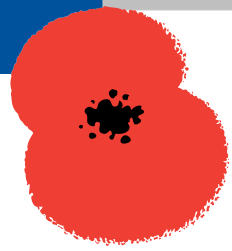


A week learning and Remembering the First World War

Introduction – the five assemblies here can be used for the week before Remembrance Sunday. The poem currently listed as day 5 can be used on Armistice Day (11th November) if you wish. After the first days assembly the assemblies for days 2, 3, and 4 can in fact be used in any order.



DAY 4: WOMEN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT AND EDITH CAVELL

In preparation:

- The Royal British Legion CD Rom
- Screen
- Select a section of the DVD showing the Women's Land Army from the First World War
- Also have a picture of Edith Cavell and the case study of her life from the CD Rom ready

Script

That film shows just one of the things that women did during the First World War. They did it again during the Second World War.

Because the First World War involved so many men going off to fight, women had to do the jobs that men had been used to doing. 90 years ago women didn't have the rights that they have today and lots of jobs were seen as being suitable only for men. But when the war came, women were needed to do that work. Without the Women's Land Army there would have been no food for people to eat. Without women working in the ammunition factories, there would have been no weapons for the men on the front line to use to fight.

The First World War was also the first war that women were allowed near the front line both as Nurses and Ambulance drivers.

Some women belonged to organisations such as the Red Cross as well. This is the story of one woman and how her actions in trying to help people during the war ended up with her being shot by the enemy.

Use the case study of Edith Cavell and ask 3 – 4 pupils to read out sections of her story.

Moment of reflection

The story of Edith Cavell reminds us that it is not just those who fight that are affected by war. Women, children and elderly people are also caught up in those types of events. Edith's own words to "not have hatred or bitterness to anyone" remind us that when we wear a Poppy we should value peace and reflect on the importance of trying not to hate anyone enough to want to fight them.

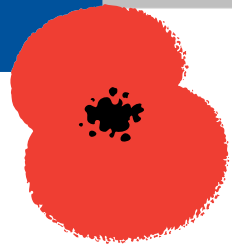
Prayer or Poem:

Select any of the poems not already used.

Wilfred Owen was born in 1893 in Shropshire. He joined up in 1915 and published his poetry about what he saw and felt. He was involved with many battles and was killed on 4th November 1918. He is buried in France.

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Anthem for Doomed Youth by Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, --
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

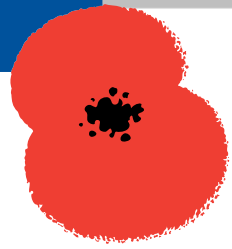
Or

Edith Cavell by Laurence Binyon

She was binding the wounds of her enemies when they came --
The lint in her hand unrolled.
They battered the door with their rifle-butts, crashed it in:
She faced them gentle and bold.
They haled her before the judges where they sat
In their places, helmet on head.
With question and menace the judges assailed her, "Yes,
I have broken your law," she said.
"I have tended the hurt and hidden the hunted, have done
As a sister does to a brother,
Because of a law that is greater than you have made,
Because I could do no other."
"Deal as you will with me. This is my choice to the end,
To live in the life I vowed."
"She is self-confessed," they cried; "she is self-condemned.
She shall die, that the rest may be cowed."
In the terrible hour of the dawn, when the veins are cold,
They led her forth to the wall.
"I have loved my land," she said, "but it is not enough:
Love requires of me all.
"I will empty my heart of bitterness, hating none."
And sweetness filled her brave
With a vision of understanding beyond the hour
That knelled to the waiting grave.

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They bound her eyes, but she stood as if she shone.
The rifles it was that shook
When the hoarse command rang out. They could not endure
That last, that defenceless look.
And the officer strode and pistoled her surely
surely, ashamed
That men, seasoned in blood,
Should quail at a woman, only a woman, --
As a flower stamped in the mud.
And now that the deed was securely done, in the night
When none had known her fate,
They answered those that had striven for her, day by day:
"It is over, you come too late."
And with many words and sorrowful-phrased excuse
Argued their German right
To kill, most legally; hard though the duty be,
The law must assert its might.
Only a woman! yet she had pity on them,
The victim offered slain
To the gods of fear that they worship. Leave them there,
Red hands, to clutch their gain.
She bewailed not herself, and we will bewail her not,
But with tears of pride rejoice
That an English soul was found so crystal-clear
To be the triumphant voice
Of the human heart that dares adventure all
But live to itself untrue,
And beyond all laws sees love as the light in the night,
As the star it must answer to.
The hurts she healed, the thousands comforted -- these
Make a fragrance of her fame.
But because she stepped to her star right on through death
It is Victory speaks her name.