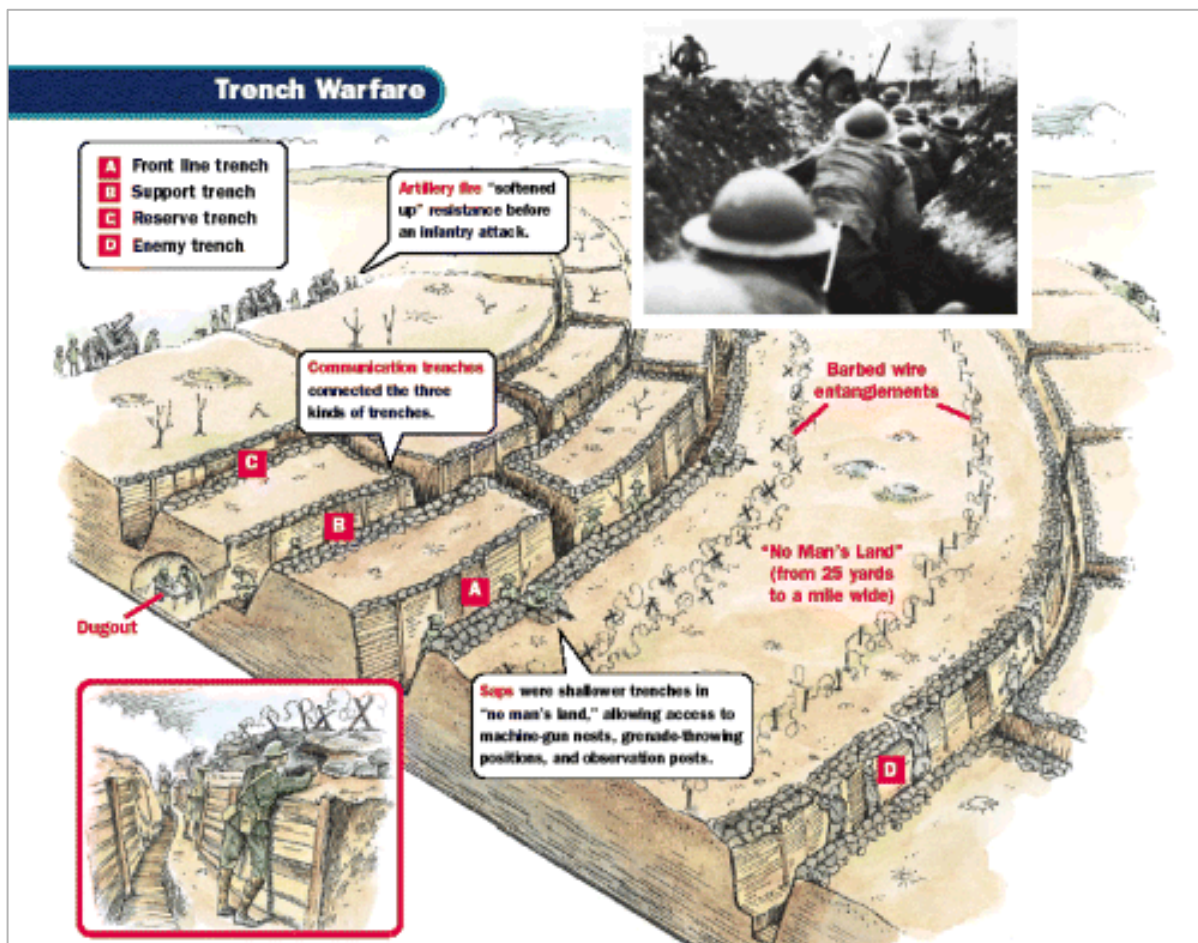


Some of these images are a bit out of focus. If you can't read all the captions, skip that image and go to the next one.



Trench life



- ▶ What was it like in a front-line trench?
- ▶ What everyday difficulties did the soldiers face?

Month after month, year after year, soldiers battled out the war in what must have been the toughest conditions they had ever seen. Basically, they were 'living rough' and had to cope with all the problems associated with the cold, the wet and the mud.

The soldier – he'd spend about one week in a front-line trench facing the enemy, four weeks in a support trench (about 100 metres behind the front line) and eight weeks in a reserve trench (about 300 metres behind the support trench).

Machine-gun – the most common German gun was the G8, whilst the British favoured the *Vickers*, the *Hotchkiss* or the *Lewis Gun*.

