



HISTORY BITES

LITTLE NIBBLES OF HISTORY

When Was the Air first used for war?

As long ago as the 3rd century BC. Yes. That long ago!

Chinese Lanterns

Yes, those traditional Chinese lanterns, which we still see today, are believed to have been used in Ancient China as military communication stations and weapons.

There is no proof, but it has been suggested that they may even have put a man underneath.

I'm not certain how a paper balloon could support the weight of a man, however small, on the other hand we do know that they were used as airborne lanterns for military signaling and possibly to drop burning wood..



It was 1794 before it was tried again.

Naturally, it was Napoleon who thought they could be useful and he founded the "Compagnie d'aérostatiers" (French Aerostatic Corps).

His idea was to use balloons for reconnaissance.

He tried this at the Battle of Fleurus in 1794, it didn't really work for him, so a year later at the Siege of Mainz, he used them again. He wasn't impressed, he found they couldn't fly in bad weather, fog, high winds, and the clincher, was they were large easy targets, so in 1799 he disbanded them.

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The Siege of Venice in 1849

During the siege, the Austrians attempted to float 200 paper hot air balloons over Venice.

Each one had an 11–14 kg bomb with a time fuse strapped underneath, and as it got over the city the plan was that it would drop from the balloon.

It failed!

Unfortunately, for the Austrians the wind changed, you guessed it, they drifted back over the Austrians! There was chaos, as they tried to avoid being killed by their own bombs!

Napoleon III did use them.

He found them useful in his victory over the Austrians in 1859.

Then used them again in 1870 when the Prussians surrounded Paris, cutting it off from the rest of the world. The Parisians used the cities railway stations, commandeered all the silk they could find, and they made 66 balloons, which carried over 100 people and 11 tons of mail out of the city, floating over the Prussians heads to freedom.

It was the only success the French could claim from the siege.

The American Civil War

In this war balloons were, finally, successfully used as observation towers by the Union Army.

However, they had learnt from the Austrian's experience, so this time they attached the balloons to 1000 feet of rope, making certain that they didn't drift over the Confederate Army and get shot down. They were convinced that if this happened, they would be shot as spies.

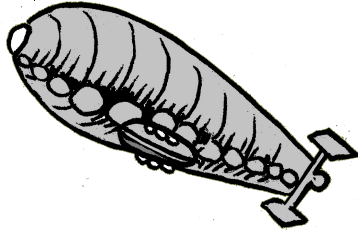




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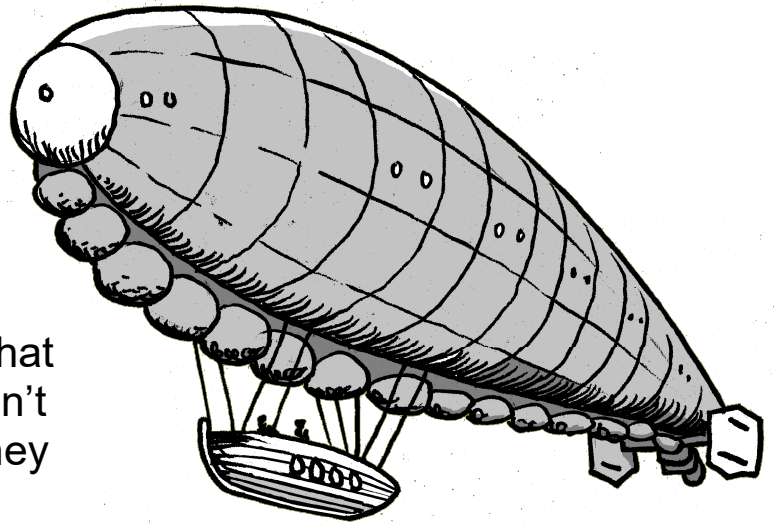
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When Was the Air first used for war?



Along came the Wright Brothers.

Once the Wright Brothers, on December 17, 1903, had proved that their plane could actually fly, it didn't take long for the military to see they had a new weapon of war.



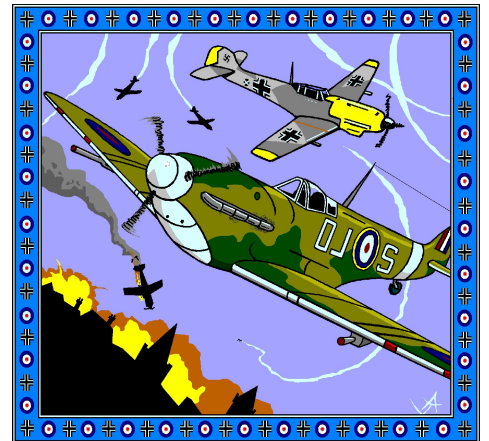
By the time of the 1911 Italo-Turkish War the Italian Army used monoplanes to bomb a Turkish camp at Ain Zara in Libya. This is the first recorded use of planes in war. Then, in the First Balkan War the following year, the Bulgarians used air power to bomb Turkish positions at Adrianople. After that, with the advent of World War 1, they really started using planes as a weapon of war.

It took from the 2/3rd Century BC until 1914 for war in the air to become one where men in flying machines could dice in the air.

We here at **EDUCATIONAL MUSICALS** have created a fabulous musical all about the epic air conflict -

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

is a fantastic show created especially for children, with an exciting and fun script and 12 amazing songs. Find out more on our website where you can see samples of script and listen to excerpts from the score.



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2 lesson. (1 to make, 1 to paint)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

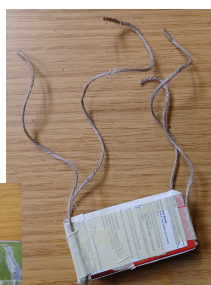
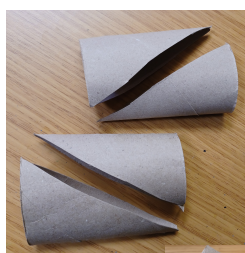
AIRSHIP MODEL



Use two plastic bottles the same size. Cut off the end of one and stick on the bottom of the other. Now stick some newspaper to a table with masking tape, then turn this upside down and roll your bottle onto the paper and stick.



Use two cardboard tubes, cut diagonally to create four fins and attach. A small tablet box cut in half can make the Gondola. Attach string to each corner, tape to the airship and paint grey or silver.



Isn't history fun? For more on this click on:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_aerial_warfare

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-ballooning>

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