

Meanings of Military Service

Home Front: Just how terrifying were air raids in London during World War One?

Learning Resources KS3

TELEPHONE.
2014 VICTORIA.

W 02/10/1053
GOVERNORS HOUSE, THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA.

(EAST GATE)

S.W.



29. Sept 1916

Darling wife

I had a good journey but the London train was 25 minutes late in leaving Bham though it made most of it up. I am trying to get on to Hilda who was dining out but have not succeeded as she has not yet returned but I hope to get her before the foot goes.

The servants heard the row on the Zeppelin night, bombs & guns etc. Lizzie says that Brixton & Kennington got rather heavily bombed.

I went over to Cratchley's after dinner. He told me the Guards had 160 officers killed & wounded, & that poor young Lane is among them - his father must be broken hearted. Willcox is still bad & two of the other permanent clerks are laid up too.

Handerson is blundering along. Lha most

Letter from General Sir Neville Lyttelton to his wife Katherine Lyttelton, 25th September 1916.

The letter from Neville Lyttelton describes a Zeppelin raid over London. The second paragraph of the letter reads: 'The servants heard the row on the Zeppelin night, bombs and guns Lizzie says that Brixton and Kennington got rather heavily bombed.' Over 50 bombing raids were made by airships on England during the war.

Image Courtesy of Queen Mary University of London Archives



Bringing up the reinforcements postcard

The picture shows the babies born during the war. The inscription on the back reads: *'This is what I promised you. What do you think of it? Nurse Ponting had an operation for appendicitis last Monday she is going on very nicely the last time I heard. Did not see anything of the Zepps last night, but head 4 bangs which I put down to bombs where they were I do not know. From G. Walker.'*

Image Courtesy of Royal London Hospital Archives.



Postcard of Queen Alexandra's visit to The Royal London.

Dated September 4th 1914 the postcard shows the large crowd gathered outside the front of The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel to see Queen Alexandra as she visited the wounded soldiers at the hospital. The back of this picture postcard reads: *'Air raid, all safe, very close, just over us, no damage to L.H.'*

Image Courtesy of Royal London Hospital Archives.



Aerial Photo of the Daylight Raid.

This image is a copy of the original photo which is now missing. While the photograph is not extremely clear, it does highlight the areas that were hit during the daylight raid on 7 July 1917. St Bartholomew's Hospital can be seen to suffer a direct hit.

Image Courtesy of St Bartholomew's Hospital Archives.

Social Functions.

Owing to the splendid efforts of this Committee, backed up by the talented members of College, the social events of the Session 1915-16 met with marked success, despite inevitable difficulties. An excellent Concert took place on November 6th, 1915, and this was followed up later in the term by a Progressive Whist Drive. Two Concerts of a varied nature were held during the Lent Term, both of which were highly appreciated. At the second Concert, on March 21st, a Pierrot troupe, calling themselves "The Chierots," achieved an immense success, but unfortunately (and when I tell you, you'll never believe me), several Zeppelins arrived on the scene in the middle of a love-duet, and insisted on doing their bit. They were eventually driven off the stage, but the audience was obliged to disperse in darkness and haste. Nevertheless their enjoyment of the concert was not the least impaired.

N.L.B.

Extract from the East London College Magazine 1916

This notice in the East London College Magazine describes the moment that the a concert was interrupted by a Zeppelin raid.

Image Courtesy of Queen Mary University of London Archives

BOMBED BABIES.

OUR READERS' TOYS
DISTRIBUTED.

QUEEN ALEXANDRA AT THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

Queen Alexandra drove down to White-chapel yesterday to smile upon one of the pleasantest and at the same time most pathetic Christmas parties that has been or will be given this year.

It was given in the big Out-Patients' Department of the London Hospital. If you had gone in there about five o'clock you would have found it filled by 800 children, sitting on long benches and watching very intently for somebody or something to come in. There was a tall, gay Christmas-tree at each corner of the hall, but they were not being stripped. The reason of this appeared shortly. Trucks were wheeled in, full of toys, and the children set up a great shouting; they knew these toys were for them.

ALL IN THREE DAYS.

How they got there the children did not know or care. Lord Knutsford and Mr. Morris, the house governor of the hospital, explained it to Queen Alexandra by telling her they were present from a kind-hearted readers of *The Daily Mail*. On November 14 Mr. Morris asked in *The Daily Mail* for toys or money to buy toys which would help the poor mites suffering from bomb-shock to forget their fear and become healthy, happy children again.

Three days afterwards Mr. Morris wrote again, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. Please don't send any more." The appeal had reached a tender spot in numberless hearts.

