



The First World War 1914-1918

Age- KS2/Secondary School/S1-3

Topic- The Shell Crisis

The Shell Crisis of 1915 revealed that British troops on the Western Front in France did not have enough high explosive shells to use as ammunition against the heavily fortified German trenches.

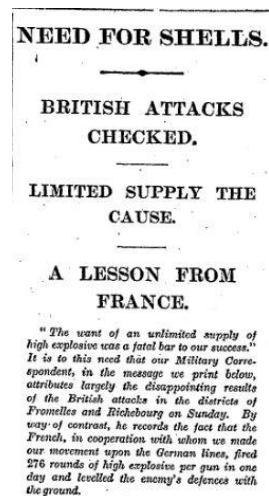
On the **Western Front** in France and Belgium, British soldiers were dying in their thousands because they were being shot down, after getting stuck in barbed wire during major offensives against German trenches. After heavy casualties were inflicted at The Battle of Aubers Ridge, a headline appeared in *The Times* Newspaper on 14 May 1915 condemning the lack of high explosive shells and the waste of life.

Something had to be done.

In response, The Ministry of Munitions decided to build **HM Gretna**, 'The greatest factory on earth' to mass produce the RDB Cordite for use in high explosive shells which were desperately needed at the front.



Lloyd George was made Minister of Munitions in a new department created to solve the munitions crisis



Headline from the Times newspaper on 14th May 1915



Empty shells

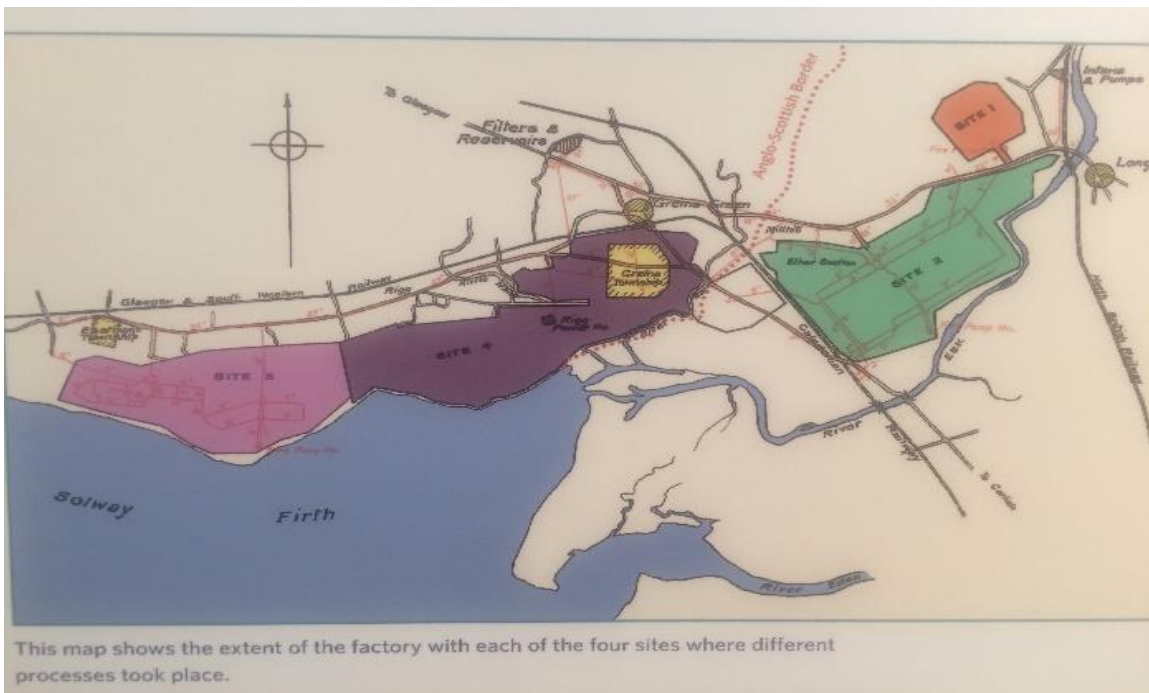


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Over 10,000 labourers built HM Factory Gretna. Most were Irish navvies.



The factory stretched for 9 miles across the Anglo- Scottish Border.

This area on the Scottish Border was ideal as there was a large isolated area of farm land and marsh land. It had excellent rail links and water supply and was shielded by the Cumbrian fells and Scottish hillside.