

# A FAMILY FIGHT

## LOOKING AT THE IMPACT OF WW2 ON FAMILIES

### Background Information for class room discussion

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 after a period of change in Germany where the National Socialist party (Nazi for short) had gained power, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Germany had already taken over parts of Czechoslovakia and invaded Poland. The countries fighting in the war were divided into two sides: Allied which included the UK, France, Poland, United Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, China, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia and Greece, other countries also took the Allied side. The main countries on this side were the British Empire lead by Winston Churchill, The United States of America led by Franklin D Roosevelt (which didn't join the War until after the battle of Pearl Harbour in December 1941) and the United Soviet Socialist Republics led by Joseph Stalin (which joined when they were invaded in June 1941). These leaders were known as 'the big three'. The Allied countries fought the Axis countries which included Germany, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, although again other countries supported them. In December 1943 Franklin D Roosevelt referred to the Allied nations as the United Nations. The United Nations was founded as an official organization in 1945 and still exists today.

For many families the impact of the start of World War II (WWII) was dramatic and affected every family member. Fathers and husbands either had to join the armed services or were working on the land and in factories to keep the country going. Many children were sent away from towns and cities to the country for their own safety, and wives and mothers had to take over the role of the men who had been sent to fight.

The role of men during the war:

Men as young as 18 had to sign up to help the war effort and the youngest known boy to die during combat was 14 year old Reginald Earnshaw who died under enemy fire on the SS North Devon on 6 July 1941. He had lied about his age in order to be able to help his country. Some men didn't have to go and fight as they were in protected occupations, jobs that were deemed essential to the running of the country. These included; Doctors, Miners, Farmers, Scientists, Merchant Seamen, School Teachers, Railway and Dock workers and Utility workers (Gas, Electric and Water). Men in these occupations often joined up with those too old or unfit for service and became either Air Raid Protection Wardens or joined the Home Guard.

The role of women during the war:

In Britain women were essential to the war effort; they were drafted in to cover jobs typically done by men who were now in the military. These jobs included work in the government, non-combat positions in the military including working in the Women's Royal Naval Service (Wrens), the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Air Transport Auxiliary. By the end of war in 1945 2.2 million women were working in the 'war industry' building and repairing aircraft, ships, other vehicles and weapons. They also helped keep the country running by working on farms, in factories and munitions plants, they drove trucks and provided logistic support to the soldiers. Thousands of Allied women also served on the frontline as nurses.

### PUPIL ACTIVITY

Use the photocopiable worksheet and ask your pupils find out what impact the war would have had on their family.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Your pupils need to do some research to find out about the roles of an ARP warden and the Home Guard. Can they draw up a job description for each one?

### CURRICULUM LINKS:

History 1a 2a 2c 4a 4b 5c 6 8a 11b English En1 2a 2e 3a-f 9c En2 3a-g 9b En3 1c 9b 12



# A FAMILY FIGHT



What would have happened to your family during the war? As young children you would have probably been evacuated to the country for your own safety, but what would have happened to the adults you left behind?

Pick one female and one male in your family, then complete the following and decide what they would have had to do. Remember that often their war jobs would have reflected what they did before the war so think about any qualifications or skills these people already have.

## Male

Name:

Age:

Current Job:

Any problems with eyesight, hearing, mobility? :  
(If yes then they wouldn't have been able to become soldiers.)

I think he would have become:

## Female

Name:

Age:

Current Job:

I think she would have become:



# HOME FROM HOME

## BEING AN EVACUEE

### Background information for use in classroom discussion

The British Government were very worried that Germany would bomb the large cities and that there could be serious casualties amongst the young. As a result the government recommended that children and some adults were moved from cities such as London, Birmingham, and Portsmouth etc to homes in the countryside where they were thought to be at a lower risk of bombing. In total 827,000 school aged children were evacuated along with their teachers, 524,000 mothers with children under 5, 12,000 pregnant women and some disabled adults. Most of these children were sent away without any adults from their family and if you weren't lucky enough to have extended family living in the countryside you would be allocated to a stranger. Because so many children were being moved in a short space of time they weren't able to take very much with them, this is a list of the items they were expected to pack but they couldn't take more than they could carry comfortably:

#### Boys

- 2 vests
- 2 pairs of underpants
- 2 pairs of Pyjamas or nightshirts
- 2 pairs of Socks
- 2 pairs of shoes or boots
- 1 pair of Wellingtons if possible
- 1 warm coat and/or mackintosh  
(if not being worn)
- 1 pair of knickers or trousers
- 2 Shirts
- 1 Pullover
- 6 Handkerchiefs
- 1 Toothbrush
- 1 Face Flannel
- 1 Comb
- 2 Towels

All children would have also had to take their gas mask and inside the box they would have also needed their Identity Card, Ration Book, Clothing and Personal Coupons. They also needed to take enough food for one day and must wear clean clothes and have a clean body and hair, although many were thoroughly washed in disinfectant baths on arrival, so as not to bring any disease into the country.

