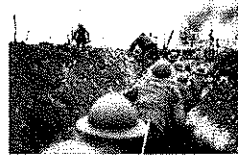


World War I

TRENCH WARFARE

Life in the trenches of the Western Front was deplorable, disgusting, and unhealthy for the soldiers who fought there. The trenches were just 'ditches' for the men to hide in and they turned to mud when the rain came. Life in the trenches was worse than one could ever imagine.



Problems in the Trenches:

WATER- As the Germans were the first to decide where to stand fast and dig, they had been able to choose the best places to build their trenches. The possession of the higher ground not only gave the Germans a tactical advantage, but it also forced the British to live in the worst conditions. Most of this area was rarely a few feet above sea level. As soon as soldiers began to dig down they would invariably find water two or three feet below the surface. Along the whole line, trench life involved a never-ending struggle against water and mud.

DYSENTERY- Dysentery is a disease involving the inflammation of the lining of the large intestines. The inflammation causes stomach pains and diarrhea. Some cases involve vomiting and fever. The bacteria enters the body through the mouth in food or water, and also by human feces and contact with infected people. The diarrhea causes people suffering from dysentery to lose important salts and fluids from the body. This can be fatal if the body dehydrates. This disease struck the men in the trenches as there was no proper sanitation. Latrines in the trenches were pits four to five feet deep. When they were within one foot they were supposed to be filled in and the soldiers had the job of digging a new one. Sometimes there was not time for this and men used a nearby shell-hole.

RATS! Many men killed in the trenches were buried almost where they fell. If a trench subsided, or new trenches or dugouts were needed, large numbers of decomposing bodies would be found just below the surface. These corpses, as well as the food scraps that littered the trenches, attracted rats. One pair of rats can produce 880 offspring in a year and so the trenches were soon swarming with them.

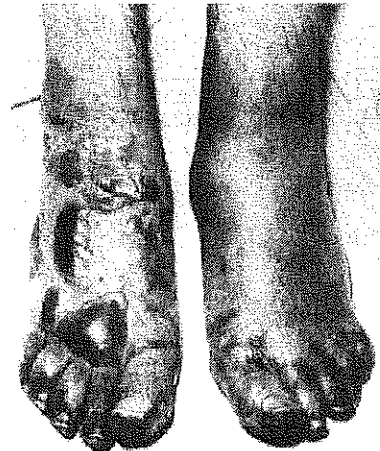
Robert Graves remarked in his book, *Goodbye to All That*: "Rats came up from the canal, fed on the plentiful corpses, and multiplied exceedingly. While I stayed here with the Welch, a new officer joined the company and, in token of welcome, was given a dug-out containing a spring-bed. When he turned in that night he heard a scuffling, shone his torch on the bed, and found two rats on his blanket tussling for the possession of a severed hand."

Self-Inflicted Wounds- Faced with the prospect of being killed or permanently disabled, soldiers sometimes hoped that they would receive what was known as a *blighty wound*, and be sent back home. There were some cases where soldiers shot themselves in an attempt to end their time on the frontline. Self-inflicted wounds (SIW) was a capital offence and if discovered, a man found guilty of this faced execution by firing-squad. A total of 3,894 men in the British Army were convicted of SIW. None of these men were executed but they all served periods in prison.

LICE- Men in the trenches suffered from lice. One soldier writing after the war described them as "pale fawn in colour, and they left blotchy red bite marks all over the body." They also created a sour; stale smell. Various methods were used to remove the lice. A lighted candle was fairly effective but the skill of burning the lice without burning your clothes was only learnt with practice.

TRENCH-FOOT- Many soldiers fighting in the First World War suffered from trench foot. This was an infection of the feet caused by cold, wet and insanitary conditions. In the trenches men stood for hours on end in waterlogged trenches without being able to remove wet socks or boots. The feet would gradually go numb and the skin would turn red or blue. If untreated, trench foot could turn gangrenous and result in amputation. Trench foot was a particular problem in the early stages of the war. For example, during the winter of 1914-15 over 20,000 men in the British Army were treated for trench foot.

The only remedy for trench foot was for the soldiers to dry their feet and change their socks several times a day. By the end of 1915 British soldiers in the trenches had to have three pairs of socks with them and were under orders to change their socks at least twice a day. As well as drying their feet, soldiers were told to cover their feet with a grease made from whale-oil. It has been estimated that a battalion at the front would use ten gallons of whale-oil every day.



Other Problems included:

- Food Rations
- Supplies and supply lines
- Arms and Weapons
- Clean Water
- Toilets (were just dug out holes that when full, were just left and another hole was dug)
 - Sleeping –imagine not sleeping and living through all this
 - Psychological Stress- (called Shell Shock)
 - and MANY other horrible situations....

Trench Warfare

Block _____ Date _____

Name _____

1. What is a stalemate and why did it occur between the British/French and the German troops?

2. Why did soldiers build trenches? (Give two reasons.)

3. The area between the trenches was called _____.

4. What was the name of the Canadian-issued rifle? Why wasn't this rifle very effective in trench warfare?

5. Why did entering no man's land come to mean almost certain death?

6. What would happen if troops managed to capture the enemy's front line?

7. List three characteristics of life in the trenches.

8. What is a battle of attrition?

Technology in the First World War

Block _____ Date _____

Name _____

TANK	SO WHAT? <i>(Significance / Impact / Consequences)</i>
USE:	
POISON GAS	SO WHAT?
USE:	
MACHINE GUNS	SO WHAT?
USE:	
SUBMARINE	SO WHAT?
USE:	
AIRPLANE	SO WHAT?
USE:	