



THE DEVIL'S  
PORRIDGE  
MUSEUM

## WW1Gap Worksheet answers

**HM Factory Gretna – Watch the film and look at the panels in The Devil's Porridge Museum to find out the information to fill in the gaps.**

HM Factory Gretna was Britain's largest munitions factory during WWI, stretching **9** miles along the Solway Coast from **Dornock** to **Mossband**. It was built in response to the **shell crisis** of 1915, when The Times newspaper reported The British Army was running dangerously short of artillery shells on The Western Front. This led to a change of government and the development of a national programme for munition production. A new government department was created to solve the munitions shortage with **David Lloyd-George** becoming the Minister of Munitions.



**NEED FOR SHELLS.**

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**BRITISH ATTACKS  
CHECKED.**

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**LIMITED SUPPLY THE  
CAUSE.**

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**A LESSON FROM  
FRANCE.**

*"The want of an unlimited supply of high explosive was a fatal bar to our success." It is to this need that our Military Correspondent, in the message we print below, attributes largely the disappointing results of the British attacks in the districts of Fromelles and Bicochebourg on Sunday. By way of contrast, he records the fact that the French, in cooperation with whom we made our movement upon the German lines, fired 276 rounds of high explosive per gun in one day and levelled the enemy's defences with the ground.*

Over 10 thousand labourers, mostly Irish **navvies** as well as 8,000 experts from the fields of chemistry, engineering and project management planned and built the factory in only 9 months.

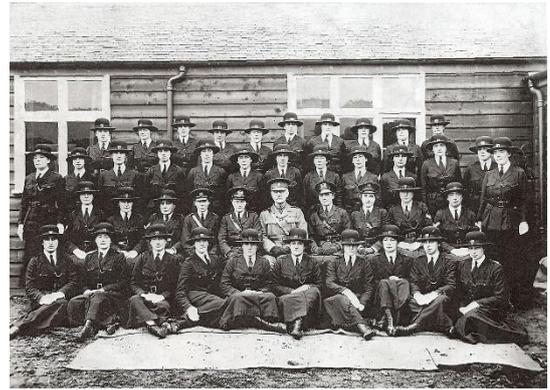
The townships of **Gretna** and **Eastriggs** were built to house the munition workers. These new settlements were seen as ideal communities, designed by the architects **Raymond Unwin** and **Courtney Crickmer**.



The settlements had many amenities including church halls, shops, police barracks, a fire station, bakeries, a kitchen and dance halls.

At its height, 30,000 people worked at HM Factory Gretna, 11,000 of whom were women. By June 1917, the factory produced 1,100 tonnes of RDB **cordite** per week, more than all the other factories in Britain combined. Sir **Arthur Conan Doyle** visited the factory as a war correspondent and nicknamed the explosive mixture of nitro – **cotton** and **nitro-glycerine** the 'Devil's **Porridge**'.





The factory had the first Women's **police force** introduced to monitor the largely-female workforce.

Gretna Police Service had 167 women officers in June 1918, the largest female police force and the first area in Britain to have a branch of the women's police force.

To control the unruly behaviour of the Irish Navvies and others that flooded into the area during the war, the government introduced the **State Management Scheme** buying-up many of the pubs around the city of **Carlisle** and effectively nationalising the drinks industry.



After the First World War, and despite much protest to keep it open, HM Factory Gretna stopped production. The decision to sell off the factory and townships led to a number of auctions, the largest of which took place in **1924**. The factory was used as storage depot in World War Two.