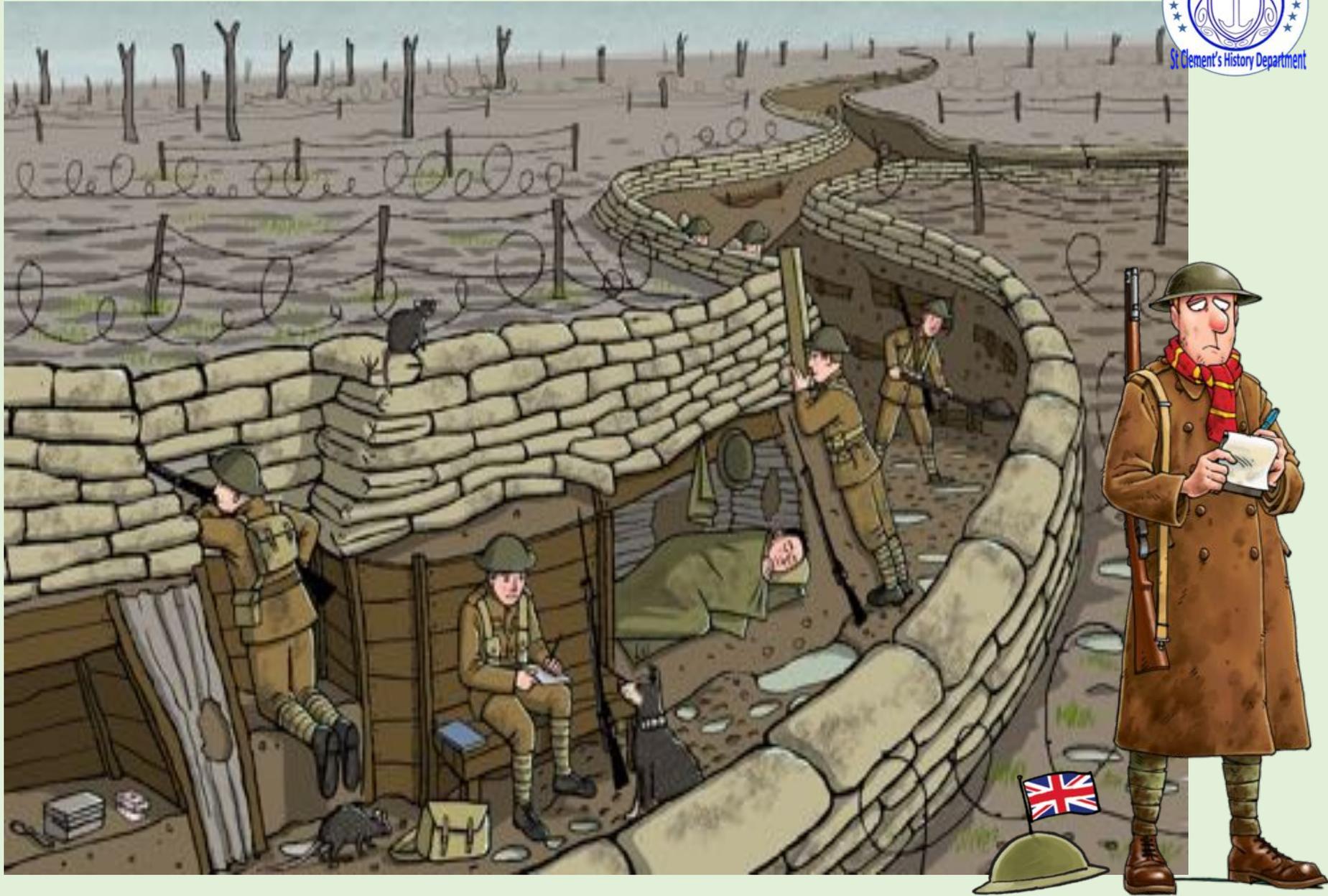


Trench Warfare





Attrition / Stalemate:

Flanders and northern France:

Britain declared war on Germany on August 4th 1914 when Germany invaded France through Belgium.

