

# **EMBSAY-WITH-EASTBY and WORLD WAR ONE**

## **War Distress**

### **Separation Allowances**

Before World War One, only a certain number of soldiers were permitted to be married and thus claim allowances for their wives and children. The majority of wives were unrecognised by the authorities and had to fend for themselves.

But the need for rapid and large-scale recruitment of volunteers, and the lack of accommodation for wives and families in the First World War forced the government to acknowledge the need to provide for dependants from very early on.

In 1915 a soldier or sailor's wife received 12/6d per week, 5/- for one child, or 8/6d for two children. 6d per day was taken out of the man's pay as a contribution to the separation allowance. The definition of dependant was extended to include a soldier's parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings and common-law wives (if they would otherwise be destitute).

### **Pensions – War Widows and Disabled Soldiers**

The Ministry of Pensions was not established until 1917. By 1920 they were paying out 1.6 million pensions to ex-servicemen. The pensions were granted on a strictly enforced sliding scale according to a % calculation of the extent of disability. Many men found their injuries, no matter how permanent, were not deemed serious enough to qualify them for a pension, and became dependent on charity, such as the British Legion.

The payment system for widows and dependent children were equally complex and harsh. It is estimated there were 240,000 soldiers' widows by the end of the war – stretching the Government's resources to the limit. Hence, many widows were subjected to constant monitoring of their "moral" behaviour – minor transgressions could lead to their pension being suspended.

Not until 1925 were all widows entitled to pensions.



# SOLDIERS' SEPARATION ALLOWANCES

INCREASED RATES from MARCH 1, 1915

Increased Separation Allowances for the War are now given to the wives and children of married soldiers and to the dependants of unmarried men and widowers.

## WIVES AND CHILDREN OF MARRIED MEN.

The New Weekly Rates are as follows:

	Private and Corporal.	Sergeant.	Cot.-Sergeant.	Quarter-Master Sergeant.	Wt. Officer (1st class).
Wife - - - - -	12s. 6d.	15s. 0d.	16s. 6d.	22s. 0d.	23s. 0d.
Wife and child - -	17s. 6d.	20s. 0d.	21s. 6d.	27s. 0d.	28s. 0d.
Wife and 2 children	21s. 0d.	23s. 6d.	25s. 0d.	30s. 6d.	31s. 6d.

With 2s. extra for each additional child.

These rates include the usual allotment of 3s. 6d. a week for privates and corporals, and 5s. 10d. for other ranks.

Adopted children are admitted. The ordinary limit of age for children is now 16, and the allowance is continued up to 21 in certain cases (for higher education, apprenticeship on a nominal wage, or physical or mental infirmity). Soldiers marrying AFTER enlistment are now eligible.

An extra 3s. 6d. a week is paid in the case of soldiers living in the London postal area at the time of enlistment if the families continue to live there.

Forms of Application for Separation Allowance can be filled in at the Recruiting Office.

## MOTHERLESS CHILDREN.

5s. a week clear for each child.

## OTHER DEPENDANTS OF UNMARRIED SOLDIERS AND WIDOWERS.

If a soldier who is unmarried or a widower (or one whose wife is not drawing separation allowance because she was living apart from him before the war) had any person or persons (whether related or not), including children, actually dependent upon him before he enlisted, the Government will pay that dependant a weekly sum provided the soldier contributes a share (one third or less) of the amount. The intention is to allow to the dependant, within certain limits (see below), the same amount weekly that the soldier paid him or her before enlistment, less any portion that went to pay for his own keep.

As an example, if the soldier had paid 17s. 6d. a week in peace to his mother, and 7s. 6d. of this was needed for his own keep, the allowance admissible will be the remaining 10s. Towards this the soldier will contribute 5d. a day from his pay.

The amount the Government will pay to any one dependant of a soldier will not exceed the amount of separation allowance for a wife (see table above), but that limit will be raised if more persons than one were dependent on the same soldier.

To secure an allowance the soldier must complete Army Form D.1838 (which will be given to him at the Recruiting Office), and hand the completed form to his Commanding Officer within one month of enlistment.

