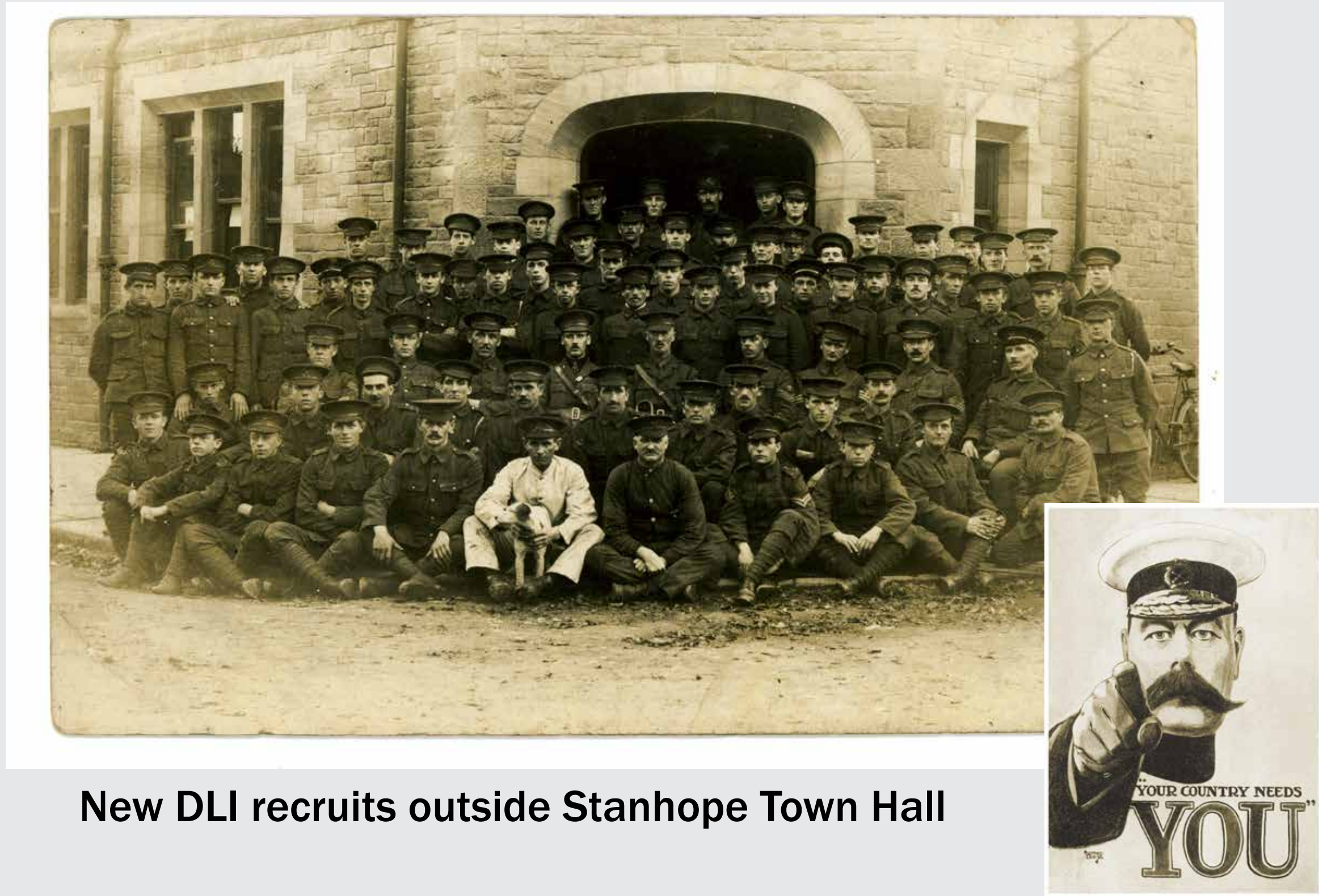


# THE HOME FRONT

## Men

When war broke out on 4th August 1914 the army was made up of a Regular Army, a Special Reserve and the Territorials, but there was no conscription.

