

# TEAM TRAINING ASSIGNMENT AND FIRST WORLD WAR CHARACTER CARDS

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## TEACHER TOP SHEET

**Curriculum Links:** History, Geography, Engineering, Design and Technology

**Key Stages:** Suitable for Key Stages 3 & 4

**Time to complete:** 45-60 minutes

**Location:** The Fire Command Post and Port War Signal Station at Dover Castle

### Learning Objectives

- Students will learn to understand the people, skills, rooms, equipment and forms of communication used by the Royal Navy and the Army in the First World War.
- By working in role as Royal Navy recruits to complete a team training assignment in the Port War Signal Station (PWSS).
- So that they can identify the different roles of the army and the navy at Dover during the First World War, and how they worked together.

### Prior Learning

We recommend that you complete some of the following before your visit:

- Explore the role of the military and Royal Navy in England during the First World War.
- Study the geography of Dover Port, Dover Strait and the coastline, in relation to France.

### Preparation and Resources

You can find supporting resources, including Historical Information and a Timeline, on the 'Schools' section of the Dover Castle webpage: [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle)

We can only provide digital versions of these resources so please print and photocopy them before you visit. You may want to cut and laminate the First World War Character Cards.

You will probably want to put your students into groups of three before you arrive at the Fire Command Post and Port War Signal Station. You could also discuss supervision of the groups with your supporting staff before your visit.

### Safety Note

Please be aware that the site may be busy with other visitors when your students are completing this activity. Whilst enthusiasm is encouraged, students need to be safe and respectful, particularly when touching the equipment and using cameras.

# TEAM TRAINING ASSIGNMENT

POST



TELEGRAM

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of O



Dear Royal Navy recruits,

Welcome to the **Port War Signal Station (PWSS)**. Your job is to identify and communicate with Royal Navy ships to ensure their safe passage in and out of port. You also need to work with the army in the **Fire Command (FC) Post** below, to protect the port, Dover Strait and coastline from attack.

This is your first training assignment. It will help you to understand:

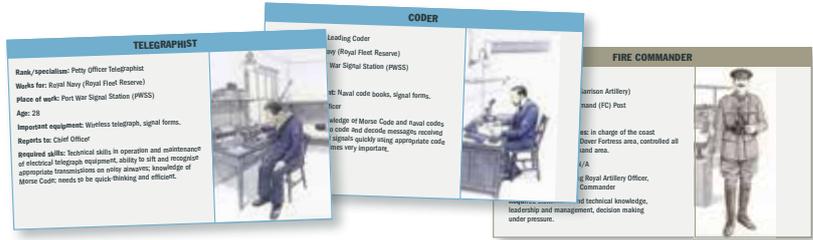
- The team you'll be working with
- The skills you need to work in the PWSS
- The rooms, equipment and forms of communication you'll be using

Work in **teams of three** to complete the tasks.

Good luck recruits.

**Know your team**

Read all of the First World War Character Cards. You will be working very closely with these people.



**Check the required skills**

Look again at the First World War Royal Navy characters (blue). Now summarise the required skills for the following roles:

|              |   | Required Skills |
|--------------|---|-----------------|
| Telegraphist |   | _____           |
| Coder        |  | _____           |
| Signaller    |  | _____           |

