

# Year 9 Independent Learning Booklet

## World War One – Trench Warfare

Trench conditions: What was trench warfare like?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

History Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

## YEAR 9 – WEEKLY INSTRUCTIONS

<b>Week</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>1</b>	Read causes of WW1 – write 10 facts about the causes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Task 1 Q1 - 4</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	Create a mind map to show the conditions in the trenches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include 8 facts for each heading. Use the planning sheet to help you</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	Read through the sources and answer the questions below using Source A, B and C <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the provenance of the source</li> <li>2. What does the source tell us about life in the trenches</li> <li>3. Which source is the most useful for an enquiry into conditions of trench warfare? Explain fully</li> </ol> Write a letter home to your parents explaining what your everyday life is like living and fighting in the trenches
<b>4</b>	Censorship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a definition for censorship</li> <li>• Censor the two letters</li> <li>• Censor your own letter</li> <li>• Why was censorship so important to the war effort?</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	Attacking a trench <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete research task</li> <li>• Trench attack report</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	Tanks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dragon's Den design a tank</li> <li>• Design speech</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	The Battle of the Somme – Haig source work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse the sources and fill in table</li> <li>• What is your opinion of Haig</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	Reflection and overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a knowledge organiser about WW1</li> <li>• Create a quiz – with 10 questions</li> <li>• Complete reflection</li> </ul>

## Week 1

Task 1 – Read through the text below – the causes of WW1

### The Causes of WW1

Historians disagree about what 'caused' the First World War, but most trace it in some degree to the growing power of Germany. The 'balance of power' between the nations of Europe became unstable. This led them to form military alliances:

- The Triple Alliance – Germany, Austria and Italy
- The Triple Entente – France, Britain and Russia

Use the word **MAIN** to remember the main issues surrounding the cause of the First World War:

**Militarism** - many countries believed it was important to build large armies and navies.

**Alliances** - the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente were said to have been formed to help prevent war.

**Imperialism** - European nations were creating empires and coming into conflict.

**Nationalism** - all countries were looking out for their own interests.

After the murder of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The countries of Europe found that the alliances they had formed dragged them into war.

### **The course of the war**

In August 1914, Germany invaded France through Belgium, using its plan for war – the Schlieffen Plan. The German attack was forced back

at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914. Both sides dug defensive trenches and the war ground to a halt.

For the next four years, the war on the Western Front consisted of a deadly stalemate. The battles of Verdun and the Somme in 1916 and Passchendaele in 1917 were key events where each side tried to wear the other side down.

In 1917, the Americans entered the war. Before they could arrive, the Germans made another attack in March 1918. It was successful at the start, but the Germans failed to break through. They were pushed back in August 1918. Two months later the Germans signed the Armistice.

### **The War had five phases:**

#### **1. The War of Movement (August – September 1914)**

- The Germans invaded France, but were stopped at the Battle of the Marne (September 1914).
- The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) helped to stop the Germans at the Battle of Mons (23 August 1914).
- The Russians invaded Germany but were destroyed at the Battle of Tannenberg (August 1914).
- Battle of Mons: The first defeat

#### **2. The Race to the Sea (September – November 1914)**

- On the Western Front, both sides dug a 400-mile line of trenches from Switzerland to the English Channel. Soldiers had to put up with constantly being wet, being pestered by rats, and illnesses.

### **3. Stalemate (1915)**

There was a stalemate (neither side could defeat the other).

On the Western Front, attacks on the German trenches led to huge casualties.

Britain's attempt to open up a 'Second Front' at Gallipoli in Turkey was a failure.

### **4. The War of Attrition (1916 – 1918)**

The two sides simply tried to wear each other down:

- Huge battles, eg Verdun and the Somme in 1916, Passchendaele in 1917, lasted many months. Thousands of men died or were wounded.
- New weapons, eg poison gas, tanks and aeroplanes failed to make much effect.
- There were terrible conditions in the trenches and many casualties from machine gun and artillery fire.
- The British blockaded German ports to try to starve the Germans into surrender. In October 1918 there was a revolution in Germany.
- German U-boats tried to starve the British by sinking merchant ships – but this angered the Americans.
- German Zeppelins and Gotha planes bombed London.

