KIDS TRACK

FIRST to FIGHT

RAILROADERS IN WWI

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B&O RAILROAD MUSEUM
KIDS TRACK
WHAT STARTED WORLD WAR I

In the early 1900s, the different countries that made up the continent of Europe were splitting into two opposing sides, much like the United States experienced during the Civil War. There were the Central Powers which included Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), and Bulgaria, and the Allied Powers were made up of France, Russia, Great Britain. The United States would also join the Allied Powers later on in the war. World War I was a complicated conflict started by a combination of several major events, but one of the biggest was when Germany invaded Belgium in 1914.

ACTIVITY

Try to locate some of the countries from both sides of the war. Circle the Allied Powers (France, Russia, Great Britain) and put a star in the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria).
Even though it took place in Europe, railroads were a very important part of the war here in the United States. Trains were used to transport troops and supplies from all over the country to ports on the East Coast where they could be shipped overseas to help our allies. This meant that people all over the country could help contribute to the war effort!

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Trains carrying troops were considered the most important, so every other train had to stop and let them pass. The only exception was if the President of the United States was traveling by train.

**ACTIVITY** Can you help the train carrying supplies make its way to the East Coast?
RAILROADERS TO WAR

When the US joined its allies in the fight, many men went off to war. This included many B&O Railroad employees. They played an important role in building and repairing railroads in Europe, as well as transporting big equipment, like tanks, by rail.

ACTIVITY

Connect the dots to build your own train!
During World War I, the only way to communicate with loved ones overseas was by written letter, much like the notes between David and his wife. Over 12 million letters were delivered to the front lines every week! At the end of the war, approximately 2 BILLION letters had been delivered to troops.

**Activity** Imagine you’re writing a letter to a friend on the front line. What would you want to tell them? What do you think they would like to know about home? Write your friend a note on the lines below.

Dear


THE FIRST 100:

When the US entered World War I many men, including lots of B&O Railroad employees, joined the military to go fight. But operating the railroad was still very important to keep the country moving, so women stepped in to fill the roles of their husbands, fathers, and brothers who had gone to Europe to fight. This was the first time women were encouraged to enter the workforce! They took on jobs like working in the shop, building and repairing trains, and using heavy machinery. The first group of women to enter the railroad industry were called the “First 100.”

ACTIVITY

Draw a line to match the tool to the job it would be used for.

![Tool icons: anvil, saw, shovel, hammer, wood, coal, horseshoe]
WOMEN’S ROLES IN WORLD WAR I

Many women were also able to join the Navy, serving right here in the United States as truck drivers, mechanics, radio operators, translators, and clerical workers. They had the same responsibilities as their male counterparts and received the same pay. This was a major step for women, considering that during WWI most women still didn’t even have the right to vote.

ACTIVITY

Imagine you’re a woman entering the work place during the war.

• What kind of job would you have?
• What would you have to wear?
• What tools would you use?

Create your idea on the image to the left.
Everyone was expected to contribute to the war effort — even kids! Boy Scouts and Girl Guides (Girl Scouts) had their own roles and responsibilities. They would collect eggs, deliver milk, knit socks & scarves for troops, and prepare medical kits with field bandages for soldiers. The boy scouts were also tasked with protecting railroads and bridges to make sure they were safe to use. At first, Boy Scouts in Europe were used to deliver messages between military bases, but it was quickly discovered that the Girl Guides were better at keeping secrets!

**Activity**

Many railroad companies allowed Boy Scouts and Girl Guides to plant Victory Gardens along the train tracks to help provide fresh fruits and vegetables for the war effort. Use the train track to draw your own garden. What would you like to grow?
Not all war heroes stood on two legs. One of the most famous American icons of WWI was a stray puppy named Stubby, who befriended soldiers training in Connecticut, and traveled to France with them aboard Navy ships. During his military career, Stubby would bark when he smelled poisonous gasses so that troops knew to put on their gas masks. He would also travel across the battlefields and bark whenever he found wounded troops, so that the medics would know where to find them.

**Activity**

Sergeant Stubby earned many awards and badges for the help he gave to soldiers. Can you design Stubby a badge for all of the good work he did?

There is a full-length movie about the adventures of Sergeant Stubby.
DID YOU KNOW? World War I ended at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. To this day we continue to honor this by celebrating Veteran’s Day on November 11th.