

# Women, Children and Animals in WWI

## Women during World War 1



Many women worked around the clock in dangerous weapons factories. Women weren't allowed to join the army, but the war still completely changed their lives – in some ways, for the better!

Before the war, a woman's role was in the home. But with the men away at war, help was needed in the workplace – and so millions of women went to work in offices, factories, shops, transport and on farms. Many men were horrified by the idea of females working and, even worse, wearing trousers! But the women proved that they could do the work of men, and do it just as well. Without the women of Britain growing food and making weapons, the war could not have been won.



The Women's Land Army was made up of 40,000 women. They grew the food that kept people alive! When the war was over and the soldiers came home, women were made to leave their new jobs and go back into the home. But not all of them wanted to do that anymore! Their experiences during the war eventually led to women getting more freedoms and rights – including the right to vote!

## Children during World War 1



Boy scouts played 'All-Clear' signals on bugles following air raids. The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides had a vital role on the Home Front. Girl Guides would make basic medical equipment for wounded soldiers. They also worked growing vegetables and delivering milk. Boy Scouts collected eggs for injured troops, protected roads and railway lines, and delivered messages.

Children were even paid to collect conkers which could be turned into explosives! They also wrote letters to soldiers and helped to knit socks and scarves for the troops in the winter months. Some boys lied about their age and went off to fight. The youngest boy was just 12 years old when he joined the army. He was sent home at the age of 13 after fighting in the Battle of the Somme, one of the war's bloodiest battles.



During this time, Winnie the Pooh popped up in Britain. A bear cub called Winnie was one of the most popular attractions at the London Zoo. He was a mascot for the Canadian Army and was being kept at the zoo for safekeeping. The bear was seen by the author of Winnie the Pooh's son, Christopher Robinson, who renamed his own toy bear. It became the inspiration for his dad's book, Winnie the Pooh!



Children were also used to carry messages for the British Secret Service. The Boy Scouts, who were first

choice for this work, apparently found it hard to keep sensitive secrets, so Britain's agents turned to the Girl Guides, instead!

## Animals during World War 1

Both on the battlefield and back at home, some incredible creatures helped to transport soldiers and goods – and save lives. Some of these animals were horses, dogs, pigeons - and even goldfish played their part!



Almost a million horses were involved in the war. Soldiers on horseback were known as the Cavalry and horses also pulled some of the gigantic guns, ambulances and supply wagons. Gas from horse droppings could even be used to power lamps!



British families gave their pet dogs to the army so they could carry messages in special tubes on their collars. Dogs were fast, difficult to shoot at, and they also caught rats!

Pet pigeons were used to carry messages over long distances, often carrying news from the Front Line back to Britain — Germans trained hawks to kill any carrier pigeons they saw.

Goldfish did their bit too — after gas attacks, the gas masks were washed and rinsed. And if the rinsing water killed a goldfish that was placed in it, that meant the masks still had poison on them!