THE STORY OF B2737
London Transport Museum’s restored B-type bus, fleet number B2737, served Route 9 between Barnes and Liverpool Street from January 1914. When war broke out, it was commandeered by the War Department. Returning to London after the war still in khaki livery, B2737 was used as a ‘Traffic Emergency Bus’ – an austere solution to post-war bus shortages. In 1922 it was sold to the National Omnibus & Transport Company for use outside London.

Vehicles of this type were constructed of interchangeable parts which made them reliable and durable. Few have survived beyond 100 years, but enough components were found to restore B2737 to working order using largely original material. Some parts were discovered as far away as Australia! The restoration was completed in June 2014.

After a busy summer attending events in original red and cream LGOC livery, the bus was converted into a military troop carrier and taken on a commemorative tour of the Western Front.

THE BATTLE BUS PROJECT
The Battle Bus project includes a community learning programme commemorating the centenary of the First World War and the role of London’s transport workers within it. The project is engaging with a different community group each year until 2018, starting with an exhibition created by women working in today’s bus industry. The exhibition explores the contribution women made when they were first employed on London’s transport network 100 years ago.

ABOUT US
Between 2014 and 2018 the Battle Bus is taking part in events in the UK, France and Belgium. The restoration of the bus and the associated community programme marking the centenary are supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, London Transport Museum Friends and public donations.

London Transport Museum is a heritage and educational charity. We conserve and explain the history of London’s transport, offer people an understanding of the Capital’s past development and engage them in the debate about its future.

As an independent charity, London Transport Museum relies on support from individuals, companies and grant-giving bodies to carry out our day-to-day activities, education programmes and special projects like the restoration and operation of the Battle Bus.
THE B-TYPE – A BUS FOR LONDON
Developed by the London General Omnibus Company (LGOC), the B-type was the first successful mass-produced motor bus. Introduced in 1910, it was designed and built in London. Within 18 months the LGOC had replaced its entire fleet of horse-drawn omnibuses. By 1913 there were 2,500 B-type buses in service, each carrying 340,000 passengers a year along the Capital’s busy roads.

THE BUSES GO TO WAR
At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, buses were commandeered for the war effort. Over 1,000 LGOC buses, one third of their fleet, were sent to the Front. Most went to France and Belgium, some even as far as Greece.

The buses served various roles. Many were used for transporting troops to and from the front lines. They were fitted with protective boarding and painted khaki. Each vehicle could carry 25 soldiers and their equipment, compared to 34 seated passengers in London. Some buses were converted into lorries, others served as ambulances or even mobile pigeon lofts. After the war surviving buses that could be repaired returned to the streets of London.

ON THE HOME FRONT
Many drivers and mechanics were recruited for war service along with their vehicles. This resulted in shortages of both buses and staff on the home front. For the first time women were employed as conductresses and mechanics to keep London moving.