### **5. The Fighting Ends**

The United States of America entered the war in 1917.

- On 21 March 1918, the Germans launched Operation Michael – a huge last-ditch attack.

- On 8 August 1918, the German Army's 'Black Day', when their attack was defeated.
- The Allies, with the Americans, began to push back the Germans. The Allies and Germany signed a ceasefire, or 'armistice', at 11am on 11 November 1918. On 28 June 1919, The Treaty of Versailles was signed by the Germans.

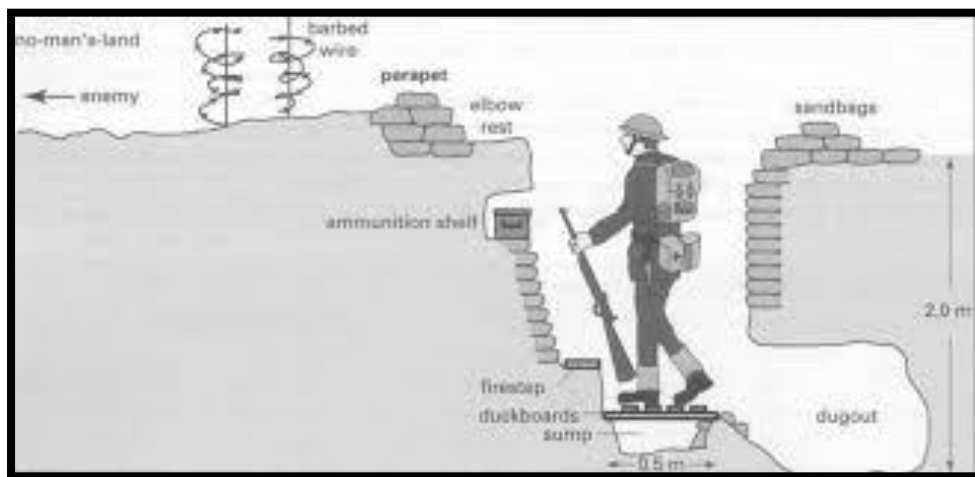
## Week 1

### Task 1

Read through the cause of WW1.

