**Bombing of Britain Information - FWW**

Count Ferdinand Zeppelin, a German army officer, began developing his ideas on airships in 1897. The first Zeppelin flew on 2nd July 1900. The LZ-3 Zeppelin was accepted into army service in March 1909. By the start of the First World War the German Army had seven military Zeppelins.

The Zeppelin developed in 1914 could reach a maximum speed of 136 kph and reach a height of 4,250 metres. The Zeppelin had five machine-guns and could carry 2,000 kg (4,400 lbs) of bombs.

In January 1915, two Zeppelin navel airships 190 metres long, flew over the east coast of England and bombed great Yarmouth and King's Lynn. The first Zeppelin raid on London took place on 31st May 1915. The raid killed 28 people and injured 60 more.

Many places suffered from Zeppelin raids included Edinburgh, Gravesend, Sunderland, the Midlands and the Home Counties. By the end of May 1916 at least 550 British civilians had been killed by German Zeppelins.

Zeppelins could deliver successful long-range bombing attacks, but were extremely vulnerable to attack and bad weather. British fighter pilots and anti-aircraft gunners became very good at bringing down Zeppelins. A total of 115 Zeppelins were used by the German military, of which, 77 were either destroyed or so damaged they could not be used again. In June 1917 the German military stopped used Zeppelins for bombing raids over Britain

During the First World War the German air force carried out 103 aerial bombing raids over Great Britain. The main targets were industrial cities, army camps and munitions factories. At first Germany used Zeppelins to bomb Britain. However, these were fairly easy to shoot down so in June 1917 Germany began sending the long-range bomber, the Gotha G-V, to Britain. The Gotha, with its giant wingspan (24 metres), was easy to identify and at first created considerable panic in those towns under attack. In the first raid over Folkestone, the Gotha bombing raid killed 95 people and wounded 195 more. This raid caused more casualties than any of the Zeppelin attacks that had taken place in the early stages of the war.

The British used searchlights, anti-aircraft guns and fighter aircraft and balloon barrages against the Gotha attacks. By the middle of 1918 a 51 mile long (82 km) balloon barrage was established around London. The balloons were arranged in groups of three which were interconnected by means of steel cable from which a number of light cables of about 1,000 ft (300 metres) length hung vertically. This net barrage was mounted so high that enemy aircraft arriving to attack would have difficulties in flying above it.

A total of 61 Gotha G-V aircraft were lost over Britain between September 1917 and May 1918. Germany decided to abandon the policy of bombing Britain and for the rest of the war the Gotha G-V was used over the Western Front.

The Germans also attacked Britain itself. For the fist time, civilians themselves were targeted with bombing raids by Zeppelins and coastal raids by the German Navy. The first Zeppelin raid on London was at midnight on May 31st 1915, when Hauptmann Linnarz bombed the capital killing seven people and making £18,000 worth of damage. In the months that followed, fifty further Zeppelin raids took place and a blackout was imposed on the city. By October 1915, these raids effectively ended when pilots from the Royal Naval Air Service flew night patrols to protect the city. On December 16th, 1914, the east coast towns of Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool were attacked by the German Navy killing 119 people including children.