

# Think about War

## 1. Conscription!

The First World War... the Great War... the War to end all Wars?

1914  
Britain  
declares war

ARMY  
RECRUITING  
OFFICE

Many volunteered for the forces, and thought it would be all over by Christmas.

But, as the war continued, the number killed and injured rose dramatically..

There weren't enough volunteers  
.....so....

Compulsory conscription was suggested - this forced men to join the army and fight. Not everyone agreed and there was a campaign against conscription.

Why punish someone who refuses to kill?

... and the Government reluctantly accepted conscientious objection, but without explaining what it meant.



On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1916 the Military Service Act came into force for men between the ages of 18 and 41

Now a Call-up letter took them to a local Army camp - they had a health check and details taken



... in uniform they became Soldiers - who must obey Army Law

But not all accepted their call-up. Many men appealed and argued their case for.... exemption... before a Tribunal.

### Military Service Tribunal



There was always a military representative keeping a check on things.

The Tribunal tended to be unclear what the 'conscience clause' actually meant...

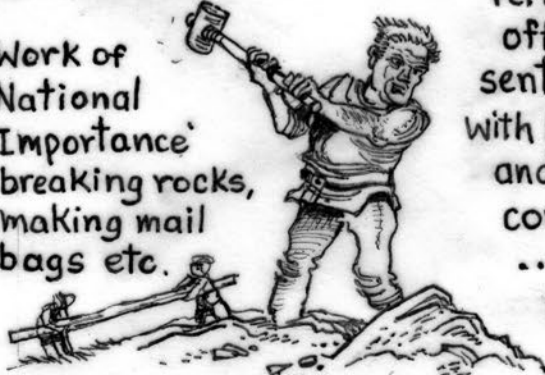
This was made up of local elderly worthies who supported the war and were mostly unsympathetic.

Absolute exemption from military service



Exemption to join a non-combat corps, wearing uniform, but not handling weapons.

Work of 'National Importance' breaking rocks, making mail bags etc.



Those who refused all offers were sent to prison with hard labour and solitary confinement ... because they refused to kill