- Write down 10 facts about the causes of WW1

Diagram 1 - Cross Section of a trench



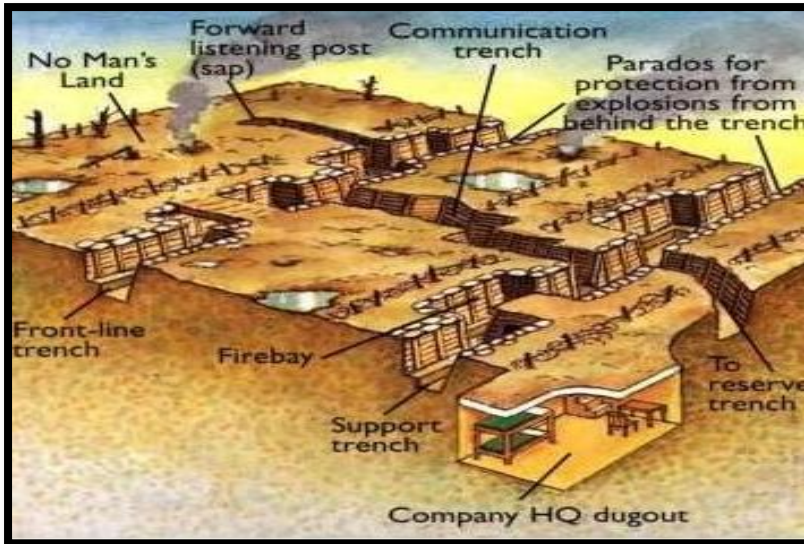


Diagram 2 - Great War Battlefield

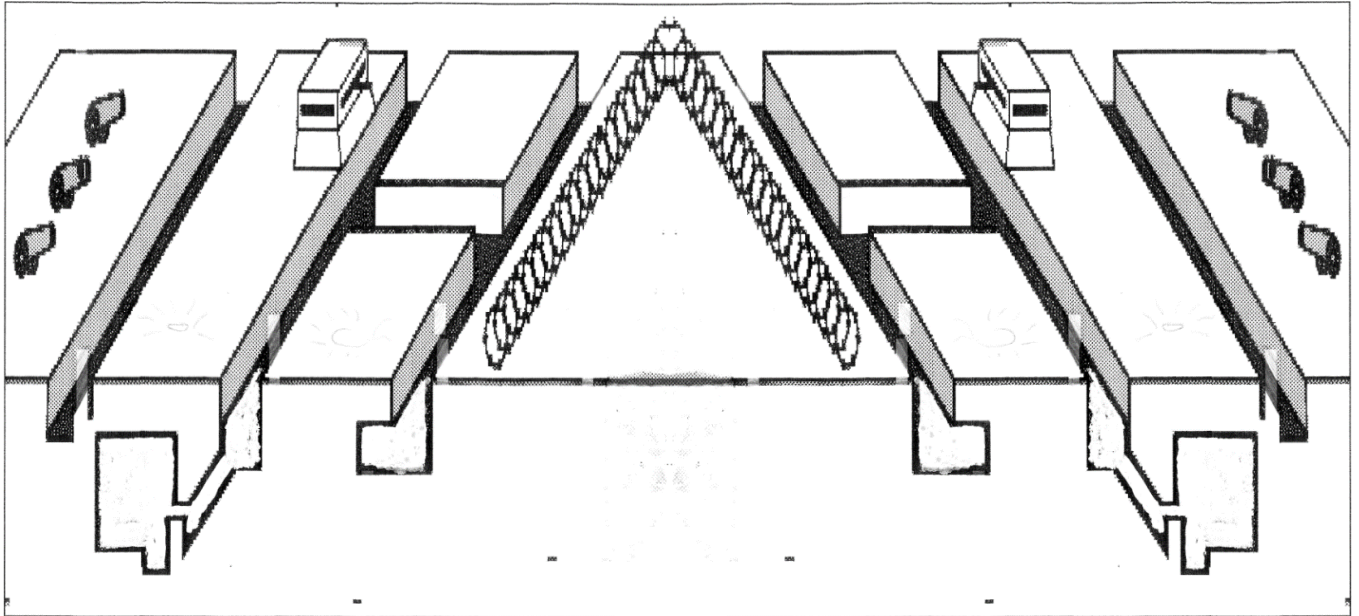
## Task 2

: Using the letters that make up the words **Trench Warfare** see how many words that you can create. Add your words to the table below:

1. Trench	2. Warfare	3.	4.
5.	6.	7.	8.
9.	10.	11.	12.
13.	14.	15.	16.
17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.
25.	26.	27.	28.
29.	30.	31.	32.

### Task 3

Create a labelled diagram of a typical Great War battlefield.



### LABELS

Your diagram will need to be labelled with the following:

No Mans Land; Barbed Wire; Artillery/Howitzers;

British Trench; German Trench; Mud filled Shell holes/Craters;

