

# WOMEN AT WAR WEST NEWCASTLE 1914 -1918

Spring 1915 marked a worrying turn of events in the First World War. The fighting had not been short, sharp and over by Christmas. Instead, there was the stalemate of the trench lines and no end in sight.

So many men had heeded the call to war that there was a desperate shortage of labour on the Home Front. And most perturbing of all – the army was running out of ammunition. In response, the Government passed The Munitions Act and took increasing oversight of key industries. War Service for Women became the cry and reluctant factories were compelled to take on female workers.

The Act was a success both in terms of women's employment and increased production. By 1917, it is estimated that 80% of the weaponry and ammunition used by the British Army was being made by 'Munitionettes'.

In this project Guy Rundle and the Year 5 children from St John's Primary School, Benwell investigated the lives of women workers at Armstrong Whitworth's Newcastle factories. To their surprise they discovered their local community had been at the centre of the British munitions industry. Key questions included;

Why did women flock to the shop floor?

What was it like to work in Armstrong's?

Was work a 'liberating' experience?

A series of lessons, activities and sources are provided for teachers to support pupils in their investigations. Whilst the lessons are arranged sequentially, teachers can best decide what they want to teach and when. We hope pupils will find this project both informative and challenging.

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# Teaching Materials Outline

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## 1 Finding the Fallen

### Section A - First World War Headstones

#### Lesson Plan

Researching First World War CWGC Graves In Elswick Cemetery.

#### Activity

Record Sheet for visit to Elswick Cemetery.

Researching First World War Headstones in Elswick Cemetery.

#### Resources

Elswick Cemetery Map.

Photograph of Albert Good's Grave.

### Section B - Researching Private Thompson

#### Lesson Plan

Researching Private Thompson.

#### Activity

Research Private Thompson's details.

#### Resources

Newspaper cutting.

Commonwealth War Graves Search Box.

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## 2 The Family They Left Behind

### Section A - Letters of Condolence

#### Lesson Plan

Letters of condolence.

#### Activity

Analyse a letter of condolence.

#### Resource

Letter of condolence.

### Section B - The Horton Family

#### Lesson Plan

Can the Horton Family Manage?

#### Activity

Create a budget for the Horton Family.

#### Resource

The Horton Family Finances.

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## 3 Women and War

### Section A - War work for Women

#### Lesson Plan

War work for women.

#### Activity

Investigate employment opportunities for women during war time.

#### Resources

Table of women's work in 1918.

Photographs of women war workers.

## **Section B - Munitions Recruiting Poster**

### **Lesson Plan**

Caption the Munitions Recruiting Poster.

### **Activity**

Write a poster caption.

### **Resource**

Munitions recruiting poster.

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## **4 The Wounded**

### **Section A - Taking Care of the Wounded**

#### **Lesson Plan**

Taking Care of the Wounded.

#### **Activities**

Draw a cartoon.

write a verse.

#### **Resources**

Cartoon.

Christmas Poem.

Mollie Ross' Diary.

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## **5 Civilians in Danger – the ‘Response’ Memorial**

### **Section A - Visit to the ‘Response’ Memorial**

#### **Lesson Plan**

Visit to the ‘Response’ Memorial.

#### **Activity**

Examine and discuss ‘The Response’ memorial.

#### **Resources**

Resource notes and images from ‘The Response’ memorial.

Outline of ‘The Response’ memorial.

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## **6 The ‘Munitionettes’ - Vickers Armstrong**

### **Section A - Ruth Dodd’s Diary**

#### **Lesson Plan**

Ruth Dodd’s Diary.

#### **Activity**

Transcribe a diary page.

How useful is a diary to an historian?

#### **Resources**

Ruth Dodd’s Diary.

### **Section B - Should I work at Armstrong’s?**

#### **Lesson Plan**

Should I work at Armstrong’s?

#### **Activity**

Write down arguments for and against working at Armstrong’s.

To Fight or not to fight? Help Ruth decide.

#### **Resource**

Drawing - Vickers Armstrong’s women workers speak their mind.

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## 7 Zeppelin Attack

### Section A - Zeppelin Over the Tyne

#### Lesson Plan

Zeppelin Raid 14th April 1915.

#### Activities

Write a diary entry.

Make a postcard.

Zeppelin over Blyth.

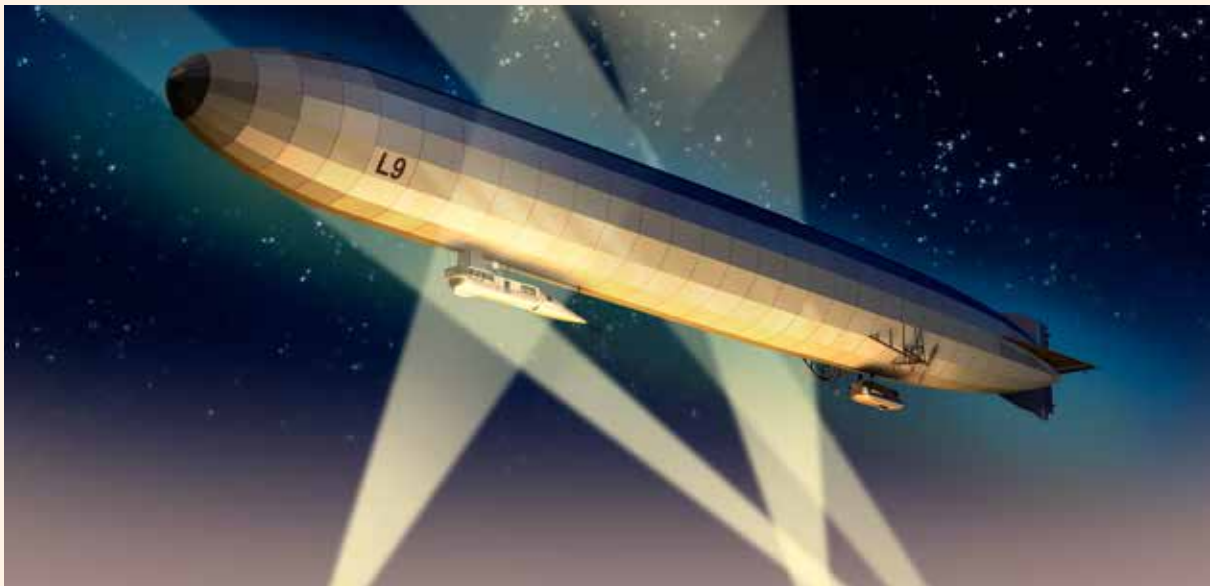
Zeppelin over Benwell.

#### Resources

Map of Airship Raids.

Zeppelin over Blyth postcard - 14th April 1915.

Zeppelin L9 Silhouettes.



Zeppelin L9



Women working in Newcastle factory, 1918 Sir John Lavery