On his appointment as Secretary of State for War shortly after the declaration of the war, Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener issued a call for volunteers to increase the size of the army and thousands of men rushed forward to sign for King and Country.



New DLI recruits outside Stanhope Town Hall

Within a year of Great Britain declaring war on Germany it had become obvious that it was not possible to continue fighting by relying on voluntary recruits and in March 1916 the Military Service Act was passed imposing conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41.



Jack Harrison (circled), shot firer in Ashes Quarry with a group of quarrymen including six German prisoners of war from Rose Hill POW camp, Eastgate.

At the beginning of the war hundreds of Weardale men were employed in the limestone quarries, a vital mineral resource for the production of steel. One of the unintended consequences of volunteering was that it deprived the nation of workers in many essential areas such as mining, quarrying and farming. While women could help to fill the void on farms quarrying was much too heavy work. German prisoners of war from Rose Hill POW camp at Eastgate were enlisted to supplement the workforce.

The Military Service Act of March 1916 enabled the War office to take control over enlistment, not only to increase the numbers being recruited, but also to exempt groups such as miners and quarrymen as “men more useful to the nation in their current employments”.

Sir,  
I am directed to inform you that the soldier mentioned below has been applied for through the Ministry of Munitions by the Firm mentioned opposite his name as being required for special work in connection with the production of munitions, and his release, provided he can be reasonably satisfactorily replaced locally, is recommended by the Adjutant General in the interests of the State.

No.	Rank	Name	Unit	Firm.
67094.	Cnr.	Herdman, W.	Base Depot.	Messrs Billing Ganister & Minerw Co. Stanhope, Co. Durham.

## Women

Mr J.J. Aubin's Party of wounded soldiers



Rookhope



Stanhope



St John's Chapel



Red House Convalescent Home for wounded soldiers, Etherley



Dozens of Weardale women volunteered as nurses.



The Government passed the National Registration Act on 15 July 1915 as a step towards stimulating recruitment. It required that all men and women between the ages of 15 and 65 register their occupation and residential location.

## Women



During The Great War, as hundreds of thousands of men were recruited for armed service, employment opportunities for women in the workplace increased dramatically. Whereas before the war women were largely employed as domestic servants, in textiles or in retail, they now took on some of the more traditionally male roles such as farming.

Nursing was one specific area where women could make a very direct and first hand contribution to the war, both in hospitals and nursing homes at home and in field hospitals near the front line. Many women joined The Royal Army Nursing Corps, The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, and The Voluntary Aid Detachment to provide crucial medical and nursing services.



