



Recruitment, fighting and gas!

A World War One Demonstration

As part of the year 8 study into the Great War students are going to get a glimpse into the lives of those soldiers that joined the BEF in 1914 and those who would never return.

The demonstration will focus on key areas of WW1 – The emphasis is the student being very active and handling stuff!

- **Recruitment and drill**
- **Fighting – Bayonet and rifle demo**
- **Technology in Warfare – Gas**

Equipment

Sandbags (*local builders merchant*)

Rifle (*speak to your local branch of WFA*)

Bayonets (*Speak to your local branch of WFA*)

Smoke grenades - 1 for each group (*Paintball Company*)

Helmets (*EBay*)

Uniform (*not essential*)

Gas masks (*improvise with bandage*)

Broom handles (*Local Builders*)

When Students arrive for the demonstration they will be given a helmet. Students instructed to have shirt sleeves rolled up, to look like proper working class boys!

Recruitment / Drill – Helmets / Broom Handles

Students to assemble on the Astroturf or Hard play - Intro idea of Kitchener's Army / Pals battalion – regular friends becoming soldiers, excitement about going to fight for King and Country. Students to get into the mind-set that they have never been away from home, that they would be given a uniform and a wage along with regular meals. They did not know the true horrors of what was ahead of them.

Teacher to lead drill around the Astroturf/ hard play– very strict –Students to carry broom handles as if they were rifles. Select students who will have performed poorly and make an example of them – (individual students to be briefed – select 2 or 3 prior to event) Students should become aware that like them the boys of 1914 didn't have any experience of being soldiers.

Teacher to go over what each soldier would be issued – KIT etc.

Fighting – Bayonet – Weapon DEMO – Rifle / Bayonets / Sandbags

Teacher – Intro on Rifle – capability – how used – techniques when in no man's land - how to advance with rifle – taking up the firing position, students to complete once teacher has demonstrated– 2 rifles available for students to use. Use of Bayonet – what it was designed for – Trench fighting etc. Students to walk towards sand bags and complete the bayonet drill. Each child to have a go – Safety is paramount! Sandbags will be hanging from the goal posts, similar to that of footage held by IWM

Technology in Warfare – Gas – Smoke grenades / Gas masks *[it is important to consider participants with respiratory problem, e.g. Asthma, in the Risk Assessment for this activity]*

Teacher to set the scene of the war and the changing technology with focus on the use of gas, students to be shown and wear the variety of gas masks – Students to advance as a battalion from one point to another on the blow of a whistle (officer's trench whistle) - they will be able to do this clearly – Students then complete the same activity through cloud of smoke. Three students will be issued with 1 gas aid each and on the blow of a whistle students will die all but the number 3. This will highlight how ineffective early gas prevention was.

1. Gorse pad
2. Gas Hood
3. Gas mask

Smoke grenades will replicate the gas attacks of 1915. Students will realise how difficult it is to complete. They will then be told of the horrors of gas and how soldiers died.

Smoke grenades obtained from Paintball Company.

Any questions please contact Martyn Hale, Education Officer for the Western Front Association.