

1914 Irish men volunteered for the British Army



It will all be over by Christmas

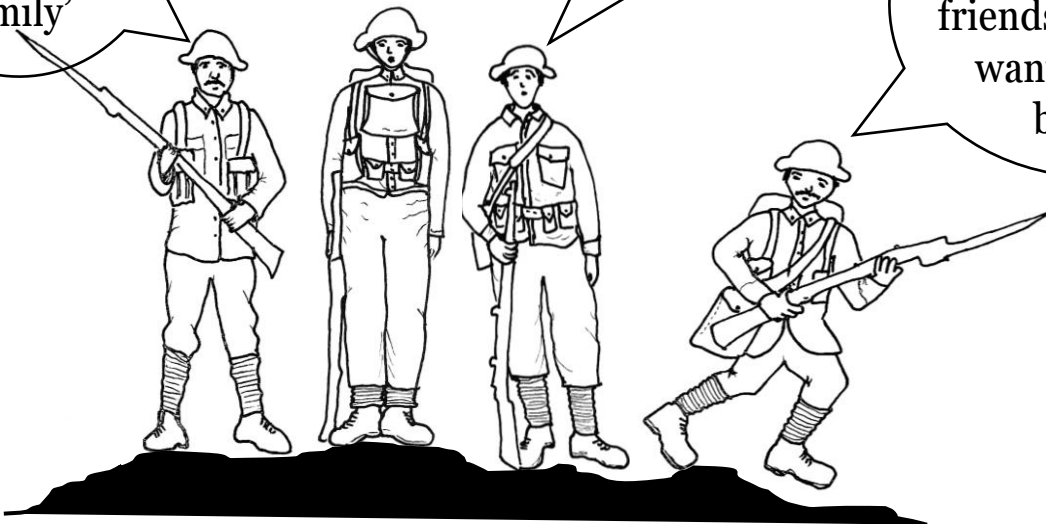
- ❖ 210,000 Irish men enlisted and fought in the British Army during World War 1.
- ❖ About 4,500 Irish women joined the Military Nursing service.
- ❖ 25,000 men died fighting.
- ❖ 43 Women died nursing.

'It's a well paid steady job. I can support my family'

'I will be on the right side of a good fight'

'It will prove that we are loyal and the British will give us Home Rule'

'It will be great to fight along side my friends. I wouldn't want to be left behind'



Word Search

n	b	q	e	s	c	y	o	j	b	s	w	t	s	a	j	e	d	e	h
i	y	r	d	j	k	y	t	l	a	y	o	l	n	x	h	c	r	r	y
t	h	s	f	v	n	d	f	k	e	i	o	g	u	d	r	o	e	e	u
l	g	w	o	s	w	r	e	d	f	m	h	d	g	r	s	l	u	f	s
t	k	l	m	l	f	i	r	s	t	a	i	d	b	e	w	g	r	d	w
s	e	f	i	j	d	e	h	n	s	r	u	u	w	d	e	b	o	y	u
r	d	i	u	f	s	i	e	o	p	c	o	t	s	o	s	n	p	y	o
a	c	g	t	a	w	a	e	p	m	h	j	y	e	p	z	v	e	t	l
w	v	h	b	z	c	d	n	r	o	e	e	l	d	h	d	c	w	c	f
r	e	t	f	b	h	x	l	a	s	p	r	t	r	o	o	p	s	r	n
a	h	i	s	n	g	s	i	e	y	o	l	u	f	e	d	c	g	u	q
e	f	n	b	n	d	r	s	a	t	o	p	g	l	d	f	e	r	n	r
o	k	g	g	m	u	l	t	c	d	e	r	h	t	e	x	s	s	b	h
b	i	d	t	i	w	t	r	y	u	n	k	f	e	a	e	l	o	b	n
k	y	c	y	o	r	a	w	d	l	r	o	w	t	s	r	i	f	v	d
o	v	o	l	u	n	t	e	e	r	s	l	o	u	h	c	r	e	n	h

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| Soldiers | Loyalty | Home Rule |
| Volunteer | March | First World War |
| War | Guns | Nurses |
| Europe | Troops | First Aid |
| Enlist | Fighting | Duty |

The Military Service Act 1918

In March 1918, the British army suffered a major loss of soldiers fighting on the Western Front of the war.

Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces badly needed 100,000 – 150,000 new recruits. He declared that he was not afraid to take thousands of ‘recalcitrant conscripted Irishmen’ into the army.

Over 100,000 British people signed a petition demanding that conscription be extended to Ireland rather than require British teenagers and men over 42 to enlist.