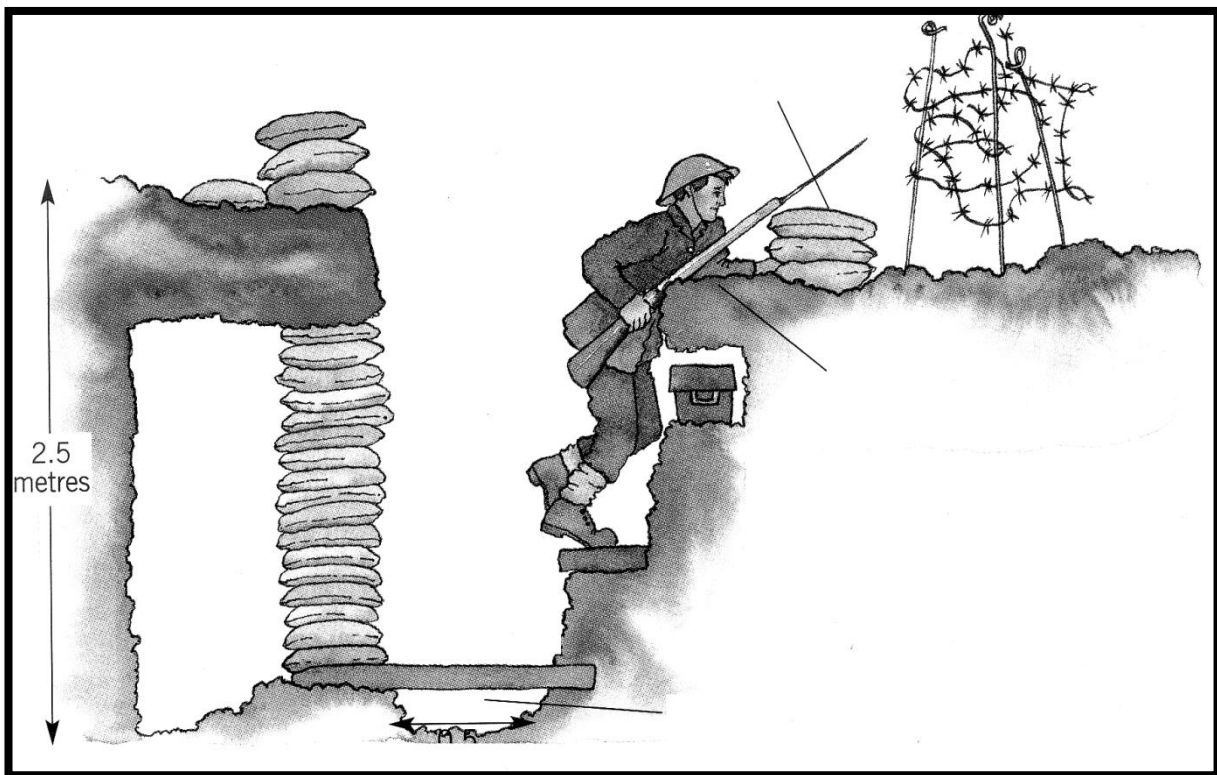
Clouds of poison gas; Exploding shells; Machine gun tower;

Basic Dug Out; Underground bunker.



## Task 4

Label or draw the following diagram of inside atypical Great War trench.



## Week 2

Research into conditions facing the average soldier in the trenches.

Use BBC Bitesize or the reading, 'Trench warfare' at the back of this booklet to help you research the following:

Conditions

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Disease

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Food

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Duties

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Fears

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How are each of these pictures linked to trench conditions?



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### Week 3

How are the sources presenting life in the trenches?

Give your opinion and give examples from the sources

**Source A - Sergeant A. Vine, diary entry, 8th August, 1915**

*The stench of the dead bodies now is awful as they have been exposed to the sun for several days, many have swollen and burst. The trench is full of other occupants, things with lots of legs, also swarms of rats.*

**Source B - 'The Harvest of Battle', by CRW Nevinson in 1919**



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## Source C - Extract from General Haig's war diaries, June 1915

After lunch I had a meeting with the three corps commanders. The following also present: General Hobbs, Surgeon-General Macpherson and Butler, on the question of trench sanitation, in consequence of a report which had reached me. One para. stated "there were two bodies buried in front parapet, one of which had "only two inches of earth on it. There were many bodies within a "few yds. of the parapet. The stench was sickening. Hundreds of "half empty jam tins were littered about, and naturally crowded "with flies. The latrine arrangements were not adequate."

We agreed that incinerators should be erected for burning all refuse. When impossible to burn the corpses, ample quick lime to be sent up to the trenches to cover them with. Sacks must be provided for the removal of tins, waste paper, etc. Buckets to be provided for the latrines, and to be renewed where possibly nightly. The several wooden tramways which have been constructed enable this to be done without much difficulty in most sections.

