

## **EXAMPLE SHORT HISTORICAL STORY BASED ON RESEARCH**

**Prompt:** Write an interesting historical story about a famous event that really happened. Show the challenges that were faced and how they were resolved. Make sure that the story contains at least five paragraphs and all the elements of a story. Provide at least three references in a reference list. Use the APA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: Shooting Down a Monster

Shooting Down a Monster

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### Shooting Down a Monster

In 1915, a year after World War I had begun, the city of London came under attack by a German flying machine called the zeppelin. To clarify, zeppelins were cigar-shaped metal frames filled with hydrogen gas and driven by propellers. They were huge: longer than two football fields. From the zeppelin, a crew could drop bombs anywhere, and no one could stop them. These monsters arrived over England under the protection of darkness, but they could be seen with the help of powerful searchlights positioned on the ground. One of the British fighter pilots was 21-year-old Billy Robinson.<sup>1</sup> He had tried to shoot down the zeppelins with his machine gun, but he had no success. The bullets traveled right through the canvas skin of the zeppelin. They did no damage, and the zeppelin continued on its mission.

To combat this threat, Billy's engineer friends in the Army worked hard to design a bullet that would make the hydrogen in the zeppelin catch fire. First, they developed an incendiary shell which would shoot flames into the hydrogen as it passed through the ship. However, this did not work because fire requires oxygen. There was no oxygen inside the gas bags that kept the zeppelin in the air—only hydrogen. Next, they designed an explosive shell. This new shell was designed to explode and rip a big hole in the canvas to let oxygen in from the outside air to mix with the hydrogen inside the zeppelin. Once created, these explosive bullets were packed into circular containers, called drums, that held 40 bullets each. Each new drum had to be loaded into the machine gun by hand while the pilot was flying his plane.

When the Germans launched a fleet of 16 airships on September 2, 1916, the British had their first chance to try out the new shells against the zeppelin.<sup>2</sup> Among this fleet, the zeppelin called the SL 11 dropped a few bombs on Hertfordshire as it was approaching London. It became

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<sup>1</sup> "Leefe Robinson," 2018, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> "Leefe Robinson," 2018, p. 1

visible in the searchlights as it bombed Ponders End. The first British pilot into the air was Billy Robinson. Around 2:05 a.m., he saw the SL 11, which was lit up by the searchlights.<sup>3</sup> He flew along the underside and fired his special bullets into it. They had no effect. After reloading, he made a second run at the zeppelin. Again, the bullets did not ignite the hydrogen. Sadly, time was running out. By now, Billy had only enough ammunition for one more run.

Despite the danger, Billy knew he had to do something more to bring down the zeppelin. Regrettably, he also knew that the attack plan of the Royal Air Force was clear and strict. Pilots were to fly under the zeppelin and fire a line of bullets from back to front. However, that plan was not working. The first two attacks on the zeppelin were useless. After thinking about the problem, Billy decided to ignore the standard procedure for his final run. He shot his entire third drum of explosive bullets into the tail section of the zeppelin. The concentration of explosive bullets opened up a big enough hole in the skin of the zeppelin for the oxygen to rush in. Then, when he shot incendiary bullets into the hole, they set the hydrogen on fire. To Billy's relief, the burning ship came crashing to the ground. There were no survivors.

Because of the searchlights, the battle between Billy and the zeppelin had been witnessed by thousands of Londoners. As they saw the airship come down in flames, they cheered and sang the national anthem. One man even played the bagpipes. September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1916 became known as Zep Sunday. Overnight, Billy Robinson became the most famous man in Britain. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in the face of the enemy. Within a month, the attack technique that he had used in desperation that Sunday was used by other pilots. They brought down two more airships. Certainly, it was the beginning of the end for the zeppelin. The Germans could no longer use zeppelins successfully in the war. The British pilots learned that

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<sup>3</sup> "Leefe Robinson," 2018, p. 1

they had to be willing to “think outside the box” and to use new strategies if they were going to win the war.

## References

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