NOTE. As it is impossible to explain all the classes of cases on a poster, intending recruits can obtain fuller information from the two pamphlets for married and unmarried men, revised to 1st March, 1915, which they can get at any Post Office.

## WAR CHARITIES

**Before the War**, in the absence of a welfare state (apart from the recently introduced National Insurance Scheme for the unemployed, elderly and sick which was woefully inadequate), there was a wide variety of charitable and philanthropic provision for those who needed help, aside from the dreaded workhouse – benevolent ladies “of leisure”, business entrepreneurs, religious missions, trade unions, friendly societies, specialised charities (such as schools for the blind, and the NSPCC).

One of the most immediate and recognisable effects of the War was the **economic dislocation** it caused. As industries converted and men enlisted in their hundreds of thousands, old jobs were lost, new ones created, and families struggled to come to terms with the loss of traditional sources of income. In addition, the sudden influx of refugees necessitated a rapid and public response on a huge scale.

**By the end of the Great War** 17,899 charities were on the official War Charities Register, an increase of 50% in the total number of charities since 1913. By November 1915 it is estimated that that nearly £7 million had been donated to Belgian relief funds, £5.5 million to the National Relief Fund, and £5 million for soldiers’ comforts. By the end of the war over £100 million had been raised for a wide range of charitable causes. Over 2 million women volunteers registered to work for these charities.

### **The role of “Lady Bountiful”**

Many contemporary newspapers and magazines (and even historians of the period) were dismissive or underestimated the value of wartime charitable work, especially the role of upper and middle-class women. However, many of these women were in fact already well-experienced in fund-raising, organising relief and providing welfare services, providing essential welfare in the absence of State aid.

There can be no doubt their work eventually helped to shape official attitudes towards the essential need for a welfare state.



www.ww1postcard.com

# STAR & GARTER HOME

for

## TOTALLY DISABLED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

PATRONS: H.M. THE QUEEN & H.M. QUEEN ALEXANDRA



*Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors, from the Daily Express, August 24th 1914.*

You can never repay these utterly broken men. But you can show your gratitude by helping to build this Home, where they will be tenderly cared for during the rest of their lives.

**LET EVERY WOMAN SEND WHAT SHE CAN TO-DAY**  
to the Lady Cowdray, Hon. Treasurer, The British Women's  
Hospital Fund, 21 Old Bond Street, W

*Special Reproductions of the Cartoon, 2|6 and 1|-, can be obtained at above address,  
or, Postage and Packing free, 2|10 and 1|2*




## Widespread involvement in War Charity work

It seems everyone, including schoolchildren, became involved in some form or another, whether at a national, regional or local level – donating money, organising or taking part in fund-raising activities, making or donating gifts for soldiers, or becoming voluntary workers with a charity or uniformed service.

It would be misleading to assume that charity work was only carried out by upper and middle class women, although it is true that they were far more likely to have the time and education needed to be the organisers and administrators of the larger, national voluntary organisations.

It is clear from local newspapers that many **working women**, at the very least, devoted much of their spare time to fund-raising within their local communities, or in knitting and sewing comforts for soldiers. Many wage-earners donated regularly to charities, either as individuals or through work-place schemes.



Delivered by FRANK BOURGONIN, A.R.A.

www.propaganda.com

### SAILORS' & SOLDIERS' TOBACCO FUND

IT IS A SIGNIFICANT FACT THAT ALMOST EVERY LETTER FROM THE FRONT CONTAINS A REQUEST FOR "SOMETHING TO SMOKE!"

Contributions gratefully received by  
Hon. Sec. CENTRAL HOUSE, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.





## **THEY STARVE —and WONDER**

**The Children of Belgium  
need immediate assistance.**

**A**MONG all the nations battling for the great cause of humanity none have suffered more terribly than our gallant ally Belgium. Throughout the four long years during which their country has been overrun and wantonly devastated by the enemy, the plight of her people—men, women, and children—has been almost indescribable.