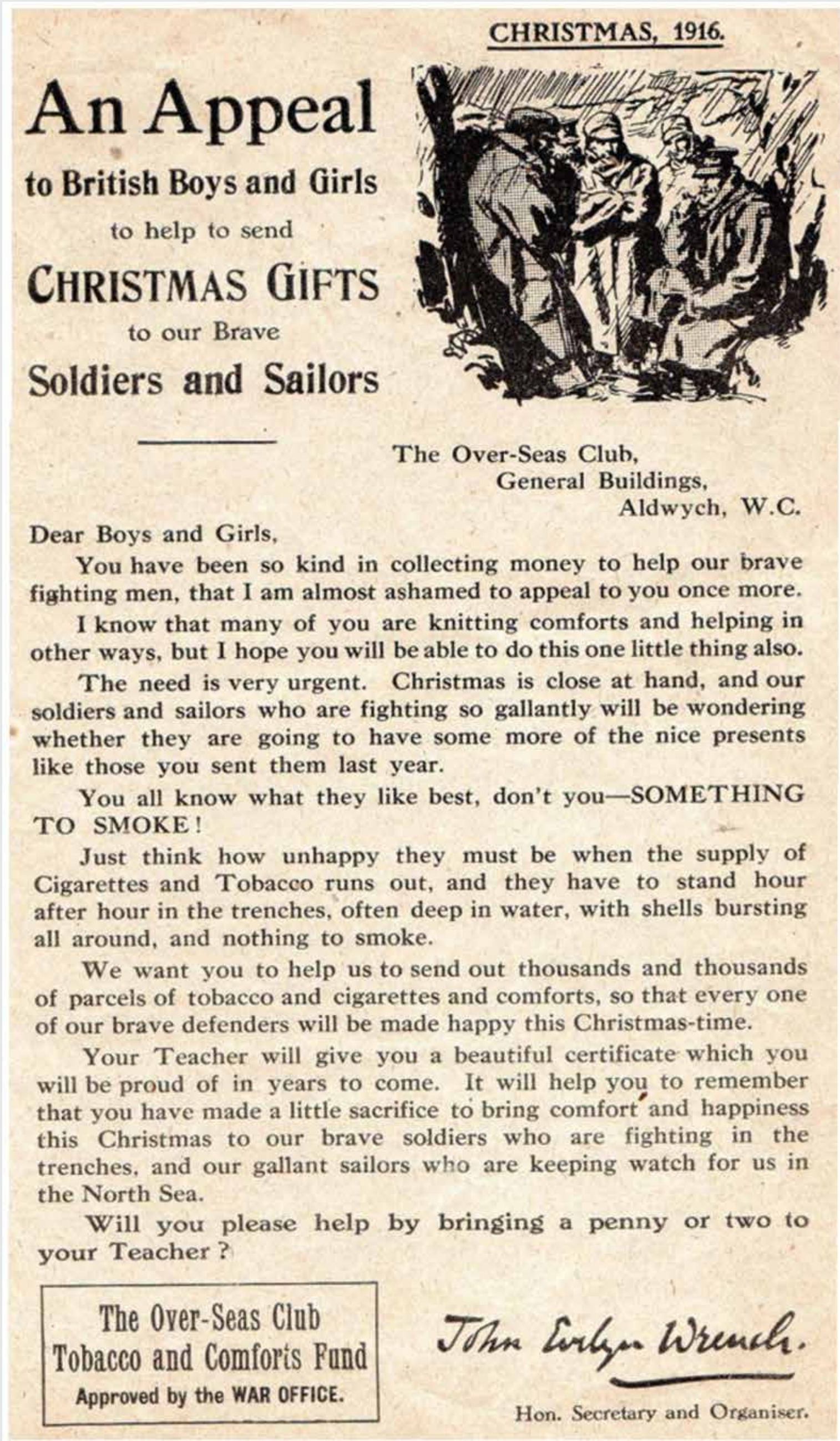
Sisters Maude Mason (Left) and Mary Backhouse, nee Mason, (right) whilst their men-folk – brother John Ambrose Mason and husband George Edward Backhouse - were away on active war service, did their best to support the war effort at home. Mary and Maude joined the St John Ambulance service, and helped to look after wounded soldiers.



