

**Box 17 Silence of Ethnicity**



**List of contents**

1. 3 photographs of soldiers from different ethnicities
2. Paper chain of soldiers created from the flags of the different nations that supported Britain during WW1.
3. Sheet with national flags from early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Key information**

- When war was declared in Europe, France and Britain controlled the ‘worlds two largest colonial empires’ and drew upon the people there to assist. Men from over 50 countries served on the Western Front for both combat and non-combat roles including doctors labourers, cooks. More than four million non-European, non-white soldiers and auxiliaries served.
- Over a million fought on the front lines but were inadequately trained and ill equipped. Nevertheless, they proved to be vital in holding the front lines.
- Behind the trenches they exposed others to their different cultural beliefs and systems
- Unlike France, which assimilated their colonial troops to fight alongside the French troops, Britain usually kept the divisions separate both on and off the battle ground. Britain looked to India, South Africa and First Nations Canadians to increase resources.

### 17. Silence of Ethnicity



1. What do you think is in this box?
2. Where do you think it came from?
3. Where do you think the different materials came from to make it?

4. Look at the photographs – what do you think is the ethnicity of these soldiers?
5. Open out the colourful paper chain. Who are these people and why are they linked together?
6. What do you think the patterns are?
7. Which countries helped Britain in WW1?



8. Can you match the flag on their uniforms with the country?
9. How do you think they felt when the war was over?

## Box 17 – Silence of Ethnicity

### **Suggested box combinations**

- Box 15 Silence of Those Who Helped in Different Ways
- Box 6 Silence of the Aftermath of War
- Box 13, Silence of Religion – Tea and Sympathy

### **Suggested activities**

- Create a mind map of all the different countries that helped Britain during the War. Research how they helped, the roles they did.
- Consider how we benefited in other ways. Discuss with the group.

### **Caring for the box after use**

- Carefully fold the paper chain back – if it gets damaged please inform H4A.
- Carefully place everything back in the box.