Since I saw the Surgeon-General this morning, he had been into the trenches at Givenchy, and now reported that the condition of affairs was not so bad as some had represented, still it was very urgent that every possible precaution should be taken to prevent insanitary conditions. Corps commanders are fully alive to the importance of this, and are personally to go into the matter.

Make a list of all the bad things Haig is mentioning in his letter.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

## Week 4 – Censorship

Complete the definition

Censorship is...

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1. Censor the two letters to make sure that people back home know the soldiers are having a good time! Scribble out the negative sentences.

### 1. Written by Private H. F. Leppard of East Grinstead on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1914.

Dear mother,

I trust you are keeping well. I am holding up well. On a lower point the soldiers at the front need more rest. While in the trenches the water is over our knees most of the time. The war is going to last some time yet, and might be another twelve months before it is over. The war has only just begun and it's going to be a war of exhaustion. The sooner people understand this the better it will be for the nation. I hope to see you soon, love Harold.

### 3. Written by Private James Mitchell o East Grinstead, on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1914.

Dear Father, how are you and mother coping? I am holding up just fine. Me and the boys always cheer each other up. Yesterday we started away just after dawn from our camp and I think it was about an hour later that we encountered the enemy. They were on the opposite side of the valley and as we came over the brow of the hill they opened on us with rifle fire and shrapnel from about 900 yards. We lost three officers and about 100 men killed and wounded in that half hour. I do not want any more days like that one. Anyway we drove the Germans back and held them there for eight days. I cannot tell you all I should like to, as it would never reach you. I will see you again soon, I promise.<sup>14</sup> Love to everyone, James.

2. Why do you think the government censored letter?

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3, Write a letter home to your parents or loved one explaining the horrors of trench warfare. Make sure you include: *What were conditions like in the trenches? What was the morale of your fellow soldiers? How do you feel about going 'over the top'? Describe in detail your emotions: fear, desperation, helplessness etc.*

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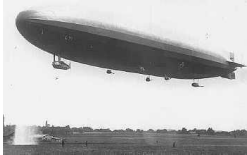



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## Week 5 - Attacking a Trench

1. Do some research on each of these weapons and come up with some advantages and disadvantages.

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Advantages</b> Good thing about this weapon.	<b>Disadvantages</b> Bad thing about this weapon.	<b>Cost</b>
Artillery (Shells) 			<b>£250 each</b>
Zeppelin 	Very quiet, so can't be heard coming.	Expensive!	<b>£2,000</b>
Flamethrowers 			<b>£65 each</b>
Tanks 		Expensive!	<b>£1,500</b>
Grenades 			<b>£5 each</b>



Machine Guns 			<b>£175 each</b>
Gas 	If you don't have a gas mask it can either blind you or kill you.		<b>£15 per canister</b>
Plane 		Expensive!	<b>£1,750</b>

3. Which weapon would have been the best and why?

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## Task 2

# TRENCH ATTACK REPORT

NAME OF PLATOON COMMANDER: \_\_\_\_\_

### TASKS:

1. LABEL THE ADVANCE TO THE ENEMY TRENCH ON THE MAP
2. COMPLETE THE TABLE BELOW TO SHOW WHAT WEAPONS WILL BE USED:

Name of weapon	What will it be used for?	Number needed	Total cost
			£
			£
			£
			£
			£
			£
Total:			£

### 3. WHAT WILL YOU DO DURING THE ATTACK?

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### 4. IF YOU'RE DONE –

LABEL THE WEAPONS ON THE OTHER WORKSHEET AS EITHER **SOLDIER WEAPONS** (CAN BE USED BY ONE PERSON) OR **BATTLE WEAPONS** (HAVE TO BE USED BY SEVERAL PEOPLE AT ONCE)

### Task 3

Bring in the TANKS!

Tanks have played a large role in land \_\_\_\_\_ during the \_\_\_\_\_ century. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the tank can be found in the First World War. The war was being dominated by the \_\_\_\_\_, and this, combined with \_\_\_\_\_ on the battlefield was creating a stalemate situation with troops unable to move forward. The British Army started to develop a \_\_\_\_\_ machine able to move over obstacles with ease using caterpillar tracks. The first \_\_\_\_\_ was tested in February 1916. It was a success and the army started the \_\_\_\_\_ manufacture of this weapon. If tanks were to be effectively used in the war, then they had to be used in large \_\_\_\_\_ and on suitable \_\_\_\_\_.

