

Scots during WWI



Learning Intentions



- We are learning new Scots language words directly from soldiers in WWI
- We are learning about the role played by pipers in WWI
- We are investigating other Scots words connected to WWI

Scottish Soldiers' Accounts

These accounts of conditions for soldiers in WWI are uniquely written in the language the soldiers would have spoken, as they were collected first-hand by a Scots speaker, Jock Duncan. Therefore, they are from the heart and conjure up stark images, and the straightforward manner in describing horrific conditions adds to the emotional impact. There is a rich vocabulary of descriptive words for mud and water.

Starter - Can you translate the following?

- ❑ the soss o dubs;
- ❑ the pleiter o watter;
- ❑ up tae yer knees in goor;
- ❑ dubs up tae ma kweets.



What do you already know?

A lot of the soldiers were farm labourers and could richly describe every condition of the ground and the unwelcome wildlife – rats and lice.

Do you know any other words or phrases that describe what it might have been like in the trenches?



Think, pair, share

The following slides show quotes from soldiers about their experiences. They are in their own words so there is a lot of Scots words and phrases.

With your partners, have a go at translating what they are saying.

What images does this conjure up for you?

Joining up

1. I jined up wi ma pal Fred Duncan efter the leaflets cam oot fae Kitchener needin a hunner thoosan men. We biket wi a lot mair fae Millbrex ti Peterheed ti jine up in the 5th Gordon Highlanders. *Sandy Simpson*
2. I wis in the Terriers at Perth. Wi their Black Watch battalion. I wis mustered when war started, I went to my officer and told him I wanted back to my own lot in the Black Isle. I was granted my wish and sent back up north to join the 4th Seaforth Highlanders at that time still at Nigg. I wis only 14 years old. *Robert Moore.*

The Ground Conditions

1. We meevied up through the soss o dubs and shell holes and the oistly o watter that wis Passchendale wid. We were jist livin like rats in the grun. *Jimmy Milne, 2nd Gordons.*
2. Ye couldna traivel for the dubs: ye couldna pit ae fit by the ither for the clort. What a sotter aathin was in. We tried aye tae redd up the trenches. *Jimmy Reid.*

The Ground Conditions

3. It cam on rain fin it stairted an oh it was terrible – ye wis widin up tae yer knees in goor. The trenches were fu o watter an it wis clay grun makkin it a helluva job gan aboot. *Charles Smith.*

4. I aye mind fin we occupied trenches that wis fu o deed. Wi the shellin they were maistly aa covered wi earth faain in, but we kent wi the spring in wer feet that it wis bodies we were stannin on. We culdna meeve fer dubs there. *Alec Barlow.*

Fighting

1. Gan ower, I took shelter fae machine gun fire in an orchard among heaps o muck. Fin I lookit at the idder folk on the grun – there wis naebody livin – they were aa deid. *Jimmy Reid, 6th Gordon Highlanders.*
2. I flapp'et (lay down flat) and keepit ma heid doon. There wis another lad at my side and he rase up tae get a pirk (shot) at them. I says tull him, 'Dinna dee that – keep yer heed doon in to the grun'. Na na! he rase up an shot aff a roon, but nae mair that wis him feenished'. *John Rennie, 5th Gordon Highlanders*

Lice



1. The lice wis affa – we never got clear o them. Harry Nicoll, Royal Engineers. Ae trick wis tae rub wir claes wi creosote – bit aat burned like hell. *Alec Nichol, 7th Gordon Highlanders*
2. I eenced ti (used to) tak a canle up the seams and ye could hear em crackin again. *Peter Baigrie, 6th Black Watch.*

Kilts

Kilts In the Winter time we eence (used) to tie sandbags roon wer knees to hud the kilt on rubbin. The tail o't got frozen and kept rub-rubbin roon the knees: it wis an affa job!

Alec HcHardy, 7th Gordon Highlanders.



Scots words used by the soldiers about life in the trenches:

Try to work out what these might mean:

barbit

weer

brae

brunt

clort

grun

dugout

dubs

dubby

droned

howe

goorhole



Scots words used by the soldiers about life in the trenches:

Try to work out what these might mean:



lair

larripin

loupin

mossin

naewye

plappering

reek

plouterin

plitered

poosaned

midden

redd up

Scots words used by the soldiers about life in the trenches:

Try to work out what these might mean:

reemin fu

sharn

sotter

rummle

shot

scrattit

soos



Over to you!