The British government sent the B.E.F (British Expeditionary Force) to northern France to try and stop the German advance. The BEF had 70,000 professional soldiers fighting alongside the French army.

After the initial fighting, both the British and Germans pulled back their forces and 'dug in' creating miles of trenches. This is when **'Trench Warfare'** began...

A defensive approach to fighting whereby soldiers defend their trenches with some attempts to capture the enemy trenches usually failing or at great loss for a small gain.

Features of the Trench System:



Feature 1: Design

Trenches were first dug by the British and French Armies in Northern France during the race to the sea.

The aim of trenches was to act as a barrier against the rapid advance of the German army from which a counter attack could be made. At first they were quickly and easily constructed using few materials other than sandbags and a shovel. They were meant to be temporary and everyone expected a war of movement in 1915.

The trenches became where most of the war was fought, because of the stalemate. It was so dangerous to come out of the trench. As the trenches got more complex and weapons such as gas, tanks and aeroplanes improved, it became harder to break through.

Describe 2 features of the Trench design [4]

The communications trench which ran between the other trenches.

At the very rear were artillery emplacements.

The reserve trench. This was at least 100 metres behind the support trench and was where reserve troops could be mobilised for a counter-attack if the frontline trench was captured by the enemy.

Holes were dug into the side of the trenches where men could take protective cover when needed. These were known as dugouts.

The support trench. This was about 80 metres behind the frontline trench and the troops would retreat here if the frontline trench came under attack.

The frontline trench. This was where attacks would be made from.

Trenches were dug in a zig-zag pattern.

Stick your trench diagram into the middle of 2 pages and describe a feature of each part of the trench system in detail.

Eg. One feature of the Trench system was the frontline trench. This was an important design feature because it allowed for quicker attacks where the soldiers would climb up out of their trenches and charge across no mans land with speed towards the enemy trenches.

Use these examples in formal descriptions:

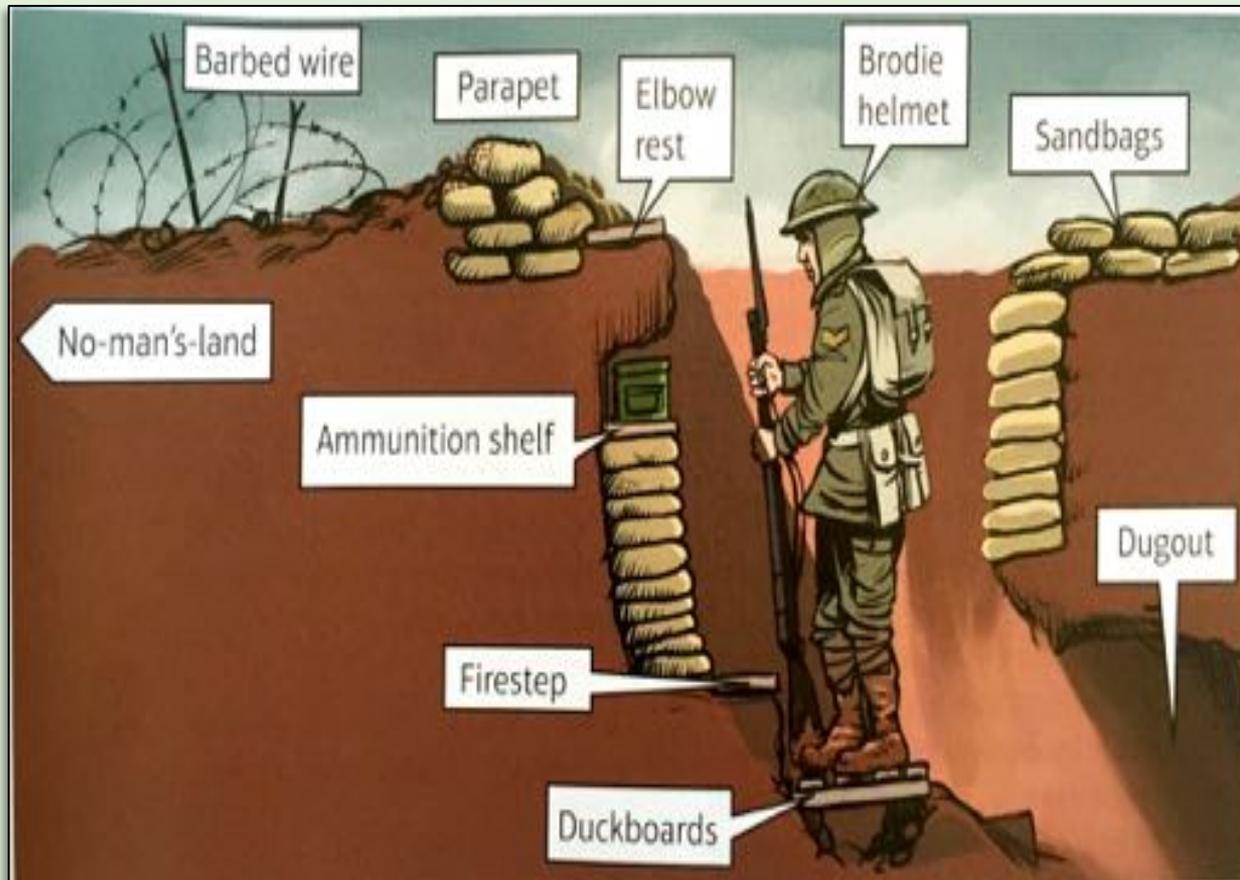
To stop enemy soldiers firing down one line and killing everyone in one go. To minimise the damage of a gas attack etc...