### Words

Numbers    Bulletproof

Origins

Prototype

Barbed Wire    Machine Gun

Secret

Twentieth

Terrain

Warfare



## **Week 6**

1. Design your own tank to present in a Dragon's Den style interview.

## **Task 2**

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am here today to present you with my product \_\_\_\_\_

I have designed the tank because

\_\_\_\_\_

It works by \_\_\_\_\_

The strengths of my product are obvious. My tank can do things like

The audience for my product is \_\_\_\_\_.

This would attract buyers because \_\_\_\_\_



## Week 7

### Battle of the Somme

Create a list of at least 5 things you know about World War One and life in the trenches.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Task 2

Read the sources about General Haig.

**SOURCE A** - Professor Seymour Clearly, a military historian in his book 'Why Britain won the Great War' in 2014. He was a long distant relative of General Haig.

At the end of the day, the British Army won a series of victories unmatched in our military history.

Haig and his generals did well to win WW1 with an army that was formed from inexperienced men and boys who had no knowledge of war.

Had General Haig not carried on sending troops into battle during the Somme then the French would have been defeated and Germany would have won WW1.

**SOURCE B** -Terry Orange in an interview with a newspaper in 2014. They were writing an article on how terrible the battle of the Somme was. Terry's great great grandfather had fought and died in the Battle.

1.2 million people died in the Battle of the Somme and for what? The Allies only secured 70 square miles of land! That's nothing!

Haig was employed as Commander as the British army because he was supposedly experienced. He should have known what to do. To send wave after wave of men over defenceless to face the German machine guns was barbaric! He is responsible for the

WW1 was a very modern war. No one had ever used tanks and machine guns in a war before. No one knew what to do. The Generals did very well to try new tactics and had to try new things. By 1918 the British army had better tactics than they had in 1916 and were the best.

mass slaughter of these young men and boys.

Where were the generals when this was going on? They were sat in their comfy dugouts behind the front lines. They did not even take part.

It is without a doubt that General Haig deserves his nickname 'the Butcher of the Somme'.

**Why do sources A and B say different things about General Haig?**

What does source A say about Haig?	What does source B say about Haig?
Who wrote Source A? What is their job or background?	Who wrote source B? What is their job or background?

When was source A written? Is there anything else happening?	When was source B written? Is there anything else happening?
Why was source A written and who would the audience be?	Why was source B written and who would the audience be?
Where might they have got their information from? What might they have used?	Where might they have got their information from? What might they have used?



Why might the author of source A be biased?	Why might the author of source B be biased?

### **Task 3**

- What is your opinion? What Haig a good leader?

You need to write a balanced answer- this means having a agree paragraph (Haig was a good leader) and disagree paragraph (Haig wasn't a good leader)

Explain your answer and use quotes from the source to back up your ideas

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## Week 8

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## END OF TOPIC REFLECTION



What have you learnt?

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What would you like to know about next?

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What was the trigger event?

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Did Germany deserve the blame for the War?

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What was a benefit of the War?

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Was the War worthwhile?

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it difficult for the opposing army to attack. Fighting in these trenches usually protects soldiers with from bullets and most artillery shells.

In between the trenches of the enemies is an area known as "no-man's land". This area is not protected from the weapons of either side, and is dangerous to walk through. It is difficult to force the enemy to retreat, because it is too dangerous to move forward over no-man's land towards the enemy.

World War 1 was famous for trench warfare along the Western Front, with the first trenches dug on 15 September 1914. Trenches were not as popular on the Eastern Front, with the battle lines moving often, meaning there was no time or need to dig them. The battle lines moved quickly because the length of the Eastern Front was so great that there were fewer soldiers along it. As a result, it was easier for the enemy to break through the battle line, and both armies had to adjust to the new fighting frontier.

