Memories of War
NEW NARRATIVES AND UNTOLD STORIES

Second World War Commemoration and Memorials

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Key Stage 3:

Aims:
The aim of this resource is to introduce the subject of public commemoration in relation to the Second World War. To do this there will be a visit to the site of some of the most famous war memorials on Whitehall. The pupils will be issued with maps and sources, which will act as guides for their group explorations of these historical sites. This will help them actively engage with 'real' history and ask them to analyse the usefulness and validity of these commemorations. The class will finish with a classroom research based I.C.T. lesson where they will create their own war memorial, which will involve individual internet research and artistic design skills to show how they have bonded with the material. They will then present their image and ideas to the class thus enhancing their confidence skills.

Outline:

“Collective remembrance is public recollection”

War Memorials have always been a way to commemorate victories and remember the dead. According to the War Memorials Trust (WMT) there are over 100,000 war memorials in Britain. These memorials can take many forms, from the monolithic Cenotaph in Whitehall to the simplest plaque or entry in a book of remembrance. The majority of these commemorations are paid for by public subscription and often by people who personally knew those being remembered. This resource will focus on Second World War memorials in Westminster, London, and will also compare specific types of memorial, such as commemoration for women's roles in comparison to men’s. The focus of memorials still has a huge resonance today, however, is it possible to keep it relevant to young people. TEACHERS NOTE: As this is an area of great historical and social interest, this trip can be incorporated into a wider trip of the Westminster area.

Sources:
Source A - Map
Source B - Images and clues for the students to help locate the historical sites. Questions to answer.
Source C - Women’s memorials
Source D - BBC article

Activities:
1. Trip to Whitehall, follow the map around Whitehall and find the Second World War memorials
2. Compare the memorials for women and men
In class use a computer to research about memorials and create a fitting war memorial. This will then be presented to the class.
3. Extension class – Read the BBC article and answer the question

Further Reading/viewing:
BBC News, “Charlie Gilmour did not realise he was on Cenotaph”, last updated: 05/10/2011
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-15189414 accessed on: 26/04/2012

Key Words: Remembrance, commemoration, memorial, recollection, victories, Cenotaph, plaque

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Activities

Trip to Whitehall in Westminster

Using the map and key below try to locate as many of the memorials and statues around Whitehall as you can.

**IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE:** This is a very busy traffic thoroughfare, only cross roads at pedestrian crossings and where possible wear High Visibility clothing.

Follow the arrows and once you have found them, think about the questions attached.

Discuss with your partner/group and then make notes on a separate piece of paper. You will find that notes will make it easier to remember this information once you are back in the classroom and creating your own memorial.

1. When you look at the memorial what does it make you think?

2. Who do you think this memorial is for? Why do you think it was put here?

3. Do people still notice memorials?

4. What could be done to make them more noticeable for a new generation?

5. Why is it important to have memorials?

6. What do you think would be a fitting memorial?

**Source A**

Write the names of the memorials under their pictures when you find them
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Source A

KEY

Cenotaph

Women’s memorial

Household Division
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Source B
Activities

According to the War Memorials Trust, there are more than 200 Second World War memorials in Westminster. Of these there are only 6 that are specifically dedicated to the role of women in the war. The largest and most important of these is the Women of World War Two cenotaph on Whitehall (see fig 1). The rest are mostly mentions in books of remembrance.

Figure 1.

“It is sometimes claimed that women are not commemorated on war memorials. This is not true but you do have to look a bit harder to find them, only because their casualty rates weren’t as high. However, their contribution to the war effort is not as visible.”

Question 1.

By looking at the list of women’s memorials in Westminster in Source B, compare these with what you have seen today at Whitehall.

Question 2.

Are there any main differences or similarities you can spot?

Question 3.

Do you think the roles women played were as important as the men’s?

Question 4.

Read the oral testimonies given by women who served in the Second World War on Source B. Do you think they minded not being recognised?

Question 5.

Do you think there should be more commemoration for women involved in war?

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This is a list of memorials in Westminster relating to the roles women played in the Second World War.

1. Women’s Transport Service First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, Marble Plaque
2. St Paul’s Church, Wilton Place, Westminster (Fig. 1),
3. Women’s Voluntary Service, Roll of Honour, Westminster Abbey,
4. WRNS Book of Remembrance, Book of Remembrance, St Mary Le Strand Church,
5. WRNS SS Aguilla Memorial WW2, Alms Dish, St Mary Le Strand Church, St James Church Women’s Memorial, Book of Remembrance, St James Church, Paddington,
6. Women of World War Two, Cenotaph, Whitehall (Fig. 2)

**Oral Testimonies**

**Interviewer:** Did you – have you ever received any recognition for the work that you did during the war from the government or from...

**Doris:** No, I don’t think so [laughs].

**Interviewer:** How do you feel about having volunteered and helped out in the hospitals and being part of the war effort but not having been...

**Doris:** Oh, I was glad to do it. I didn’t expect any, no. No, I didn’t think so. That was just – you did it that’s all. I think I did – had a high moment when I used to go every year to go to – I had go to the air force service in Westminster Abbey.

*Doris Pullen*

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**Interviewer:** Then you received a cheque from the company as well after the war? Was it for five pounds?

**Eileen:** Well, the boss for the companies, apparently, they all contributed. I mean, they were twenty — twenty firms. They were all situated along the river: Calendars and Allworks and Thorntons and all of those along the river and whoever it was [laughs] must have gone around there and they all contributed and the four of us got a five pound — a big white five pound note [laughs] for all our work — yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did you feel like you were recognised for the work that you did?

**Eileen:** Yeah, yes — yes. Yes, I do — yeah. Yes, we had many sort of, not recommendations but letters and things that — to say thank you for being there — yeah.

*Eileen Rogers*

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3 United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials (UKNIWM) available at: [http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/server/show/ConMediaFile.112/ofConMemorial/40/fromUkniwmSearch/1](http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/server/show/ConMediaFile.112/ofConMemorial/40/fromUkniwmSearch/1) accessed on 16/04/2012
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Activities

1. Create a memorial

   - Using ideas from what you’ve seen on your trip and information researched online create a modern memorial that you think would appeal to the public today.
   - Think about what sort of materials you would use and why?
   - Will you write a message on your memorial, what would it say?

2. In groups of 3, research about memorials and create a PowerPoint Presentation including your memorial to present to the class.

   - You are trying to show whether you think public commemoration is still valid
   - Are women and men are remembered in the same way and is this fair?
   - What do you think would make commemoration more exciting?
At the student protests about tuition fees in 2011, a student was found swinging from a flag on the Cenotaph. A lot of people were very upset about this and it was worse because he did not know what the Cenotaph was. What do you think about his behaviour and the media outcry that followed it? (BBC article attached)

Charlie Gilmour, the son of Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour, was unaware he was swinging from the Cenotaph during student protests, a court has heard.

The Cambridge history student knew the "significance" of the monument but did not realise he was dangling from a war memorial, the Court of Appeal was told.

Gilmour, of Billingshurst, West Sussex, was jailed for 16 months for violent disorder in July. The 21-year-old is appealing against his sentence.

Judges heard Gilmour had taken LSD and valium before joining the central London protests against increased tuition fees last December.

He was seen hanging from a Union flag on the Cenotaph and leaping on to the bonnet of a Jaguar - part of a royal convoy.

Gilmour was previously found by a judge at Kingston-upon-Thames Crown Court to have thrown a rubbish bin at the vehicle.

His lawyers are also challenging this ruling as part of the appeal.

n.b. You may want to do further research on this topic to fully understand the media interest in the case.