Advantages:

- Easy to make,
- Easy to defend,
- Cheap to build,
- Didn't need lots of men to defend them.

Disadvantages:

- Wet and cold
- Hard to get in and out of without being seen by the enemy.
- Trenches were very dirty and unhygienic as there was no running water or flushing toilets.



Stick this in and describe the trench using each of the labels in this diagram





Describe 2 features of Trench Warfare (tactics) using this picture and your own knowledge.

Include the words (minimum):

Over the Top
No-mans land
Artillery
Barbed wire
Shell holes

Answer on a copy of the exam grid

1 Describe two features of the support trench by
Feature 1

Feature 2

(Total for Question 1 = 4 marks)

This answer will be peer assessed using the peer assessment sheet and purple pen.



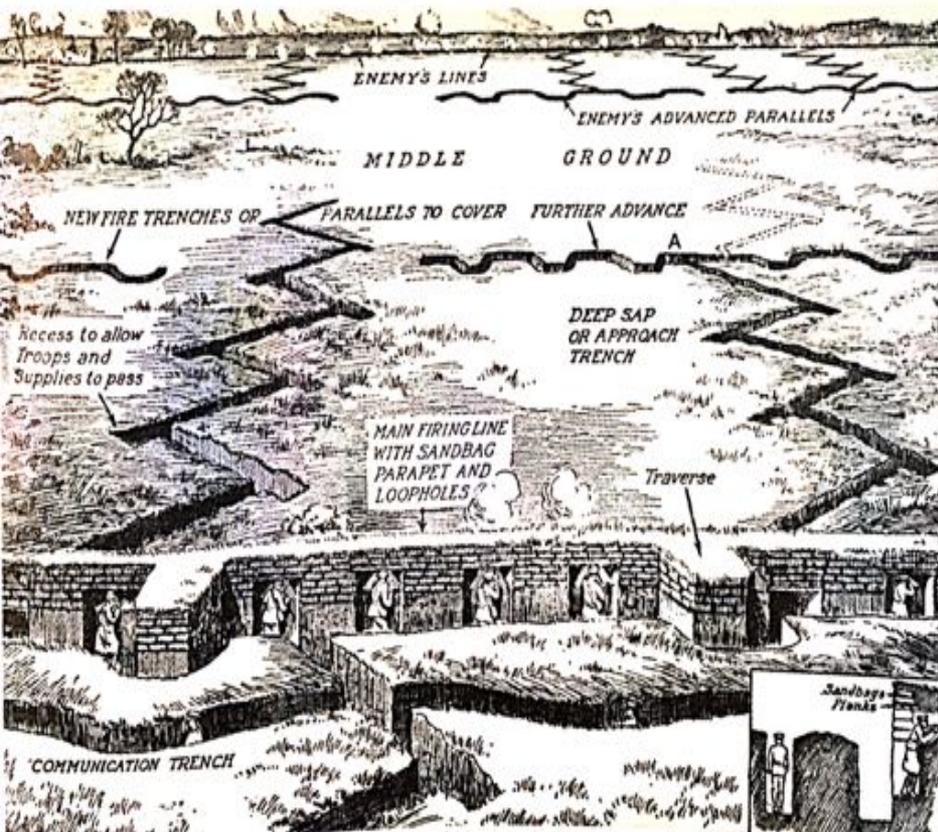


was half full of mud and water. We set to work to try and drain it. Our efforts were hampered by the fact that the French, who had first occupied it, had buried their dead in the bottom and sides. Every stroke of the pick encountered a body. The smell

Study sources A and B:

Source A

A typical trench system, sketched during the war. The exact date and artist is not known. It was likely sketched after 1915.



Source B

A British trench during the Battle of the Somme, July 1916.



What differences can you note between the sketch & the photograph?
What are the benefits and drawbacks of each of these sources for a historian?

Which source is most useful / helpful and why?

Blackadder – Final episode:

Using the work sheet, make notes on the following...

1. Conditions in the Trench?
2. Captain Blackadder's attitude to the war?
3. Lt. George's attitude to the war?