### **Trench-Warfare**

The use of more modern weapons during the war, and complicated systems of fighting, meant that trench warfare was considered an ideal way of protecting soldiers. This meant that, for example:

The French were unable to attack with their favourite method of using speed to surprise the enemy. This was because they could not rush towards the Central Powers due to the danger of being killed in no-man's land. Germany's new weapons, such as machine guns, were not as effective. This was because the Allied Powers were able to hide from the straight line of bullets behind the trench wall

Trench warfare was using during the war along the Western Front until 21 March 1918, when the Germans started their Spring Offensive. Germany used small groups of soldiers to move through

areas with weak defences. The initial attack by the Germans included the use of poisonous gas in the trenches and artillery to destroy supply lines and artillery. The Allied Powers retreated from their trenches and the battle line moved too much for trench warfare to continue.

The first trenches used were quite simple and in straight lines, with soldiers fighting alongside each other. But this led to more dead or injured if an artillery shell landed nearby or an enemy soldier was able to get into the trench and fire down the line. This was because there was no protection for the troops. As a result, trenches were dug at angles or with curves in them (such as around mounds of earth). This meant that pieces of shell or bullets could not pass through obstacles such as earth and sandbags.

Along the Western Front, the no-man's land was normally around 100-300m wide. In Gallipoli, there were some areas where there was only 15m between enemy trenches. This meant that soldiers could throw grenades into each other's trenches.

From time to time, armies organized official truces so the wounded and dead could be recovered from no-man's land. Even where commanders did not support truces, soldiers would often refuse to attack enemy stretcher-bearers who were retrieving the wounded.

As the war progressed, trenches became deeper (to around 4m) and grew larger. Trenches varied in direction, leading away from the front line back to supply lines. This allowed communication and travel between different areas of the front line. Reserve trenches were also dug behind the front trenches. This meant that if the front trenches were captured, there were troops in the rear trenches who could continue fighting and stop the enemy's advance. Trenches called "saps" were trenches dug out into no-man's land. They were used as listening posts if they were close to the enemy's communications lines, or could be used for surprise attacks.

Germany was able to develop an advanced system of trenches, having studied past wars as a guide. They used concrete to strengthen their trenches and make them better able to withstand artillery fire. They also built their trenches with special forts that allowed more than single rows of soldiers to fire at any given time.

Trenches generally had sandbags, wooden frames and floorboards inside them, with a step the soldiers used to fire from. Troops would use a gap in sandbags sometimes reinforced with a steel plate, to shoot through without being exposed to the enemy. Some German trenches even used concrete stairs, which allowed soldiers to move between different trench levels. The most common weapons used by soldiers were rifles, bayonets and hand grenades.

There were three main methods of actually digging trenches:

Entrenching - standing on the surface and digging downwards. This was the fastest way to dig trenches, but left troops exposed above ground to attack

Sapping - digging away at the face of the existing trench, which took longer but protected the troops from attack.

Tunnelling - digging away at the face of the existing trench but leaving soil at the top of the trench while a tunnel was being dug. The "roof" of the trench was only removed when it was about to be occupied

Soldiers usually spent one day to two weeks in the trenches before being replaced by fresh soldiers. This allowed them to rest and rotate through support duties such as filling sandbags or acting as reserve forces. But some Portuguese soldiers in France had to fight for as long as six months in the trenches due to lack of reinforcements and a high casualty rate.

There was limited medical support in the trenches, meaning that even simple injuries could result in death due to infection. Many

infections set in when a shell fragment carried dirt into a wound. As a result, artillery shell injuries were often more dangerous than gunshot injuries. Soldiers could also die or suffer long-term damage from head injuries caused by exploding shells.

With poor sanitary conditions, infections such as dysentery and cholera, parasites, fungal problems and extreme cold weather during winter also affected the health of the soldiers fighting in trenches.

The trenches were dirty and could be filled with water and become muddy, and were often infested with rats and lice. They constantly required repair, especially due to damage from bombs and the weather conditions.

Trench warfare was not a pleasant method of fighting, but became one of the well-recognized means of fighting in World War 1.