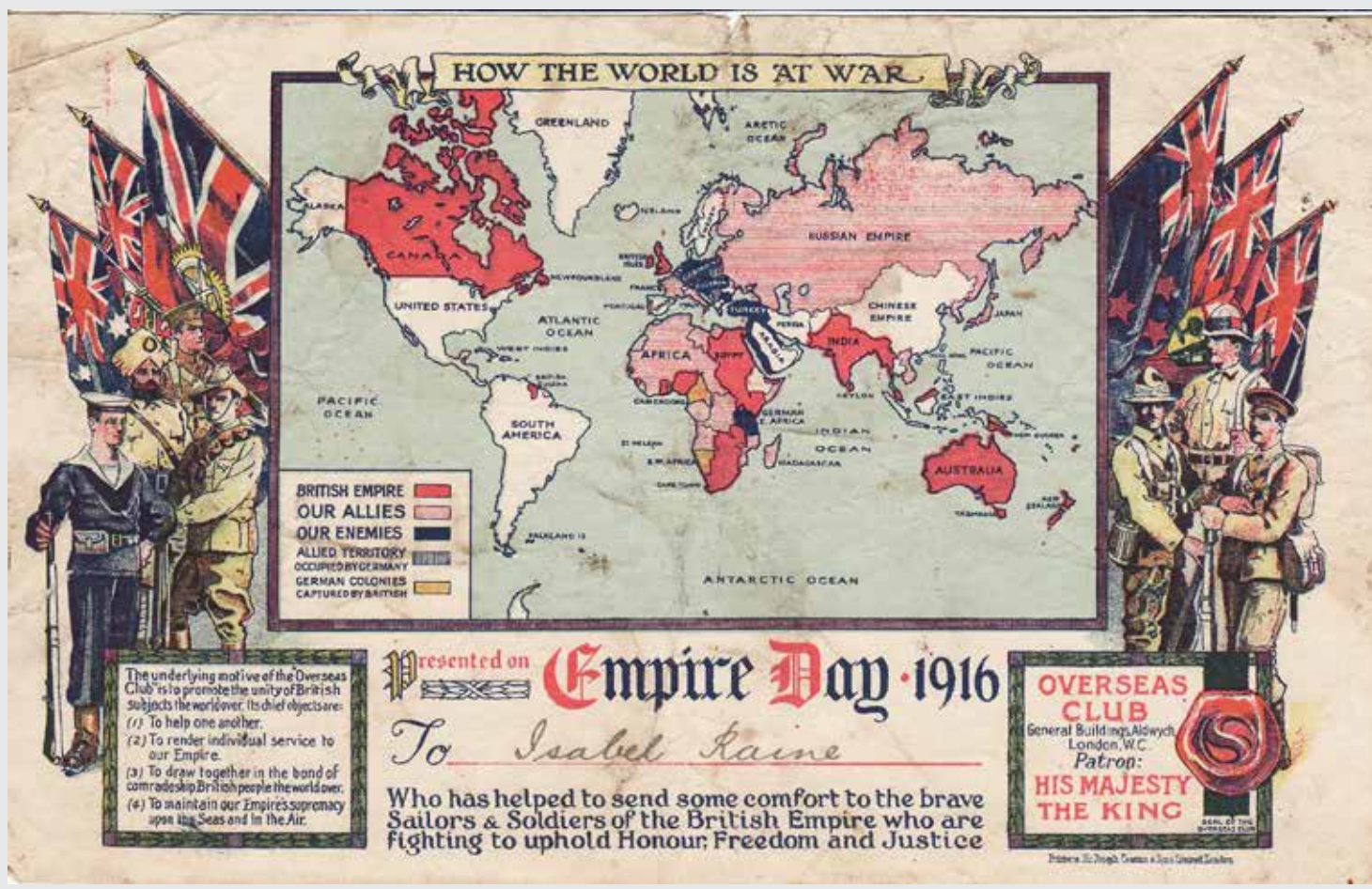
Mr John J Aubin was a Bishop Auckland shopkeeper and merchant (Hardware and Fancy Goods), who organised a fund set up to pay for outings for parties of wounded soldiers from hospitals and convalescent homes such as the one at Red House, Etherley. Such outings, by charabanc, visited several villages in Weardale – St John's Chapel, Rookhope, and Stanhope – and also villages in Teesdale. As well as improving the morale of the wounded soldiers the visits helped to drum up support and funds for the war effort.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 saw St John Ambulance join forces with the Red Cross to form the Joint War Committee. Together, they set up the Voluntary Aid Detachment, to provide voluntary nursing care for war casualties in hospitals in England and overseas. By the end of the conflict, over 9,000 volunteers had been recruited.

