

Why did Welsh men enlist?

Men would enlist for many different reasons. Lots of men and even boys would enlist. Some were underage, as young as 14. When these boys enlisted to become soldiers, none asked them for a birth certificate, so all they had to do was to lie about their age and they could go to fight. Three quarters of a million men and boys joined up at the start of the war. They would go to war to protect their family. They would try to stop the Germans from invading. Another reason to go to war was because their lives led nowhere. They didn't have anything better to do, so they decided to fight.

(by Annalie Hodge)

The men were lied to. The army would put up posters around town convincing men aged 18 and over to join. Many of these posters would give quotes such as 'We need you.' Also, 'War isn't all work guys!' The army was made out better than it really was. So many men and boys were interested in joining the army that boys as young as 14 would lie about their age. At the start of WW1, lying about your age was pretty easy, as the army needed as many willing soldiers as possible. Also it wasn't compulsory to show the army any certification of proof of age. Although the law was 18, this law was broken so many times. Many soldiers volunteered to enlist for money. Remarkable survivors of WW1 claimed even when they were young boys they wanted to be part of the army –badly. I think this was due to the persuasive posters around the villages. The posters were so convincing that the motivation for joining the army was strong. Many soldiers were buried along with their real ages.

(by Abey Grant)

There were loads of reasons why men and boys of all ages wanted to enlist in the army. Boys as young as 14 lied and said they were 18 or 19 to be allowed to join. They did this because they were brought up to believe that war was a good thing and they would return as heroes. 500,000 men were made redundant in the weeks after war broke out and they had nothing, war guaranteed the bare essentials, food, etc. The motivation to join the army was extremely strong. Men and boys would march through the streets on recruitment drives looking for people to join up. Eventually, communities of men and boys all over Britain signed up to go to war, not fully knowing what they were letting themselves in for. Towards 1916 the numbers of men enlisting dropped dramatically. Soon men were forced to join the war and they had no choice about whether they wanted to go or not!

(by Bethan Dyke)

Most men and boys joined the British army at the start. Not because they were forced to, but because they volunteered. With the jobs that the men already had such as the pit, it was an adventure to get out. Some men were depressed and thought their lives led to nowhere so why not join the army and fight for their country? The government relied on persuading men to join the army and to fight. They were under a lot of pressure. Also not many jobs were available and men got sick of repetitive jobs. Boys were often brought up with amazing stories about the army, which inspired them to go. Boys as young as 14 lied about their age just to join the army. They wanted to die for their country and make people proud. It was easy to become a soldier: they didn't ask your age; you didn't need to prove it with a birth certificate. You said you were 18 and you were in. Women wanted to join but the government said they were not prepared for women to fight. Men enlisted for the army to protect their families as well as their country.

(by Rebekah Rogers)