Day Two History -

What did women do on the front line in World War One?

We have studied World War Two and have looked at the role women played during this war. Read the information about the role of women during the First World War. What do you notice? Are there any similarities and differences between the roles of Women during World War One and World War Two?

* **Women were not allowed to fight as soldiers in World War One. So they found other ways to help on the front line.**
* Conditions were dangerous for women travelling to the war zones. They were at risk from enemy fire.
* After working long hours, they slept on uncomfortable camp beds and had to be up early for duty.
* Women on the front line were very brave. For many this was the first time they had ever been away from Britain.

What was the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps?

By 1917 the Army was running short of men. The War Office realised that some front line jobs which did not involve fighting were being done by men. They decided that women could do these jobs instead.

Heroic women

Some women became famous for the way they helped soldiers.

* Marie Curie discovered important chemical elements which meant doctors could use X-ray machines.
* Flora Sandes joined St John's Ambulance service. In the confusion of war she was enrolled in the Serbian army.Flora was the only British woman to officially serve as a soldier in World War One. She became a Sergeant Major.
* Gabrielle Petit from Belgium was one of the first female spies. She gathered information about the Germans for the British Secret Service.

Other women became heroes for their work in medical roles.

Medicine and first aid

Before war broke out there were only approximately 200 female doctors. A shortage of trained medical staff during World War One gave opportunities for women to take a wide range of crucial roles.

How did life change for women? At first some women saw the front line of war as an adventure. They quickly realised the reality was harder and sadder than the stories they had read.

But women learnt new skills and some worked as doctors, mechanics and in other jobs which would have been unthinkable before the war. Like women at home they had tasted independence and didn't want it to end.