

Additional information about cats

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Rat-catchers Cats were primarily brought in to control the rodent population of the trenches. Rats and mice were a terrible problem for the soldiers – a single breeding pair of rats could be responsible for up to 900 offspring in a year, so rat traps were not enough. Cats were able to keep the numbers of rats down to manageable levels

Messengers Some cats were used to carry messages in small containers that were attached to their collars. Because cats could freely cross no-man's land, during the Christmas Truce of 1914, many soldiers used them to send messages of peace to the other trenches. They did this by tying friendly notes to the cats' collars and sending them over to the enemy soldiers. Some officers were not very pleased with this and considered the cats to be spying for the enemy!

Morale Cats are affectionate animals, so kept many soldiers company during their time in the bunkers or living quarters. The men found that playing with the cats helped them relax and forget about the war for a few minutes.



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