

Bridge History

In the early years of Bridge the game was called Whist and it was played by kings, queens, generals, and officers. In the early 1900's in England, Auction Bridge was invented and all four players were allowed to bid and compete to win the bidding like a commercial auction. Sometime between 1920 and 1925 contract Bridge was developed as a result of contributions from English, French, and American players and it became the game of Bridge that we know today.

The highest stakes Bridge game in history happened in Istanbul, Turkey around 1917 when the United States entered World War I. The captain of the American gunboat Scorpion, Lt Cmdr. Herbert Babbitt and the Turkish Minister of Interior, Talat Pasha, played a game of Bridge to decide the fate of the ship. If Babbitt won, the ship would stay anchored in Turkey and would not go anywhere, and if Talat won he would hand the ship to Germany who wanted to use the ship as a decoy in the war. Turkey and Germany were allies at the time. Captain Babbitt who was the best Bridge player in the United States Navy won the game and Talat Pasha kept the ship in Turkey as promised until the end of the war.

