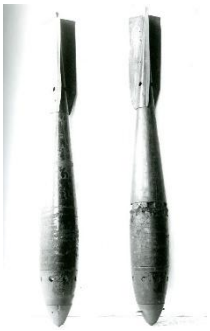
WORLD WAR ONE (WWI) BOMBING

During WWI, strategic aerial bombardment of the UK took place for the first time. An estimated 9,000No. German bombs were dropped on Britain during the course of 51No. airship and 52No. aircraft raids.

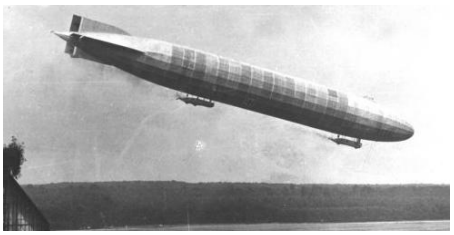
Many of these raids were carried out on London and Southeast England, with areas along the East Coast also targeted regularly due to their proximity to the European continent. Raids further inland were rare and West England and Wales were out of reach for German aircraft of the time.

4.7l Incendiary (L) and 12.5kg Carbonit bombs (R)



12.5kg P.u.W bombs

300kg P.u.W bomb



Zeppelin LZ44 (LZ74) rigid airship

Zeppelin Staaken R.XIV ('Giant') bomber aircraft

12.5kg, 50kg, 100kg, and 300kg P.u.W bombs

Gotha G.IV bomber aircraft

Early aerial bombing in WWI was carried out by rigid airships know as Zeppelins, which were predominantly replaced by 1917 by bomber aircraft. Bombing initially relied on visual aiming, with bombsights not developed until later in the war. This inaccuracy meant that bombs often fell some way from their intended targets.

The first recorded raid against England was on the 21st December 1914 in Dover. Zeppelin raids intensified during 1915 and 1916, with aircraft raids becoming more frequent after 1917. The last aircraft raid of WWI took place on the 19th May 1918, when 41No. aircraft dropped over 2,500lbs of bombs on London and surrounding districts.

WWI aerial-dropped bombs range from small incendiary bombs up to 1,000kg Prufanstalt und Werft der Fliergertruppe (P.u.W) High Explosive (HE) bombs.

Hazard

Given the low bombing density of WWI raids, it is typically considered unlikely for a WWI Unexploded Bomb (UXB) to be encountered.

Areas subjected to sustained bombing raids in WWI may have recorded higher numbers of UXBs. In these areas, where there has been no significant development since WWI, the potential of a UXB remaining from WWI cannot be totally discounted.

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