


# YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU



On the outbreak of war, 4th August 1914, the British Regular Army totalled 160,000 men. Although it was far from being the “contemptible little army” many Germans believed it to be, this professional force was not large enough to fight the largest army ever deployed.

Lord Kitchener, who was rare among soldiers and politicians at that time in considering that the war would not be a short one, began his appeal for volunteers to enlist on the 8th August 1914. At first, there was no shortage. Within a month, the figures had reached 30,000 a day. Throughout the nation, recruitment stands, set up by the War Office, found it difficult to cope with the crowd of volunteers who rushed forward to ‘take up the sword of justice’ because ‘Your King and Country Needs You.’

Once volunteers began to decrease, the posters took on a threatening tone. Pressure was applied, not just on potential new recruits, but in addition on their families, who were also expected to make the sacrifice.

Recruitment was to remain the dominant theme of domestic propaganda until the introduction of conscription in January 1916. It was the principal focal point of the individual citizen’s commitment to the national war effort.