No words can ever express the gratitude the world owes to that brave race who, in 1914, when the whole of civilisation was at stake, were the first to hurl themselves fearlessly into the breach, and by so doing lost everything save their soul.

### **How All can Help.**

One of the greatest anxieties throughout these terrible days is the welfare of the young children of Belgium. To keep them from literal starvation the "Working Men's Belgian Fund" were appointed delegates for a children's fund under the presidency of H.S.H. Princess A. de Liane. This branch sends sick and debilitated children from Belgium to various hostels established by the Fund in Holland, where they are fed, clothed, and medically cared for until restored to health.

To carry on this most necessary work funds are urgently needed, and all subscriptions and donations will be most gratefully received. Remittances should be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer,

**"BELGIUM CHILDREN FUND,"**

c/o **"WORKING MEN'S BELGIAN FUND,"**

*Working under the patronage of H.E. the Belgian Minister,  
Em. Vandervelde, and registered under the War Charities Act, 1916.*

**32, GROSVENOR PLACE, LONDON, S.W. 1.**



*Cartoon from "Punch" Magazine, 1914, rather mocking the enthusiasm of lady volunteers for charitable work.*



## FLAG DAYS

Nearly every week the Craven Herald reported another social event was being held in this village, or in another – an entertainment evening, a fete, a whist drive, a tennis tournament, and so on.

Flag Days (street collections where donors are given a pin badge) were the innovation of a woman called Agnes Morrison in September 1914 and rapidly became a popular means of raising funds for innumerable charities – some local, some national.

Among the most **popular causes** were:

- Belgian Refugee Fund
- Soldiers and Sailors' Family Association
- The Blue Cross Fund for War Horses
- The Red Cross
- The National Relief Fund (for soldiers' dependants)
- Dr Barnardo's Children's' Homes & The NSPCC
- Egg Collections for Soldiers
- Tobacco for Soldiers' Fund
- Local Hospitals for convalescent soldiers
- St Dunstan's Hospital for Blind soldiers



*Flag Pins for War Horse charities*





*A Flag Day, London, 1916*



**A SUMMERY AND SHIMMERING SYMBOL OF THE WAR**  
**The Flag Day Flapper. A Camera Study by F. J. Mortimer, F.R.P.S.**

*Idealised vision of charity fund-raising in "The Graphic" magazine, June 1918*



## EMSBAY WAR DISTRESS COMMITTEE

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 1914, 21 men and 12 women formed the Embsay War Distress Committee in anticipation of the war causing unemployment as industry adapted to new demands, and soldiers' dependants needing financial assistance.

Attendances at the meetings sometimes reached over 40, such was the interest taken by local residents. By the end of October 1914, an astonishing £94 had been collected locally to support the Embsay W.D.C.'s work.

The Embsay W.D.C. was soon answerable to the West Riding County Council Distress Committee, itself working under an increasing raft of government regulations and auditing systems. Nevertheless, they had total autonomy in the collection and distribution of locally raised funds for residents (such as war widows) adversely affected by the war, and dealt with about 10 to 20 applications every week, except in 1915, when there was "an absence of distress".

On the arrival of the **Belgian refugee family**, the Embsay W.D.C. set up a separate bank account and appointed Miss Heron as "matron", to look after their day-to-day welfare.

In October 1914 a **Ladies' Committee** was formed, their main function to knit, sew and raise funds for refugees, soldiers' comforts (warm clothes) and gift parcels.

Meeting weekly, a large portion of the committee's work entailed **fund-raising for various charities** – especially the National Belgian Fund, the Red Cross, The Serbian Relief Fund, the Scottish Women's Hospital Fund, and the Skipton Khaki Club.

In May 1918 they formed a visiting committee to visit soldiers in local convalescent hospitals. By that time they were also dealing with an increasing number of applications for "alternative" pensions from widows and disabled ex-servicemen, the state pensions being woefully inadequate. The Ladies Committee was still knitting, and that Christmas sent out 90 Christmas parcels to soldiers and POWs.



*The Heron family, Eastby Hall, c.1920*