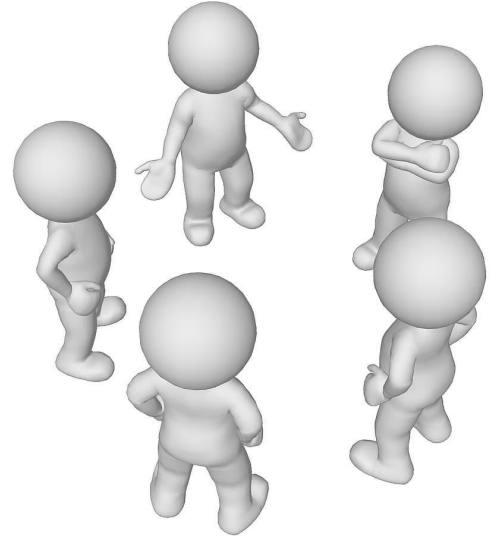
Using the words we have just learned, write a sentence (or more) in Scots describing what you think the conditions were like during the war for the soldiers.



The importance of pipers during WWI

Discussion:

What is a piper and why might they have played a part in the war?





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xW2ojn5agr4>

The importance of pipers during WWI

Piper Daniel Laidlaw of the 7th Kings Own Scottish Borderers was awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry in World War One.

[https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/
Scottish-Piper-War-Heroes/](https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/Scottish-Piper-War-Heroes/)

The importance of pipers during WWI

The 14-18 pipers are famous in the Scottish Regiments, bagpiping to encourage the soldiers out of the trenches and when they 'went over'. They played a big part in raising the morale of young soldiers, even though it is doubtful how much they would have been heard above the battery of shells.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnGbZa51Scc>

The importance of pipers during WWI

Some local pipers who fought in WWI include PM Jimmy Robertson, who in solitary confinement in a POW camp composed the oft heard tune Farewell to the Creeks, scribbling it down on a piece of yellow blotting paper, which he kept all his life. He worked as janitor at Banff Academy on his return. Soldiers would have sung both the traditional songs and popular songs of the day.

Nicknames given to Scottish soldiers

Kilties

Devils in Skirts

Ladies from Hell - Die Damen aus der Hölle

Why do you think they had these names?

**Letter to a relative in Leeds was reported in the
Leeds Mercury 14 July 1915**

Private Clifford Walker, serving with the Cameron Highlanders stated that 'The French people in the villages nearly go daft when they hear the pipes and see us in our 'frocks', as they call them. A good many times I have been offered money and a pair of trousers for the kilt, but it is far warmer and helps to frighten Johnny German away'.

Aberdeen Evening Express 25 December 1914

Private Alick Moore of the Camerons, stated that ‘ ... the Germans nicknamed us ‘the ladies from hell’. We looked as if we were relations of the devil sure enough, our kilts covered with mud, and a few weeks beard on our chins.’

Evening Express

Scots soldiers were also known as 'The Kilties' in the Crimean War

The Crimean War (1854-56) was fought by an alliance of Britain, France, Turkey and Sardinia against Russia. Many Scottish regiments fought in the Crimean War, including The Royal Scots Fusiliers, The Scots Guards, The Black Watch and The Highland Light Infantry.



The following slides show some verses from 'The Kilties in Crimea'. How much of it do you understand?

The Kilties in the Crimea', written by John Lorimer of Paisley, in 1865:

*The Kilties are the lads for me,
They're aye the foremost in a spree,
And when they're in they'll no' come oot
Tho' a' the warld should turn about.*



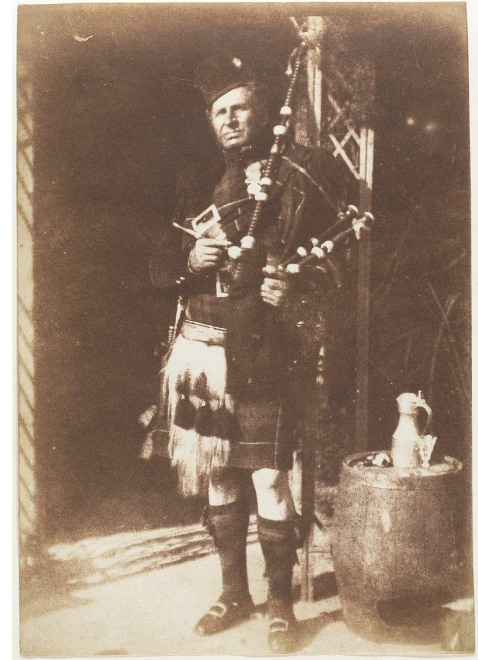
The Kilties in the Crimea', written by John Lorimer of Paisley, in 1865:

*They're no' the lads will run awa',
But feicht while they ha'e breath to draw;
Just tell them whaur they'll meet the foe,
And shoulder to shoulder awa' they go!*



The Kilties in the Crimea', written by John Lorimer of Paisley, in 1865:

*Hurrah for a' the kiltie lads,
Wi' tartan plaids and white cockades ;
Just set them down before the foe,
And, shouther to shouther, awa' they go.*



Plenary

3 things you have learned:



- 3 Scots words to describe WWI conditions
- 3 ways the pipers helped the soldiers
- 3 nicknames given to Scottish soldiers
- 3 Scots regiments you noticed in this lesson.