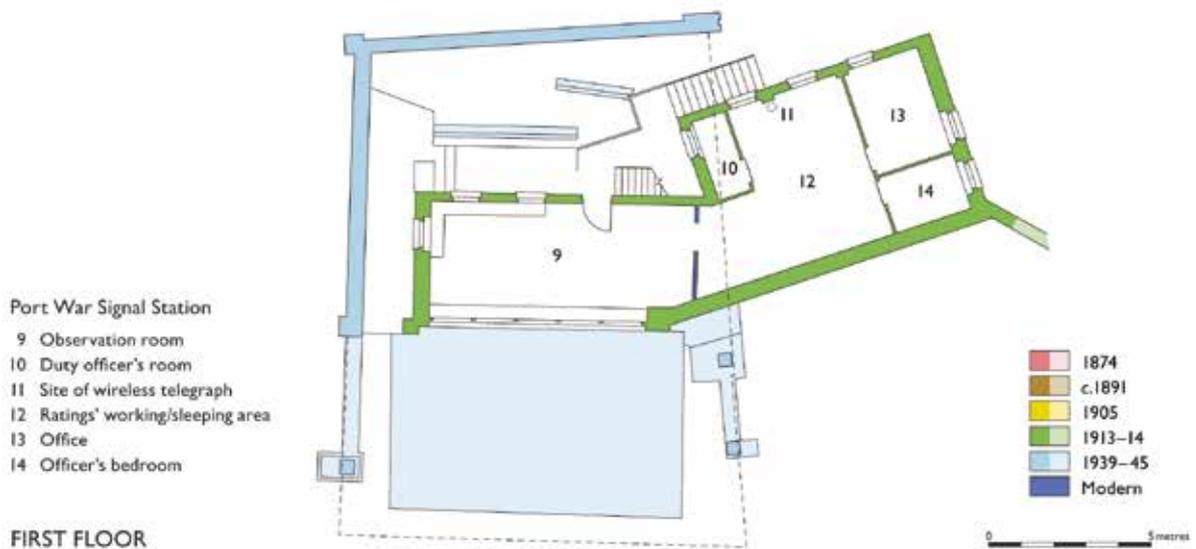
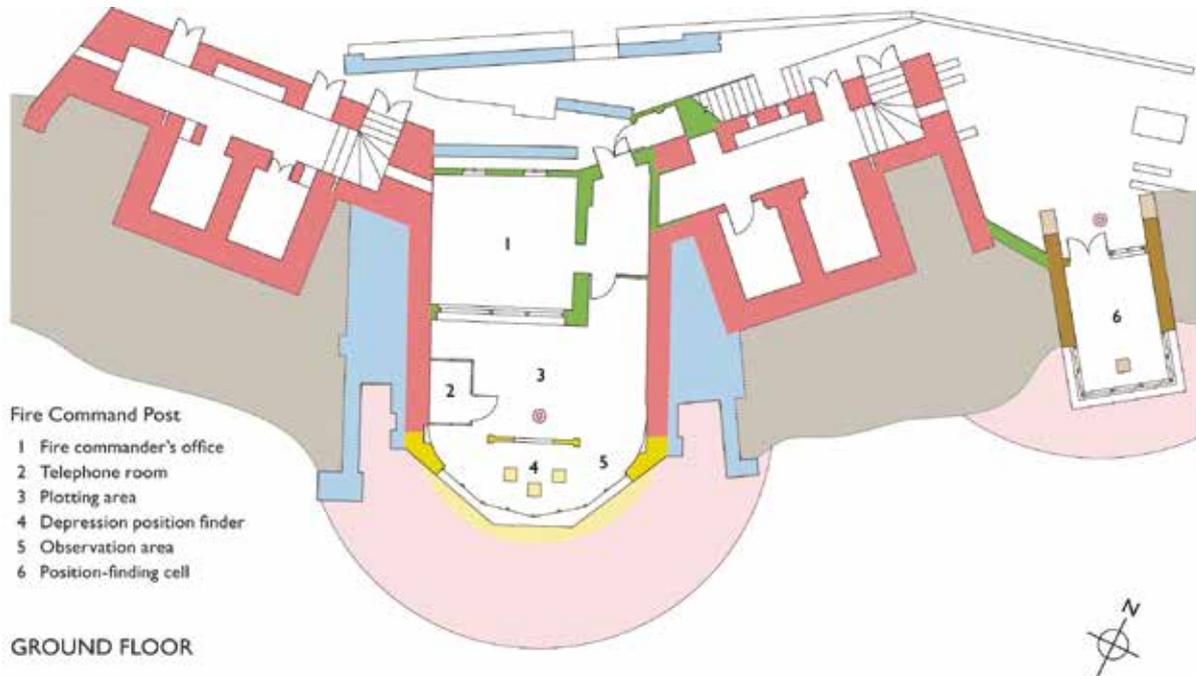
**Choose your specialism**

You now know what it takes to be a Telegraphist, Coder or Signaller in the PWSS. Decide with your team who would be best for each role and write them here:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Name of recruit 1 |  |
| Chosen specialism |  |
| Name of recruit 2 |  |
| Chosen specialism |  |
| Name of recruit 3 |  |
| Chosen specialism |  |

**Find your equipment**

Explore the rooms in the PWSS and label each piece of equipment you find on the floor plan below. If you get stuck, the First World War Character Cards can help.



