

Joining Up

Recruitment of soldiers at the outbreak of War.

The First World War

Lord Kitchener

Lord Kitchener was the Secretary of War. He was responsible for recruiting soldiers. At the start of the war a very successful campaign was started to encourage men to 'join up'. Posters, such as the one to the right, were used to advertise the army.

Other successful methods of encouraging people to join up included the creation of 'Pals Battalions'. This scheme placed men from the same area in a battalion together: knowing other people in the army would ease the mind of some recruits.



Source Material

Source A

"We had been brought up to believe that Britain was the best country in the world and we wanted to defend her. The history taught us at school showed that we were better than other people and now all the news was that Germany was the aggressors and we wanted to show the Germans what we could do.

I thought it would be the end of the world if I didn't pass (the medical). People were being failed for all sorts of reasons. When I came to have my chest measured (I was only sixteen and rather small) I took a deep breath and puffed out my chest as far as I could and the doctor said "You've just scraped through". It was marvellous being accepted.

When I went back home and told my mother she said I was a fool and she'd give me a good hiding; but I told her, "I'm a man now, you can't hit a man".

Private George Morgan, 1st **Bradford Pals**, interviewed after the war

Source B

Now, dearest mum, keep your heart up, and trust in Providence: I am sure I shall come through all right. It is a great and glorious thing to be going to fight for England in her hour of desperate need and, remember, I am going to fight for you, to keep you safe.

Second Lieutenant Cyril Rawlins, letter to mother (December, 1914)

Sources taken from: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWrecruit.htm>

Move on to the Activities Sheet

Joining Up

Activities about
Recruitment at the start of
World War One

The First World War



Activities

Why would posters such as this one make people feel as though they should 'join up'?

Design your own poster aiming to encourage people to join the army.

- Think about the punch-lines carefully before you start the poster.
- Think about the kinds of things that would encourage people to join up.
- Colour the poster in carefully.

Using Source Material

- 1) What reasons does George Morgan give for wanting to join the army in 1914?
- 2) How did Cyril Rawlins try to persuade his mother that joining the army was the right thing to do?
- 3) Why would poster such as the one on this page appeal to young men like George Morgan and Cyril Rawlins?
- 4) What evidence is there to suggest that the two recruits expect the war to be over quickly?
- 5) What evidence is there to suggest that the two recruits thought that the war was a good thing?