
Conscription

The **National Service (Armed Forces) Act 1939** came into force on 3rd September 1939, the day war was declared against Germany. This meant that, with a few exceptions, all men aged 18 to 41 had to register for national service. Exceptions included those in so-called reserved occupations and those who were not medically fit for war duty.

Conscription

Conscription greatly increased the numbers in the armed services during the first year of the war, but more were needed such that in **December 1941 a second National Service Act** was passed. All unmarried women or childless widows between the ages of 20 and 30 could be called up, and men up to age 60 could also be enlisted. The extra personnel were needed to fill police and civilian defence posts or auxiliary units of the armed forces.

Conscientious Objectors

Conscientious Objectors (people who objected to war on moral or religious grounds) had to appear before a tribunal to argue why they refused to join up. Some were forced to enlist for active service, others were given non-combatant reserved occupations work, and others had to serve a prison sentence.

Sir Phillip Macdonnell from Woodlyn in Gatehouse was a retired judge and headed one of these tribunals in Southport, Lancashire. He was not a healthy man and sadly died in 1940 whilst on duty.