4. Equipment in the trenches
5. Dangers of going "over the top" including previous attacks.
6. Anything else you want to discuss or find interesting.



You are watching this maybe for the first or fifth time, but either way, this time, you're watching it as a source of information, therefore are being more critical of it – you will be evaluating its use at the end.



For this part of the course, we're going to look at a few of the main battles of WWI and consider the significance of them on medical procedures.

What battles do you know about from World War I?





For homework, you're going to produce a guidebook to some of the most famous battles of WWI. You should include as many facts and as much detail as possible, things like casualties, deaths, weapons, problems faced eg weather and mud at Passchendaele etc...

- **The Ypres Salient (2 main battles) 1914-15**
- **Hill 60**
- **The Battle of the Somme 1916**
- **Battle of Arras 1917**
- **Battle of Cambrai 1917**
- **Passchendaele 1917**



Extra challenge – Try to find which battles saw the first use of tanks, mustard gas, chlorine gas, blood banks...

You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

1. The Ypres Salient

Salient: *An area of a battlefield that extends into enemy territory, so that it is surrounded on three sides, therefore vulnerable*

1914: Battle 1



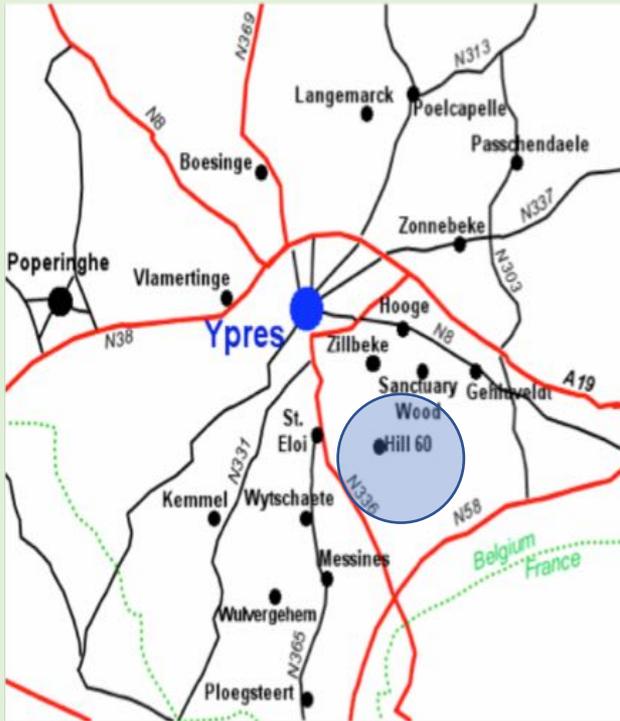
- Early in the war, the BEF moved to Ypres in western Belgium
- Autumn 1914, Germany launched an attack to the east and north east of Ypres
- Britain lost 50,000 troops but managed to keep hold of Ypres meaning they controlled the English Channel ports

Why is this important?

