

Tanks

By the outbreak of the First World War, Richard Hornsby & Sons produced the Killen-Strait Armoured Tractor. The tracks consisted of a continuous series of steel links, joined together with steel pins. The machine could successfully cut through barbed wire entanglements.

With the help of Colonel Maurice Hankey, Swinton managed to persuade Winston Churchill, the navy minister, to set up a Landships Committee to look at the possibilities of building a new war machine.

The Landships Committee and the newly-formed Inventions Committee agreed with Swinton's proposal and commissioned to produce a small landship. Constructed in great secrecy, the machine was given the code-name tank by Swinton.

Nicknamed Little Willie, this prototype tank with its Daimler engine, had track frames 12 feet long, weighted 14 tons and could carry a crew of three, at speeds of just over three miles. The speed dropped to less than 2 mph over rough ground and most importantly of all, was unable to cross broad trenches. Although the performance was disappointing, Ernest Swinton remained convinced that when modified, the tank would enable the Allies to defeat the Central Powers.



WWI New Technologies Analysis

After learning about WWI, this activity allows you to explore the new technologies and devices which came out from this world war. Here is what your group will do:

1. Have someone in your group read the description and brief background about your particular device. Other students in the group should follow along taking note and pulling out the important information. Jot down a brief (3 or 4 sentence) paragraph summary.

2. Look at the image at the bottom of the page. Think about these questions when viewing it.
 - a. What ways do you think the device was used and how do you think it was utilized when fighting? Why?

 - b. By looking at your weapon do you think it was light weight and easy to maneuver to the battle grounds? How do you think it was operated?

3. Figure out a solution to the following dilemma: *If you were a soldier on either front (you pick a side) and you wanted to protect yourself from enemy fire from these weapons, what methods or ways would you use to counteract them and protect yourself?* (Example: If your enemy fought on a horse and you were a foot soldier, whose men continued to die by the horsemen, maybe your army would begin to wear protective armor or start riding on a horse.)