## Children

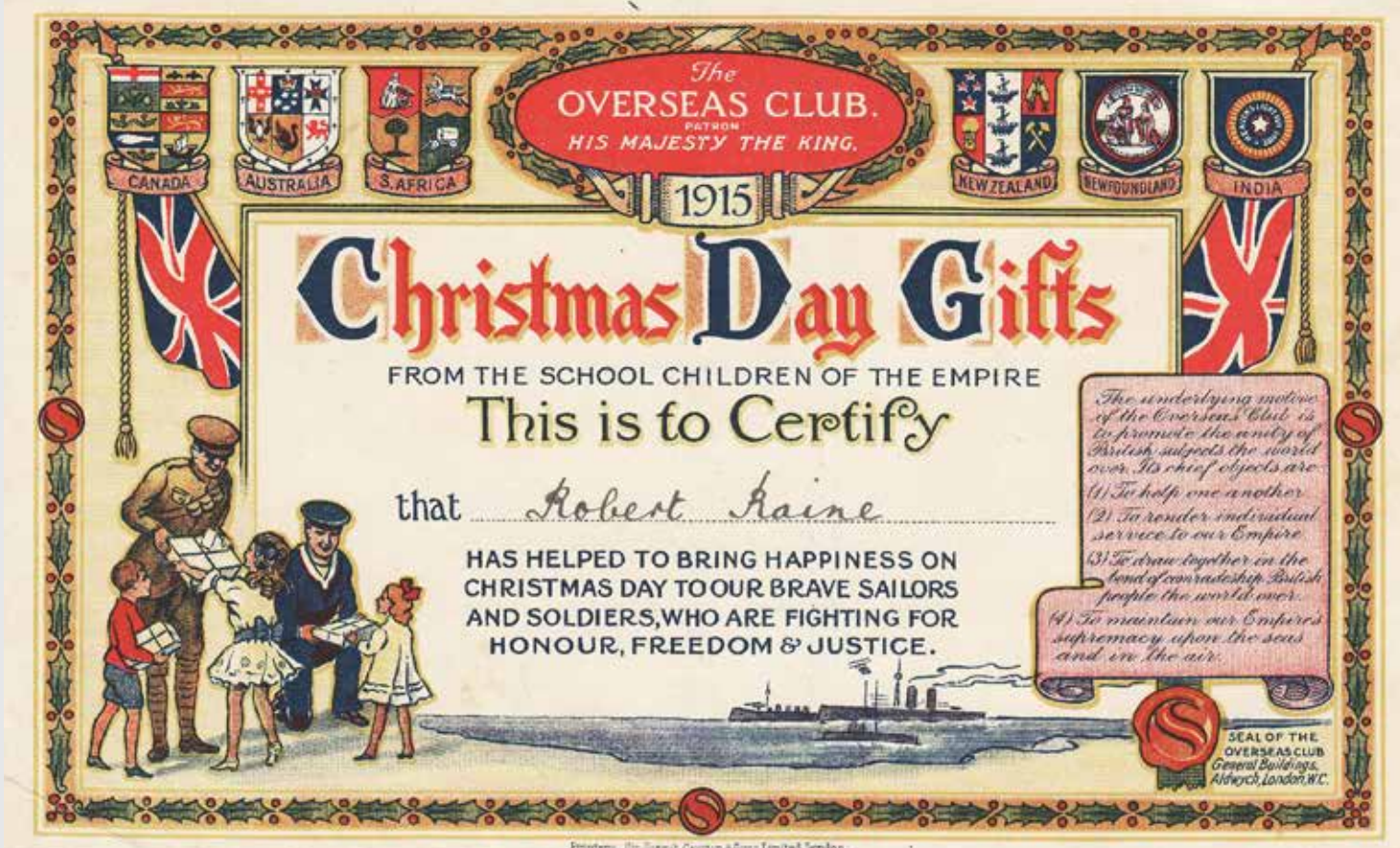


Children were also able to contribute to the war effort by joining local branches of the “The Overseas Club”.



Siblings George (10), Robert (9), Elizabeth (7) and Isobel Raine (5) of Spains Field Farm, Eastgate each earned certificates for their work in sending parcels of food, clothing and other gifts to servicemen overseas.

The Over-Seas Club was founded in 1910 by Sir Evelyn Wrench, who saw the British Empire of the time as not merely a political and economic structure, but also “a far-flung brotherhood of individual men and women of diverse creeds and races living widely apart under differing conditions in different latitude”. During the war it became an important vehicle for mobilizing support for the fighting forces throughout the Empire.



Women and children on the home front were encouraged to support the troops in a variety of practical ways; for example by collecting and sending parcels of food and clothing. Knitting of warm garments – socks, mufflers, sweaters and balaclava helmets - for the troops was organized on a national scale, through schools, churches and women's groups. The Red Cross played an important role in promoting and organizing all this knitting.

