

## Animals that helped the War effort WW1-Workshop 3

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/28589438>

Animation link

### World War I soldiers brightened the trenches with glowworms.

One of the most unlikely nonhuman contributions to World War I was made by **Lampyris noctiluca**, also known as the **European glowworm**, which emits light through bioluminescence.

Huddled in dank, dark trenches, enlisted men and officers alike turned to these insects for help, collecting them in jars by the thousands.

These instant lanterns allowed soldiers to examine intelligence reports, study battle maps or simply read comforting letters from home.

*According to a 2010 study, just 10 glowworms can provide the same amount of illumination as a modern-day roadway light.*





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## Dogs

**Dogs were some of the hardest and most trusted workers in World War One.**

The most popular dogs were medium-sized, like Doberman Pinschers and German Shepherds. They were very agile and their darker coats allowed them to slip unseen through the battlefield at night.

## Sentry dogs



### Sentry dog

These dogs stayed with one soldier or guard and were taught to give a warning sound such as growling or barking when they sensed a stranger in the area or close to camp. Many Dobermans were also used as sentry dogs.

## Scout dogs



### German scout dog

These were dogs used to find the enemy. They were trained to be very quiet and well-behaved while they walked alongside soldiers patrolling the area. They could detect smells up to 1000 yards away which was much better than the sense of any man. Unlike sentry dogs they were trained not to bark as this would draw attention to the soldiers. Instead they would give a silent signal, like raising their tail, to let soldiers know that the enemy was on his way.

## Casualty dogs

These dogs were trained to find wounded or dying soldiers on the battlefield. They carried medical equipment so an injured soldier could treat himself and they would also stay beside a dying soldier to keep him company.



Trench rats were caught by a small terrier dog



With a message tied to its collar, a dog jumps over a soldier in the trenches

**Most communication systems used in the war broke down easily.  
Animals were often the most reliable way to transport messages.**

Dogs helped to get messages across the front line from one base to another. They were faster than humans, less of a target for the enemy and could run

Pets Mascots



# WANTED—A DOG TO ENLIST.

Co. F, First Engineers, Would Prefer a French Bulldog for Trenches.

If any person possesses a dog willing to do its bit for the country George C. MacDonald, a private of Company F, First Engineer Regiment, and the rest of the company would be glad to hear about it. A mascot to take along to France is needed and the boys believe a dog would be just right.

"Any good loyal dog would do," said Private MacDonald, who issued an appeal through the newspapers for a dog, "but a French bulldog would be preferable."

**The New York Times**

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## Pigeons

100,000 carrier pigeons were used as messengers during the war. Pigeons always flew home when released, so the troops made sure the pigeons' nests were in places they needed to send messages. At the Battle of Marne, the pigeons advanced with the French troops as they attacked. Whenever troops needed to get a message back to their base, they tied it to one of the pigeons. It would fly home and deliver the message.

Pigeons were far more reliable than man-made machinery to get messages from one military base to another. In fact, records say they delivered 95% of their messages correctly. Pigeons were kept at military bases and headquarters. Sometimes they were also kept in unusual places, like old London buses which were brought over from England. Pigeons became so valuable the British government issued a poster saying "Killing, wounding or molesting homing pigeons is punishable under the Defence of the Realm regulations by six months imprisonment or £100 fine".

One pigeon, called *Cher Ami*, meaning Dear Friend in French, became famous. Used by US forces, *Cher Ami* managed to get 12 very important messages through one of the battles in 1918. It also saved the lives of nearly 200 soldiers during another battle. *Cher Ami* received a medal from the American government for her bravery.

The Germans also used pigeons. Some were even seen with cameras attached. This was most likely used to take photographs of enemy troop positions.



A former London motor bus camouflage-painted and used as a travelling loft for carrier-pigeons. Pernes, 26 June 1918.

## Horses



**During the war, millions of horses were used in many different roles. Before 1914, wars had mainly been fought by cavalries - soldiers who fought on horseback using swords and guns.**

When World War One began, most people thought this would be the case again. In fact, only 2% of the British army was cavalry, though the Germans and French had far more.

Cavalry were used in the first battles such as the Battle of Mons. Even though technology in battle developed during war, there were some cavalry charges right up to the last day of the war.

### **Horse power**

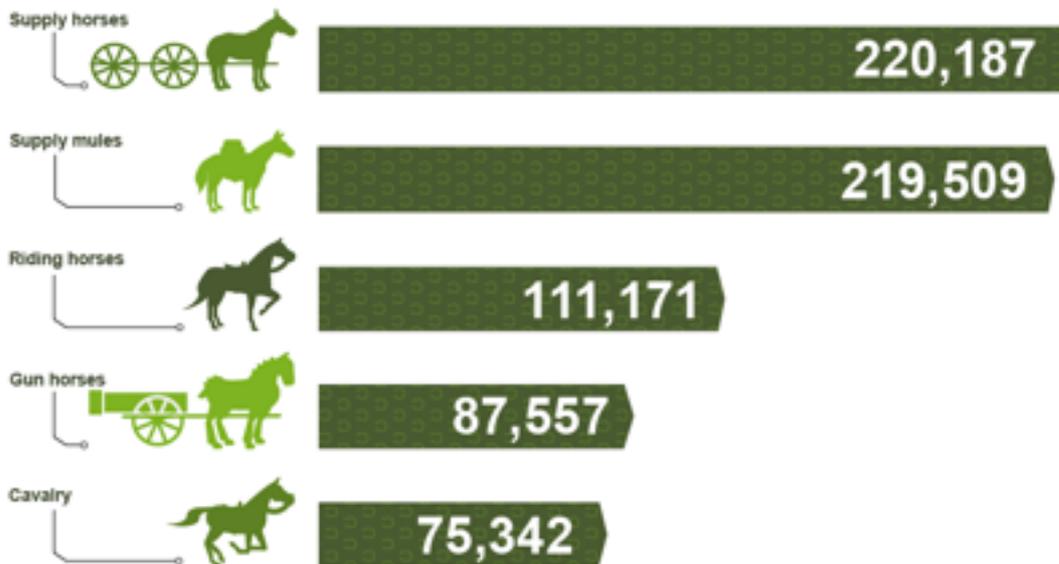
Both sides soon realised men on horses could not win the war in the trenches. The muddy ground, barbed wire and machine guns made it very difficult for horses, so they were used for transportation instead.

Cars and tanks often went wrong but horses and mules could be relied on to get food and equipment to the front line.

Ambulance horses carried wounded soldiers and artillery horses carried weapons, ammunition and other heavy loads. They had to be strong. Soldiers were not small and light like jockeys - most weighed around twelve stone. Fully armed and equipped, they were a lot heavier.

In total, around 8 million horses from all sides died during the war. Horses had a food ration of 20lbs of grain per day. When grain was in short supply, German horses were fed sawdust cake.

## British Army in November 1918 Horses and mules



### Other animal power

Donkeys and mules were sometimes used to pull heavy equipment, including artillery. Elephants were taken from circuses and zoos and photographs of them pulling heavy guns were used to show people back home that even exotic animals were 'doing their bit' in the war effort.

The soldiers in Isaac Rosenberg's poem 'Louse Hunting', paints a vivid image of men tearing off their shirts and burn them over a candle to get rid of the lice