The toys were played with in the wards. They brought back smiles to wan little faces. Dolls and teddy-bears made dull eyes brighten. Listless little hands grew busy with puzzle or bricks. "They really were a wonderful help to us," one of the doctors said yesterday afternoon. And then, as there were still so many more toys than were needed in the wards, there came the happy idea of a Christmas party to all the child sufferers from air raids in the neighbourhood of the hospital, at which all the little guests should receive toys to keep for their very own.

CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER.

There were very few symptoms of bomb-shock to be noticed when they were all seated at tables. They munched away with great enjoyment, pulled the crackers without minding the explosions, a bit, laughed shyly at Father Christmas, "Charlie Chaplin," and other figures of fun who went round the festoons to see how they were getting on. Louder still they laughed when a red-nosed, very fat policeman walked in with "Take Cover on his breast and "All Clear" on his back. You might have thought it was just a party of children like any other.

But below the surface there were pitiful stories to be probed. One tiny thing cried and cried with a monotonous whine. Baby never did that before the raids," his sister said. A little chap on crutches said he hadn't been wounded. What was the matter with him, then? "Fright," he replied, looking very important. Terror had brought on epileptic fits. One poor, wee girl of five had been thrown into a state of mania. Every attempt to quiet her failed until a kindly member of the staff, who in the Christmas revels impersonated a Baby, took her with him in his perambulator and kept her so well diverted that her delirium ceased.

There are compensations for all ills. At the door, after the party, I said to a little boy and a little girl who had been telling me their painful experiences; "I hope you'll never be bombed again." "I wouldn't mind, gov'nor," the small boy made answer, "not if we could have another party like this."

"And I wouldn't have been given this dolly if I hadn't been so frightened," his sister put in.

Plucky little Britons, I believe they went home almost hoping for more raids—and another party next year.

T. L.

Bombed Babies' Newspaper Article.

The article describes how readers of the paper had kindly donated toys to the young victims of the air raids. It tells how the children responded to their toys and how the gifts helped to alleviate their 'bomb-shock'.



23 June 17



THE KAISER'S ENEMIES.

(Some of the little victims of the air raid, last week, at the London Hospital, where they were visited by H.M. the King.)

'Kaisers Enemies'.

These cuttings from a newspaper have the description 'The Kaisers Enemies (some of the little victims of the air raid, last week, at the London Hospital, where they were visited by H M the King)' The picture shows some of the young victims of the air raid over London. These children became known as 'Bombed Babies'.



Bombed Babies

A newspaper cutting from the Daily Mirror which began a campaign for toys for the young victims affected by the air raid in East London. This photograph shows the toys being distributed to children in the London Hospital.

Image Courtesy of Royal London Hospital Archives.

A good history enquiry process:

1 Setting the motivating challenge

2 Gathering information

3 'Working' the information

4 Making judgements

5 Refining thinking

6 Communicating understanding in as imaginative and varied ways as possible

- **Approx 50 Zeppelin raids on Britain during WW1**
- **A maximum of 12 Zeppelins in any one raid**
- **556 deaths in total from Zeppelin raids**
- **First one on Great Yarmouth 19th January 1915 – 2 deaths**
- **First on London, 31st May 1915, 7 dead, 15 injured**

Why such panic?

- Government secrecy**
- So many people see the Zeppelins**
- No effective defences**

'Lieutenant Leefe Robinson last night became the first member of the Royal Flying Corps to shoot down one of the German airships that have been bombing England since the war broke out. The raider was caught in search-lights above Hatfield. Despite not being able to climb as high as the raider, Lt. Robinson emptied his Lewis gun into the tail of the raider which burst into flames and crashed. Lt. Robinson has been awarded the VC for his brave and courageous action. Last night was the first time British planes have been able to shoot down one of these raiders.'

(a simplified newspaper account, September 3rd 1916.)

'It was a fantastic sight, like a big silver cigar, and it seemed to be going very slowly by this time. A lot of people came out of their houses and then all of a sudden flames started to come from the Zeppelin and then it broke in half and was one mass of flames. It was an incredible sight: people were cheering, dancing, singing and somebody started playing the bagpipes. This went on well into the night.'

(10-year old Henry Tuttle, remembers the first downing of a zeppelin.)

'To me it was what I would call an awful sight. It was like a big cigar I suppose and all of the bag part had caught fire - the gas part. I mean - it was roaring flames; blue, red, purple... And we knew that there were about sixty people in it - we'd always been told there was a crew of about sixty - and that they were being roasted to death. Of course you weren't supposed to feel any pity for your enemies, nevertheless I was appalled to see the kind, good-hearted British people dancing about in the streets at the sight of sixty people being burned alive - clapping and singing and cheering. When I said I was appalled that anyone could be pleased to see such a terrible sight they said; 'But they're Germans; they're the enemy - not human beings.'

(Sybil Morrison remembers the same incident.)