**Test your knowledge**

You are now ready to complete the most challenging part of the training assignment. In the following eight-step scenario, speed and attention to detail are equally important.

As a team, complete the eight steps in order. After each step, log important details in the table provided.

Use the rooms and equipment in the building to help you.

1. The Chief Officer spots a suspicious flag signal

23/05/1915. 2pm. A trading ship approaches the Examination anchorage; an area of water just outside Dover harbour where ships have to stop for inspection. Ships are required to fly the correct flag signal to enter port, like a passcode. The Chief Officer in charge of the PWSS reads the ship's signal through binoculars in the observation room. This ship doesn't look like a Royal Navy ship but, unusually, it is flying a Royal Navy flag signal. The Chief Officer checks with his Coder - it is a known Royal Navy signal, but a top secret one.

2. The Chief Officer alerts the team in the FC Post and PWSS

The Chief Officer uses the speaking tube to order a Signaller, on the signal platform, to use flag signals (semaphore) to tell the ship to anchor and await instructions. He uses a second speaking tube to alert to the Fire Commander, in the FC Post's plotting area downstairs. In all circumstances a ship cannot enter port without the Fire Commander's permission. As the ship is unidentified the Fire Commander has to take action.

3. The Fire Commander picks up a phone call from the port

A ringing sound comes from the telephone room in the Fire Command Post. It is the Examination Officer based in the port. He has also seen the ship. A quick telephone conversation between the Fire Commander and the Examination Officer results in the Examination Officer ordering his boarding party to stand to (get ready to go out to the ship with an armed crew).

4. The Fire Commander gives orders

The Fire Commander orders his Sergeant in the observation area to fix the position of the ship using the Depression Position Finder. From the telephone room, he calls one of his Gun Battery Commanders, ordering him to do the same and to target his guns on the ship.

5. The Fire Commander updates the staff in the PWSS

The Fire Commander confirms these actions through the speaking tube with the Chief Officer upstairs in the observation room of the PWSS. If the ship attempts to move, a warning shot will be fired. The Chief Officer tells the Fire Commander he will quickly investigate the ship's signal.

6. The PWSS communicates secretly with Naval Intelligence

The Chief Officer talks with his Leading Signalman (Coder) who uses a naval code book to code a message on a signal form in the office and gives it to the Petty Officer (Telegraphist) in the working area. The Telegraphist quickly sends the message, using radio signals (wireless), to Royal Naval Intelligence based in Sheerness, several miles away.

7. The PWSS receives news from Naval Intelligence

After about 15 minutes a coded wireless (radio) message is received back, written down on a signal form in the working area and handed to the Leading Signalman (Coder). The Coder quickly decodes it in the office and hands it to the Chief Officer. Naval Intelligence report the signal as genuine: it is the secret signal of a Q Ship, a small warship disguised as a normal trading ship and dedicated to hunting German submarines called U-boats. It can be admitted to port.

8. The ship is given clearance to enter port

Please write your signatures and the date, to confirm that your team has completed the training assignment to the best of your ability:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Recruit 1 |  |
| Recruit 2 |  |
| Recruit 3 |  |
| Date      |  |

|                                     | 1            | 2                    | 3 | 4 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---|---|
| <b>Navy characters involved</b>     |              | Chief Officer and... |   |   |
| <b>Army characters involved</b>     | None         |                      |   |   |
| <b>Form/s of communication used</b> | Signal flags | Semaphore and...     |   |   |
| <b>Equipment needed</b>             | Binoculars   | None                 |   |   |
| <b>Areas used</b>                   |              |                      |   |   |

|                              | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Navy characters involved     |   |   |   |
| Army characters involved     |   |   |   |
| Form/s of communication used |   |   |   |
| Equipment needed             |   |   |   |
| Areas used                   |   |   |   |