#### Girls

- 2 Vests
- 2 Liberty bodices (if worn)
- 2 Pairs of knickers
- 2 Nightdresses or pyjamas
- 2 pairs of socks or stockings
- 2 pairs of shoes
- 1 pair of Wellingtons if possible
- 1 warm coat or mackintosh  
(if not being worn)
- 1 cardigan
- 2 Cotton Frocks
- 1 Warm dress or tunic and Jersey
- 6 Handkerchiefs
- 1 Toothbrush
- 1 Face flannel
- 1 Comb
- 2 Towels

### PUPIL ACTIVITY



Arrange for your pupils to speak to some McCarty & Stone residents to find out about their experiences during the war. Use the photocopiable worksheet to help.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Get your pupils to imagine that they are an evacuee - how would it feel? They need to write their first letter home to their family. Where are they, how did they get there, what is it like?

### CURRICULUM LINKS:

History 2a 2c 4a 4b 5a 8a 11b English En1 1a-f 2a-e 3a 3f



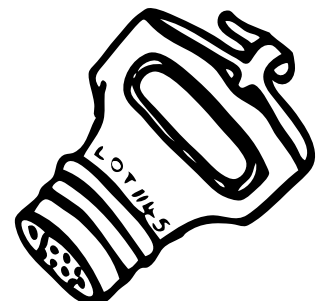
# HOME FROM HOME

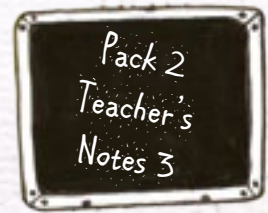
You have the opportunity to speak to some McCarthy & Stone residents who were small children during World War II. You will be getting firsthand accounts of what life was like, so make sure you think about what you are going to ask them and how you are going to record the information.

Take time now to think carefully about your questions, make notes here to remind you of what you want to ask:



Don't forget to carefully record the answers. Think about how you will do this to make sure the information is recorded correctly. Please remember to ask permission if you choose to take an oral history and record them speaking.





# A LITTLE OF WHAT YOU FANCY?

## WHAT WAS RATIONING?

### Background information for a class discussion

During the war the Germans didn't just fight with weapons, they also tried psychological tactics and tried to starve us to surrender. Being an island a great deal of Britain's food was imported, in fact prior to the start of the war 55 million tons of food was imported. However just 4 weeks after the start of World War II that figure dropped to just 12 million as German submarines torpedoed ships trying to deliver food to Britain. Fortunately this threat had been pre-empted and the British Government had decided that food and other goods needed to be shared out fairly. This resulted in rationing.

Before rationing could take place the Government needed to know exactly who lived in Britain and on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1939 every householder had to fill in a form which gave details of everyone who lived at that address. This was called National Registration Day. Each person in the country was then issued with an identity card and a ration book. The ration books were different colours depending on your age; Buff books were given to most adults, Green books were for nursing mothers and children under 5 (they had a higher ration of milk and eggs) and Blue books were given to children aged 5 – 16 (they had more fruit, an adult meat ration and half a pint of milk every day). The ration books contained coupons which had to be signed and stamped by the retailer to show that you had had your ration. Everyone had to sign up with a retailer and then always purchase your goods from them. Food rationing lasted even after the war had finished, and some items were only put on ration after the war had ended! The last item to be taken off ration and therefore end rationing was meat which was removed at midnight on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1954, nine years after the war ended.

Clothes were also put on ration in 1942 as there was a shortage of fabric. This led to the 'Make Do and Mend' campaign to try and stop people from buying new items. The clothes ration book also had coupons in it to ensure clothes were available to everyone. At the start of the year each person was allocated 60 coupons but this later dropped to 48 as fabric became scarcer. It might sound like a lot of coupons but one pair of boy's trousers would have used 6 coupons (and don't forget how quickly children grow) and a men's coat would have used 16. Plus you still had to pay for the items!

Other items that were rationed include; coal in 1941 and soap, gas and electricity in 1942.

### PUPIL ACTIVITY

Using the photocopyable worksheet pupils need to look at how people were encouraged to not waste food or clothing.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

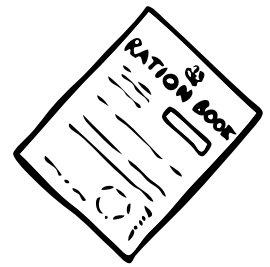
You have the opportunity to link in with your local McCarthy & Stone residents. Try and organise a visit so your pupils can find out about the effect rationing had on daily life from people who lived through it.



