had been detrimental to the economy and it is forecast to fall even further in the coming months. "Having such a large proportion of the budget be spent on defence was (cont. p.2)

TAX RISES DUE

Taxes are set to rise once again by 15% as the country recovers from the war. The council shall expect those taxes paid by July 6th. These higher rates of tax due to our economy's decreased value since The Great War. "We know this is going to continue to be a hard time for families around the country, however it is a necessary step if (cont. p.6)

MILK RATIONS TO END THIS WEEK

Good news ahead as milk rations will end this week. Supplies are set to be back to usual capacity following a huge drive by farmers to recover milk rations. "This is a great sign that our country is on the mend! Farmers have worked incredibly hard since returning from war to get the milk shares filled once again (cont. p.6)



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