**Well done! You have now completed your first training assignment as a First World War Royal Navy recruit.**

## CHIEF OFFICER

**Rank:** Chief Officer

**Works for:** Royal Navy (Coastguard)

**Place of work:** Port War Signal Station (PWSS)

**Age:** 45

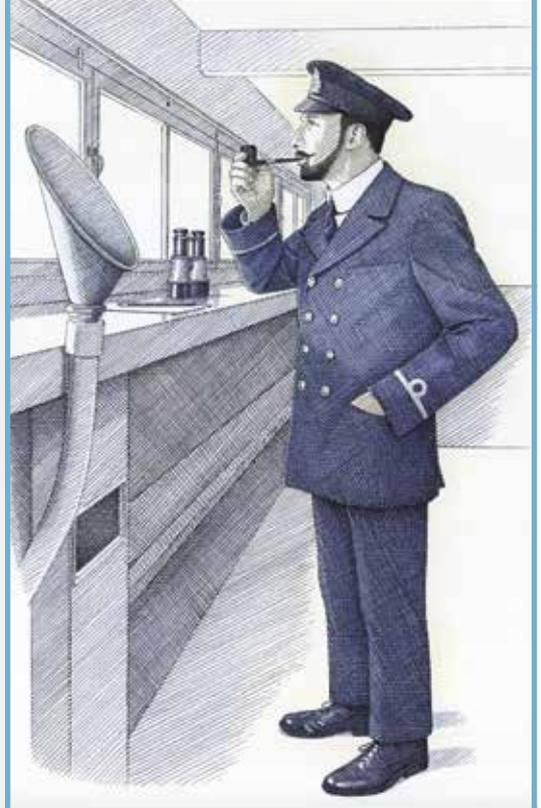
**Roles and responsibilities:** In charge of the PWSS.

**Important equipment:** Binoculars

**Reports to:** Admiral Commanding Reserve Forces/  
Flag Officer Dover (Admiral)

**Required skills:**

Excellent leader and communicator, copes well when under pressure, good all-round knowledge and experience of the different jobs in the PWSS.



## TELEGRAPHIST

**Rank/specialism:** Petty Officer Telegraphist

**Works for:** Royal Navy (Royal Fleet Reserve)

**Place of work:** Port War Signal Station (PWSS)

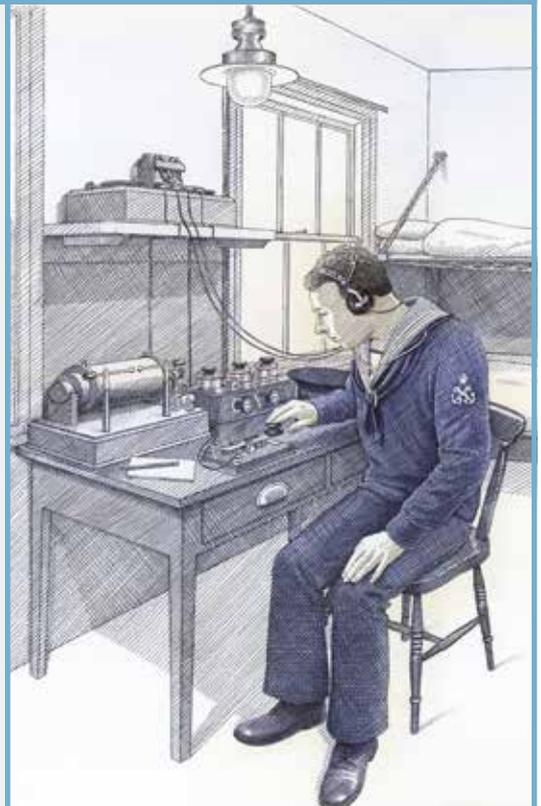
**Age:** 28

**Important equipment:** Wireless telegraph,  
signal forms.

**Reports to:** Chief Officer

**Required skills:**

Good at using and fixing technical equipment, quick-thinker, good listener, can pick out important messages on noisy airwaves, good memory for Morse Code.