### CURRICULUM LINKS

History 2a 2c 2d 4a 4b 5c 8a 11b English En1 1a-f 2a-e 3a 3f Art and Design 1 a-c 5a 5d

# A LITTLE OF WHAT YOU FANCY?



During the war both food and clothing were rationed. This was to ensure that everyone could have a little of everything without it running out. Many items that were imported weren't available at all or were in very short supply (tropical fruit for example).

In order to encourage people to make the most of what they already had, campaigns such as 'Make do and Mend' and 'Dig for Victory' were launched.

Look at the historic campaigns and these posters here:



Images © The Imperial War Museum

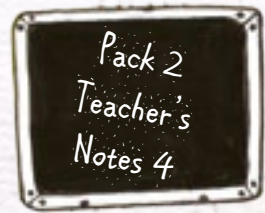
Imagine you are in charge of making sure people don't waste coal, gas, electricity and soap, all of which were rationed during the war. How would you try and encourage people to save these precious resources? You need to come up with a slogan, which is a short phrase to get the idea across, for example 'Dig for Victory'. You also need to come up with a poster which will be used to promote your campaign.

Use the space below to come up with ideas, then draw and colour the poster. Don't forget to include your slogan on it!





# VICTORY, TIME TO CELEBRATE!



## THE END OF THE WAR (INCLUDING A BIG STREET PARTY)

### Background information for use in class discussion

The war had raged for 5 years and spread across the globe killing 40 million men, women and children. The end of this long war happened over a period of just 11 days in 1945.

On 27<sup>th</sup> April, Allied forces closed in on Milan in Italy. It was here that the Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini was captured and shot, his body was then hung up for all to see.

On 30<sup>th</sup> April the battle of Berlin was raging and closing in on Adolf Hitler the German dictator. Adolf Hitler had heard of Mussolini's death and fearing the same would happen to him he committed suicide.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May with the two major dictators dead the German forces in Italy surrendered. The following day the German forces in Berlin also surrendered. Over the next 5 days German forces in various countries also surrendered.

At 2.41am on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945 General Alfred Jodl signed the 'unconditional surrender documents for all German forces'. News of their surrender broke on 8<sup>th</sup> May and was met with huge celebrations and is known as Victory in Europe day – VE day! VE Day was celebrated in every town and city with over a million people celebrating in the streets

However, despite the German's surrendering on 7<sup>th</sup> May one of the worst parts to the Second World war was still to take place. In the third year of the war on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1941 Japanese warplanes bombed the US Navy in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. At this point America went to war with Japan. Hence despite the German forces surrendering in May 1945, America and Japan were still fighting. On 6<sup>th</sup> August 1945, the first nuclear bomb was dropped by the United States of America on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later on the 9<sup>th</sup> August a second bomb was dropped by the USA on Nagasaki. Each of these bombs killed over 60,000 in seconds. The Japanese surrendered.

### PUPIL ACTIVITY



Victory! The war is over, fighting soldiers slowly return and children come home, but how did people celebrate?

Use the photocopyable worksheet to help your pupils plan a street party to celebrate VE day. They will need to design invitations to send out to their local McCarthy & Stone residents who will hopefully be attending their street party.

Use the photocopyable worksheet. Think about what has been invented since 1930.



### CURRICULUM LINKS

History 2a 2c 2d 4a 5c 8a 11b - English En3 1a 1e 2a-e 5b 9b 11 12

# VICTORY, TIME TO CELEBRATE!

The war ended on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 and celebrations took place throughout the country! Street parties were a common way of celebrating Victory in Europe day (VE day), roads were decorated with bunting, ribbons and streamers (which were made from old/recycled items as rationing hadn't yet stopped).

You need to plan your own VE day street party to have at school. You will be inviting your local McCarthy & Stone residents to come along and join in, so you will need to design invitations, decorations and also come up with a menu of finger food that you can make with food from your rations.

Plan your invitation here: Don't forget to include, why you are celebrating, where the party is taking place and when they need to arrive.



When planning the decorations, try and use recycled items.

The food will need to be simple and made from ingredients that were readily available in 1945.

Here are a couple of ideas:

## Jelly Eggs

Make up some jelly according to the instructions. Fill egg cups and allow to set. Turn out set jelly in the egg cups on to a tray and put the jelly half eggs on the tray in the fridge. Refill the cups with more jelly. Once this is set, carefully lift the set halves off the tray and place onto of the full egg cups so you have cups with a whole jelly egg in.

## VE Day sandwiches

Cut the bread thinly and remove the crusts. Fill with either; Raspberry jam, mashed hard boiled eggs with mayonnaise, drained sardines and mayonnaise, mashed tinned crab, Marmite and thinly sliced cucumber or peeled and thinly sliced tomatoes. No sliced meat as it was still on ration. The sandwiches then need cutting into small triangles.

