



# SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

## AMBULANCE TRAINS: WOMEN

A FORGOTTEN FIRST  
WORLD WAR STORY

TALKING  


Ages  
**11-14**  
**14-16**

Topics

**WORLD WAR ONE • HISTORY**

Skills used

**OBSERVATION • DISCUSSION**

**women**

# About Ambulance Trains

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Explore the realm of First World War ambulance trains with our image bank for Key Stage 3 pupils. Discover the significance of the railway industry and ambulance trains during the 1914-1918 conflict, and learn about the life-changing journeys of wounded soldiers.

# Using images in your classroom

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Our galleries in the Science Museum Group are full of amazing objects which are all examples of how science and technology has changed and improved our everyday lives.

## **You can use images:**

- To hook students' interest at the start of a lesson or to introduce a new topic.
- As part of a discussion to explore the stories of the people who have shaped the world we live in through their passion and creativity.
- As mystery objects and get your students using their science and history skills such as observation, using prior knowledge and asking questions.
- To create a display of applications of science in your classroom, connecting past, present and future examples of technology.
- In a pre-visit activity to familiarise students with some of the objects and themes they will find in any of our museums.

# Women: Background information

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In the First World War the role of women changed dramatically. With many husbands, sons and brothers heading off to the front, women had to take their place in the jobs they left behind. Many of these roles were paid but some were voluntary such as; ticket collectors, nurses on ambulance trains and station buffet attendants.

These new roles allowed women to experience being part of a needed taskforce. They gained skills and expertise in roles that only men had previously had.

The aim of these resources is to help your students to explore the role of women in the First World War. The resources offer an insight into some of the roles and experiences of women at the front as well as at home on the railways.

# Teachers' notes

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Use these images as discussion points for learning about the lives of women in the First World War.

Encourage your students to explore and interpret the resources.

Compare the experiences of women on the home front and in France.

## **Talking points:**

What's happening in these pictures?

Why do you think these photographs might have been taken?

What does this tell you about the role of women?

Does anything in these resources surprise you?

What has changed with regards to the role of women on the railways now?

What do these photographs not tell us?

What questions do you need to ask about these resources?

What other types of sources of information do you think you need to look at to find out the answers to these questions?



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## **Women munitions workers**

No 1 Fuse shop at Horwich Works, Lancashire, 1916. Part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway works was given over to the manufacture of weapons. From June 1915 onwards around 2200 shells were made every week here.



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## **In a man's world**

Female workers in a railway office, 1916.  
Many male workers joined the army; women were employed in their place. Some roles were in administration and catering, whilst others included blacksmiths, welders and electricians.



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## **Wartime stations**

Male and female porters with luggage on a station platform, about 1918. Women were employed as station porters and engine drivers.







Image: Courtesy of  
Imperial War Museum

## Stations at Christmas

British troops celebrating Christmas with staff at the free buffet on Euston Station, December 1917.





Image: Courtesy of  
Imperial War Museum

## A tribute to war

Wounded soldiers from ambulance trains are taken by ambulance to hospitals. Women outside the station give flowers to the men in the ambulances.

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Image: Courtesy of  
Imperial War Museum

## **Nurse caring for soldiers on-board**

Nursing was already a female profession. Ambulance trains employed nurses to remain on the trains throughout the war.

There were 2–4 nurses on board every ambulance train.