## CODER

**Rank/specialism:** Leading Coder

**Works for:** Royal Navy (Royal Fleet Reserve)

**Place of work:** Port War Signal Station (PWSS)

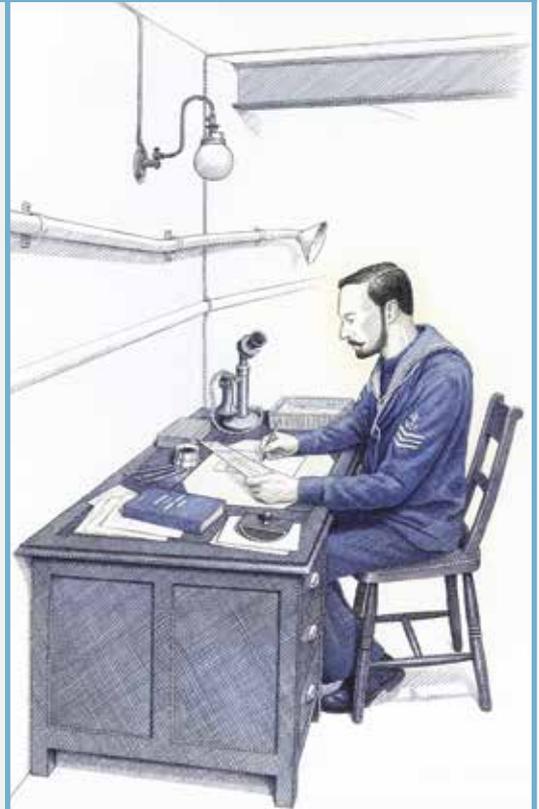
**Age:** 38

**Important equipment:** Naval code books, signal forms.

**Reports to:** Chief Officer

**Required skills:**

Excellent memory for Morse Code and naval codes, quick-thinker, good at using code books to work out cryptic messages.



## SIGNALLER

**Rank/specialism:** Leading Signaller

**Works for:** Royal Navy (Coastguard)

**Place of work:** Port War Signal Station (PWSS)

**Age:** 43

**Important equipment:** Signal flags and signal lamps.

**Reports to:** Chief Officer

**Required skills:**

Fast worker, can send and receive signals quickly, excellent memory for flag/letter combinations, good at remembering codes and information.



## FIRE COMMANDER

**Rank:** Colonel

**Works for:** Army (Royal Garrison Artillery)

**Place of work:** Fire Command (FC) Post

**Age:** 40

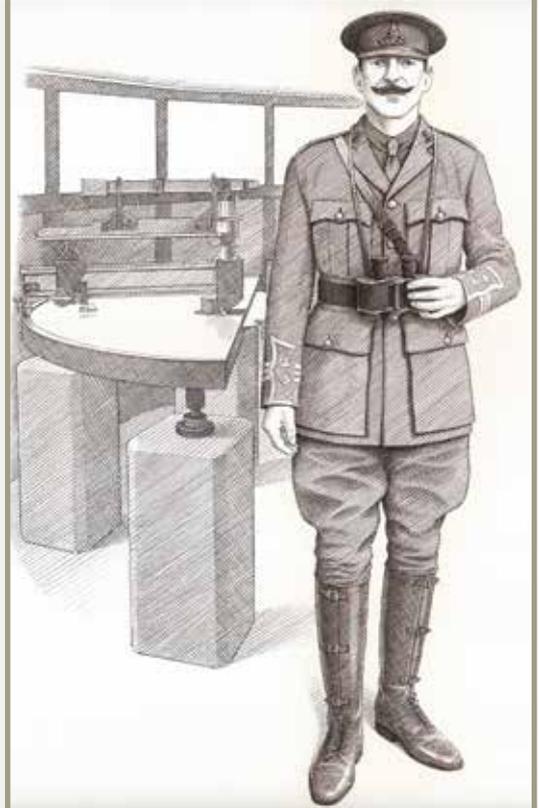
**Roles and responsibilities:** In charge of the coast artillery defences in the Dover Fortress area, controls all activity in the Fire Command area.

**Important equipment:** N/A

**Reports to:** Commanding Royal Artillery Officer, Dover Fortress/Fortress Commander

**Required skills:**

All-round technical knowledge, leadership and management, decision making under pressure.



## RANGEFINDER SPECIALIST

**Rank/specialism:** Sergeant/Rangefinding

**Works for:** Army (Royal Garrison Artillery)

**Place of work:** Fire Command (FC) Post

**Age:** 29

**Important equipment:** Position-finders and range finders (Depression Position Finder), various binoculars.

**Reports to:** Fire Commander

**Required skills:**

Excellent eyesight, can operate electrical and optical equipment, good at maths, can identify ships from lots of different countries at a distance.

