The Home Front in Britain
Images, Myths and Forgotten Experiences since 1914

Edited by
Maggie Andrews
University of Worcester, UK

and

Janis Lomas
Independent Scholar, UK

palgrave
macmillan
Contents

List of Illustrations vii
Foreword ix
Charles Bagot-Jewitt
Acknowledgements xii
Notes on Contributors xiii

Introduction 1
Maggie Andrews and Janis Lomas

1 Ideas and Ideals of Domesticity and Home in the First World War 6
Maggie Andrews

2 A Personal Account of the Home Front 21
Angela Clare Smith

3 Soldiering On: War Widows in First World War Britain 39
Janis Lomas

4 Mortality or Morality? Keeping Workers Safe in the First World War 57
Anne Spurgeon

5 A Heroine at Home: The Housewife on the First World War Home Front 73
Karen Hunt

6 Female Agricultural Workers in Wales in the First World War 92
Thomas George

7 Ellen Wilkinson and Home Security 1940–1945 108
Paula Bartley

8 Guernsey Mothers and Children: Forgotten Evacuees 139
Gillian Mawson

9 The Home Front as a ‘Moment’ for Animals and Humans: Exploring the Animal–Human Relationship in Contemporary Diaries and Letters 152
Hilda Kean
Contents

10 The Weak and the Wicked: Non-Conscripted Masculinities in 1940s British Cinema 170
Paul Elliott

11 Second World War Rationing: Creativity and Buying to Last 185
Elspeth King and Maggie Andrews

12 Idle Women: Challenging Gender Stereotypes on Britain's Inland Waterways During the Second World War 201
Barbara Hately-Broad and Bob Moore

13 ‘Doing Your Bit’: Women and the National Savings Movement in the Second World War 217
Rosalind Watkiss Singleton

14 Contemporary Images and Ideas of the Home Front 232
Maggie Andrews

Index 245
List of Illustrations

Figures

1.1 William (Will) Brown, a young soldier from Worcester who wrote regularly to his mother. By kind permission of Sean Brown, Worcestershire. 123

1.2 Letter from Will Brown to his mother. By kind permission of Sean Brown, Worcestershire. 124

1.3 Letter from Will Brown to his mother. By kind permission of Sean Brown, Worcestershire. 125

1.4 Letter to Lois Turner in Stone, Staffordshire. Reproduced by kind permission of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service (SRO 5778/1/21). 126

2.1 Jack and Gert Adam. Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Armouries. 127

2.2 Jack Jnr., Peggie and Madge. Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Armouries. 128

2.3 Jack with his unit. Jack is centre fourth row from the left. Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Armouries. 128

3.1 Swansea Women whose husbands and sons were on active service waiting to register for army pay, note many are wearing their husbands hats. 129

5.1 Potato Day at Bentalls of Kingston – 4 May 1917. When it became known that Bentalls would be stocking potatoes during the war years (there were shortages although no direct rationing of potatoes), people queued round the block to purchase their spuds, sold as a special promotion at the store. Reproduced with permission of the Mary Evans Picture Library. 129

6.1 Women's Land Army recruitment poster, showing four young women carrying tools and a basket of produce, and leading a team of horses, 1918. Reproduced with permission of the Mary Evans Picture Library. 130

7.1 Ellen Wilkinson on the hustings. Reproduced by kind permission of the People’s History Museum, Manchester. 130

8.1 Guernsey Mothers prepare to evacuate. By kind permission of the Priaux Library, Candie Gardens Guernsey. 131
viii  List of Illustrations

8.2  Eva and Bert le Page and baby Anthony, August 1940.  
By kind permission of Anthony Le Page, Petit Creux,  
Guensey.  
8.3  Mrs Kath Ozanne with Tony and Mike Cheshire, 1942.  
By kind permission of Mr Anthony Ozanne.  
8.4  By kind permission of the German Occupation Museum  
Forest Guernsey.
9.1  Firefighters with their dog mascot during the  
Second World War. Reproduced with the permission  
of Mary Evans Picture Library.  
11.1  Hat crocheted out of garden string. Hat from the  
collection of the Fashion History Museum, Cambridge,  
Canada. Photography by Jonathan Walford.  
12.1  Kit Gayford and women trainees walking along a dock.  
Reproduced with the kind permission of the Canal and  
River Trust.  
13.1  War Industry ‘Wings for Victory Week’ 1943. At a  
factory two women war workers fill bombs which have  
been covered in savings stamps following ‘Wings for  
Victory’ week in London. A third worker looks on.

Tables

5.1  Women and waged work  
5.2  Finding the housewives  
6.1  Percentage excess (+) or deficit (-) in numbers of  
females permanently employed in agriculture in  
Wales as compared with July 1914.