Irish MPs and church leaders advised the British Government that introducing conscription into Ireland was ‘an act of insanity’.

Despite this the Military Service Act 1918 became law on the 16th April 1918.

When the Act passed, the Irish Parliamentary MPs walked out of the parliament in Westminster in protest and returned to Dublin to organise the campaign against conscription.

Create a Slogan

that the British Army could use
in its propaganda about
conscription.

The Campaign against Conscription in Ireland

The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Lawrence O'Neill, called for a conference at The Mansion House on the 18th April 1918. He condemned *conscription and called a general strike in Ireland. This was supported by all political parties, the Catholic Church, Trade Unions and Women's groups.

They called a general strike for Tuesday 23rd April.

ANTI-CONSCRIPTION PLEDGE.

The following is a copy of the Pledge:—

“Denying the right of the British Government to enforce Compulsory Service in this Country *we pledge ourselves solemnly to one another to resist Conscription* by the most effective means at our disposal.”

Catholic Priests all over Ireland encouraged people to sign the Anti-Conscription Pledge after Sunday mass.

Two million men and women signed the Anti-Conscription Pledge in Ireland.

In the words of Thomas Johnson who was present at the Mansion House Conference:

‘That the enforcement of compulsory military service on a nation, without its assent, constitutes one of the most brutal acts of tyranny and oppression that any Government can be guilty of; that the present proposal of Mr. Lloyd George's Government to enforce conscription in Ireland is an outrage and a gross violation of the national right of Ireland’

What would Irish men have felt about being forced to fight in the British army just 2 years after the 1916 rising?

*Conscription means being forced to enlist and fight in the army against your will.

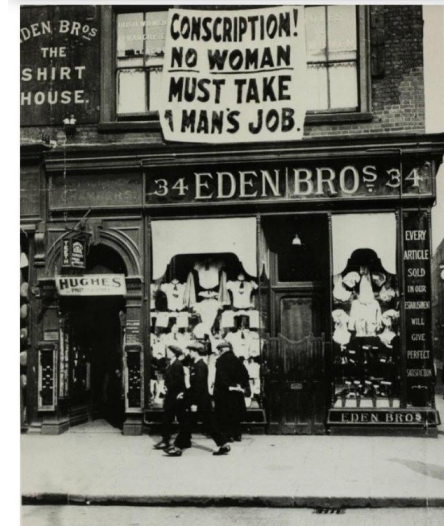
The Women's Pledge against Conscription

31st May 1918, the Women's Day Committee met in the Mansion House, Dublin

Alice Stopford Green headed the committee with women from: Irish Women's Worker Union, Irish Women's Franchise League, Cumann na mBan and other women's groups.

Irish Women pledged to refuse to take the jobs of men who had been conscripted into the British Army.

This was a clear warning to the British government that the economy would be crippled if they implemented conscription in Ireland.



About 2,500 women from the Irish Women's Workers League and 400 from Cumann na mBan marched in Dublin on Lá na mBan (The Women's Day). What do you think should be written on their banner?



The British government campaign for conscription failed in Ireland



Maud Gonne

Constance Markievicz, Kathleen Clarke and Maud Gonne were arrested and imprisoned during the alleged 'German Plot'. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord French alleged that that the anti-conscription campaign was a German plot to undermine the war effort. However, this was not generally believed. These arrests were seen as a retaliation for Ireland's refusal to permit conscription.

Women who had found their voice during the anti-conscription campaign went on to campaign for Republican candidates in the General Election in December 1918.

Constance Markievicz stood for election in 1918 and was the first women to be elected to the House of Commons at Westminster.



Constance Markievicz

However, in line with Sinn Fein policy she refused to take her seat and formed part of the first Dail Eireann set up in the Mansion House, Dublin in January 1919.



Kathleen Clarke

Letters from Constance Markievicz to her sister Eva Gore Booth while in Holloway prison

8th June 1918 'Myself, I think it is about the best thing that could have happened for Ireland, as there was so little to be done there, only propoganda, and our arrests carry so much further than speeches. Sending you to jail is like pulling out all the loud stops on all the speeches you ever made or words you ever wrote!'

22nd June 1918
'I am radiantly happy! Don't be alarmed. 'Stone walls do not a prison make,' etc.! I've just got the result. Such a victory! Our arrests did it! for we were not at all certain; in fact, most doubtful of results. Ireland is always true to those who are true to her. Putting us away cleared the issues for us, so much better than our own speeches ever could.'

What did Constance Markievicz believe were the advantages of being imprisoned for the 'German Plot'?
