

Prisoners of War

As the First World War progressed each side took prisoners. German prisoners were taken from France to the United Kingdom. Once there, they were sent to a Prisoner of War Camp. The camps were mainly made of wooden huts, some with a few permanent buildings.

To help make life a little more comfortable the prisoners might have been allowed to have a camp newsletter, reading room, theatre, chapel and workshops. Even pets were allowed; rabbits were kept in one camp.

Sometimes prisoners were allowed out to help the local farmers by working in the fields, or to go to the local town to sweep the streets. Money they earned could be spent on chocolate or cigarettes in the camp shop.



THE FIRST WORLD WAR HOME FRONT 1914-18

Zeppelins

100 years ago, at the time of the First World War, airship travel was new and exciting.

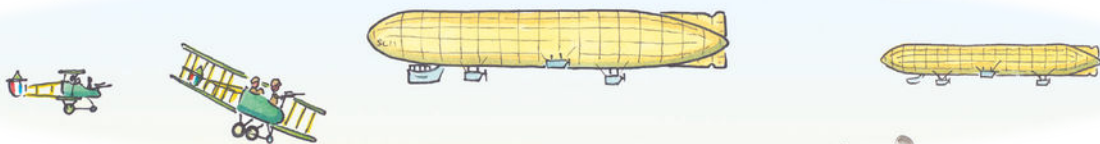
Germany led the way. Their best known airships, the Zeppelins, were named after their German inventor Count von Zeppelin.

These airships were huge, nearly 1.5 times the length of a football pitch! They were like long straight sausages, with an inner skin filled with hydrogen gas. Hydrogen is lighter than air, so the airship could easily float. They needed powerful engines to propel and steer them in the right direction. Their top speed was 85 mph and they carried enough fuel to fly for 30 hours.

The crews sat in cabins that were fitted to the underside of the Zeppelins. From here they steered the ship, controlled the engines and dropped the bombs.

The first airship raid took place in January 1915, when the towns of King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth were bombed. Altogether there were 57 airship raids. The raids were frightening. The airships made a loud noise and were very scary to see in the night sky above your home.

Great Britain had to find a way to fight back and stop the Zeppelins. British inventors came up with special types of ammunition to set the gas alight, which could be used by aircraft. The first pilot to shoot down a Zeppelin was William Leefe Robinson in September 1916. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery.



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