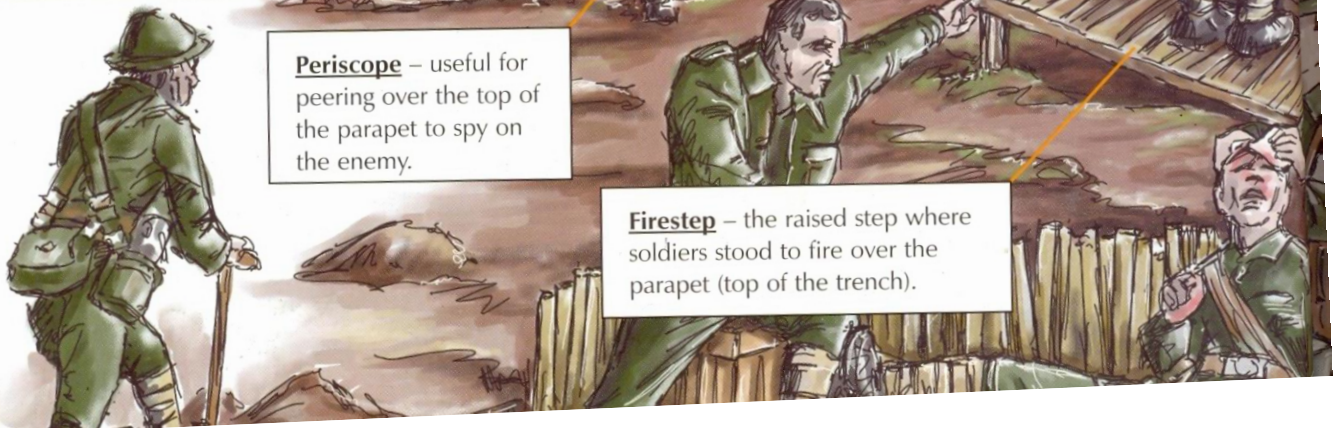
Sandbags – to protect soldiers from bullets and bombs.

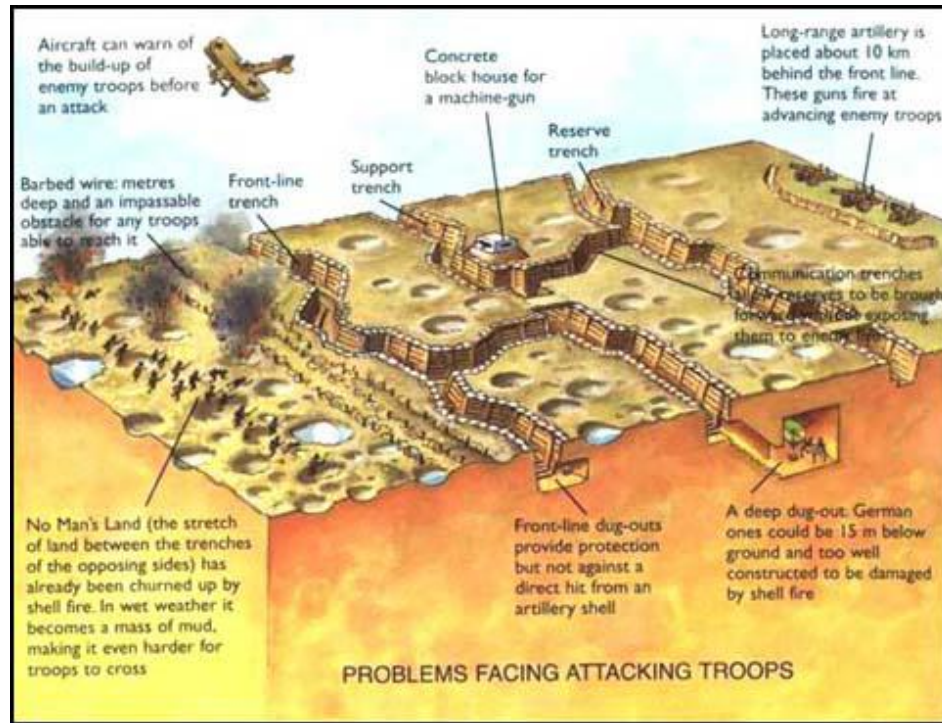
Latrine (toilet) – a board with a hole in it, laid over a pit. Soldiers didn't really like using the latrines – the enemy usually knew where they were located and fired bombs at them in case anyone was using them at the time!

Dugout – for resting and sheltering. The officers (men in charge of the ordinary foot soldiers) often had a bed and table in here.

Periscope – useful for peering over the top of the parapet to spy on the enemy.

Firestep – the raised step where soldiers stood to fire over the parapet (top of the trench).








Trenches

Daily Routine:

Men would wake up, keep watch, clean their guns, eat breakfast, and do chores like drain the trenches after rain so they wouldn't collapse.





Because of sniper's constant watch, they could not move at all so some wrote letters home or slept. Some prepared meals.




The stench was terrible. It came from decaying bodies, unclean, sweaty bodies and smelly feet.



Usually someone would serve in the front line then go to the support and finally reverse lines before getting a break. But some only got 2 weeks of break per year



One-third of all casualties were killed or wounded while in the trenches. Many died the first day. Many died on the front line.





Infestation

Some were sent to no man's land to listen to enemy lines. Some repaired wires.

Lice invaded the trenches and the seams of clothing. They spread from rats to humans. Even when clothes were washed, the lice eggs could spread and hatch.

huge Rats infested the trenches and ate the dead bodies. They could get to be the size of a cat and reproduce 900 offspring a year. They contaminated to food and water supplies and spread infection.



A stretch of No-Man's Land between Trenchy and Man/noon.