

SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

AMBULANCE TRAINS: EMPIRE

A FORGOTTEN FIRST
WORLD WAR STORY

TALKING



Ages

11-14
14-16

Topics

WORLD WAR ONE • HISTORY

Skills used

OBSERVATION • DISCUSSION

EMPIRE

About Ambulance Trains

Explore the realm of First World War ambulance trains with our image bank for Key Stage 3 pupils. Discover the significance of the railway industry and ambulance trains during the 1914-1918 conflict, and learn about the life-changing journeys of wounded soldiers.

Using images in your classroom

Our galleries in the Science Museum Group are full of amazing objects which are all examples of how science and technology has changed and improved our everyday lives.

You can use images:

- To hook students' interest at the start of a lesson or to introduce a new topic.
- As part of a discussion to explore the stories of the people who have shaped the world we live in through their passion and creativity.
- As mystery objects and get your students using their science and history skills such as observation, using prior knowledge and asking questions.
- To create a display of applications of science in your classroom, connecting past, present and future examples of technology.
- In a pre-visit activity to familiarise students with some of the objects and themes they will find in any of our museums.

Empire: Background information

The First World War was mainly fought in Europe, although many countries were involved because under the British Empire, Britain was able to conscript troops from around the world to fight and support its war effort. The colony which sent the greatest amount of soldiers was India, including Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Many nationalities were on board and treated on the ambulance trains destined for Britain. The diverse collection of casualties shared stories, language or even cigarettes to keep morale up in unfamiliar surroundings.

The aim of these resources is to help your students to explore the role of the British Empire in the First World War. The resources offer an observation into the diversity and comradeship of the troops fighting to support a nation on a different continent.

Teachers' notes

Use them as discussion points for learning about the impact of the British Empire within the First World War

Encourage your students to explore and interpret the resources

Use the resources to research how government rule changed after the war as a result of the colonial involvement

Talking points:

What do these images/quotes tell you?

What do you think might have been the biggest challenge for the British staff on board ambulance trains?

Through your own research, create a map of the British colonies that fought in the First World War

From further research can you find out how many soldiers from the British colonies lost their lives?

What do these resources tell you about the role of the British Empire in the First World War?

What questions do you need to ask about these resources?

What other types of sources of information do you think you need to look at to find out the answers to these questions?

**SCIENCE
MUSEUM
GROUP**



1



Image: Courtesy
of Imperial War Museum

All nations treated

Injured soldiers waiting to be loaded onto the train for transport. Injured enemies and allies had to wait and travel together on the same train.

SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

2





Image: Courtesy of
Imperial War Museum

Wounded British Empire Soldiers

The British Army included soldiers fighting from Canada, the Union of South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland as members of the British Empire.

**SCIENCE
MUSEUM
GROUP**

3





Image: Courtesy of
Imperial War Museum

Indian Soldiers

Britain raised its army from across the British Empire. The Indian army was one of two largest volunteer armies in the world.

‘We had Germans, prisoners of war. You see, they were all taken on the same train and we had Canadians and Australians and so on and I don’t think I could say that any particular nation put up a better or worse show than any other’

KH Green (Orderly)

'We had Germans, prisoners of war. You see, they were all taken on the same train and we had Canadians and Australians and so on and I don't think I could say that any particular nation put up a better or worse show than any other'

All on the same train

All wounded soldiers regardless of their nationalities, were loaded together onto ambulance trains. Soldiers shared similar war experiences, despite language and cultural differences.