

Joining the Army

Thousands of men left their jobs to join the army. All of them had to be provided with equipment, including uniforms, as well as food and somewhere to live and train.

The United Kingdom was like one big army camp. Large green spaces sprouted tents or huts to provide homes for the new soldiers. Some of the the camps had shops, cinemas and churches.

In camp, the new recruits started their day at 5:30am. They were awoken and called to duty with a bugle call, or 'Reveille'. At 6:30am the recruits would parade for an hour and a half to work on their fitness. Breakfast was served at 8am. The rest of the morning was spent drilling on the parade square and learning to march.

The men returned to drill after lunch, which was between 12:15pm and 2.00pm. At the end of the day, the men were allowed to use the leisure facilities such as the cinema and YMCA hut.

Once the recruits had learned to become soldiers, the training became more intensive and real. They had to dig practice trenches, and learn how to live and fight in them.



THE FIRST WORLD WAR HOME FRONT 1914-18

The Air War

The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was the air arm of the British Army until it merged with the Royal Naval Air Service to become the Royal Air Force in 1918.

In France, at the start of the war, the RFC was used by the army to observe the enemy defences and to pass this information to the artillery (the big guns). As aircraft became better armed they became involved in duels against enemy aircraft.

At home there were air raids by Zeppelin airships on British towns and cities. Later in the war there were bombing raids by Gotha and giant Zeppelin Staaken R.VI bomber planes too.

Anti-aircraft guns and searchlights were introduced to help detect and stop the raiding aircraft.

New airfields called 'aerodromes' were built to provide bases for Home Defence squadrons, groups of planes that could fight off these attacks.

The Avro 504 and the Sopwith Camel were two of the best British fighter aircraft in the First World War.



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