

Additional information about horses

Many of the horses used for the war came from farms, hunt stables and horse-drawn bus companies, and were shipped over to France along with the soldiers.

Cavalry Both sides used cavalry horses at the start of the war, using them to charge enemy infantry soldiers. It soon became obvious that the muddy conditions of the trenches made this impossible to sustain.



Transport Horses were mainly used for transporting supplies to where soldiers needed them, and for pulling heavy artillery. Carts and wagons were used, so the horses need to be strong to pull the heavy loads. They were much better at picking their way through mud and potholes than motorised vehicles, and so were highly valued by the soldiers. Indeed, their value was not just physical: the men who looked after them became attached to them emotionally and the horses became very

important to the morale of the soldiers.

Ambulance Horses also carried wounded soldiers back to the hospital tents. Again, they needed to be strong for this, as a fully armed and equipped twelve-stone soldier was a lot heavier than a racing jockey.

Horses had a food ration of 20lbs (about 44kg) of grain per day. When grain was in short supply, German horses were fed sawdust cake.

At the end of the war, 25,000 horses that served in the British army were returned to Britain.

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