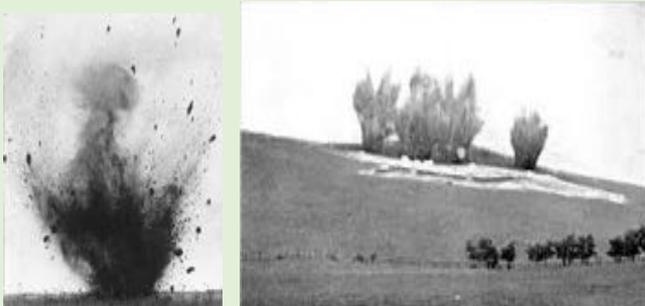
- The Germans had extended their control around the edge of the Ypres Salient as far as the village of Messines

You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

Hill 60 - Mines



- Hill 60 was a man-made hill to the south-east of Ypres
- The Germans captured it in December 1914
- **Why would this be useful?**
- The British used mining to take it back in April 1915
- **How do you think this might have been done?**
- Step 1: Tunnel into and under the hill
- Step 2: Place 5 mines in the tunnels
- Step 3: Explode them taking the top off the hill
- Step 4: Successfully take this strategically important position



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gyu3TJ8wZf8>

Something similar to this crater that we took on our Battlefields tour.

Ypres – 2nd battle

You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

Immediately following the battle for Hill 60, the Second Battle of Ypres began:

- A sequence of battles over a period of a month (**22nd April to 25th May**)
- This was the first time the Germans used **CHLORINE GAS** on the Western Front
- British losses were 59,000 men
- **End of battle:** Germany moved 2 miles closer to the town of Ypres on the eastern side of the salient



Source I

From *The Daily Telegraph*, a British newspaper, 29 April 1915.

POISON BOMBS: CANADIAN'S HEROIC CONDUCT

There appears little doubt that the material used by the Germans in the "poison bombs" is chlorine. This is the only conclusion one can arrive at after hearing the graphic narration of a Canadian who was enveloped in the fumes near Ypres.

The Canadian said, "Directly we opened fire the Germans rained shrapnel over us. We kept the guns going, wounded as some of us were. That we could stand. We had no complaints, because it was honest warfare. Then came the surprise. We saw bombs burst in the air and throw off a greenish-yellow vapour..."

At yesterday's meeting of the London Education Committee, the chairman (Mr. Gilbert) called attention to the request of the Government for respirators [gas masks] for the troops.

Source I shows strengths and weaknesses of national newspapers as sources. This report refers to events in both the Western Front and Britain. The chairman of the London Education Committee is named but the soldier is anonymous, he is only referred to as 'the Canadian'. It appears to give valid information but is also a form of propaganda

Stick in and study Source I:

- 1) What can you find out about the German attack at Ypres, the types of weapon used and the response at home?
- 2) Which of the things you discovered would you also expect to find in a local newspaper?
- 3) How useful is this national newspaper for studying gas attacks?
- 4) Considering **CONTEXT** of your **NOPCAT analysis**, is this source useful? WHY?

Source I

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Q2b: Following up a source

In Q2b you're asked to suggest a possible question and a type of source that you could use to follow up another source. This is a 4 step process... On your blank answer sheet have a go at this.

- 1) Choose the detail in the source that you want to follow up eg.

The request for respirators

- 2) The question you might ask is
How many gas masks were given to the Canadian troops after April 1915?

- 3) What source would you use to find out? You could suggest
- Private diaries, local newspapers, official records

- 4) Explain the reason for your choice eg. You could say
you would follow up Source I with a private diary because gas attacks would be a common event soldiers would write about in their diaries, they might talk about getting new gas masks too

Battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916

You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

Aim: To take ground from the Germans

- 1 July 1916
- **Day 1** casualties: 57,000
- **Day 1** deaths: 20,000

Tactics:

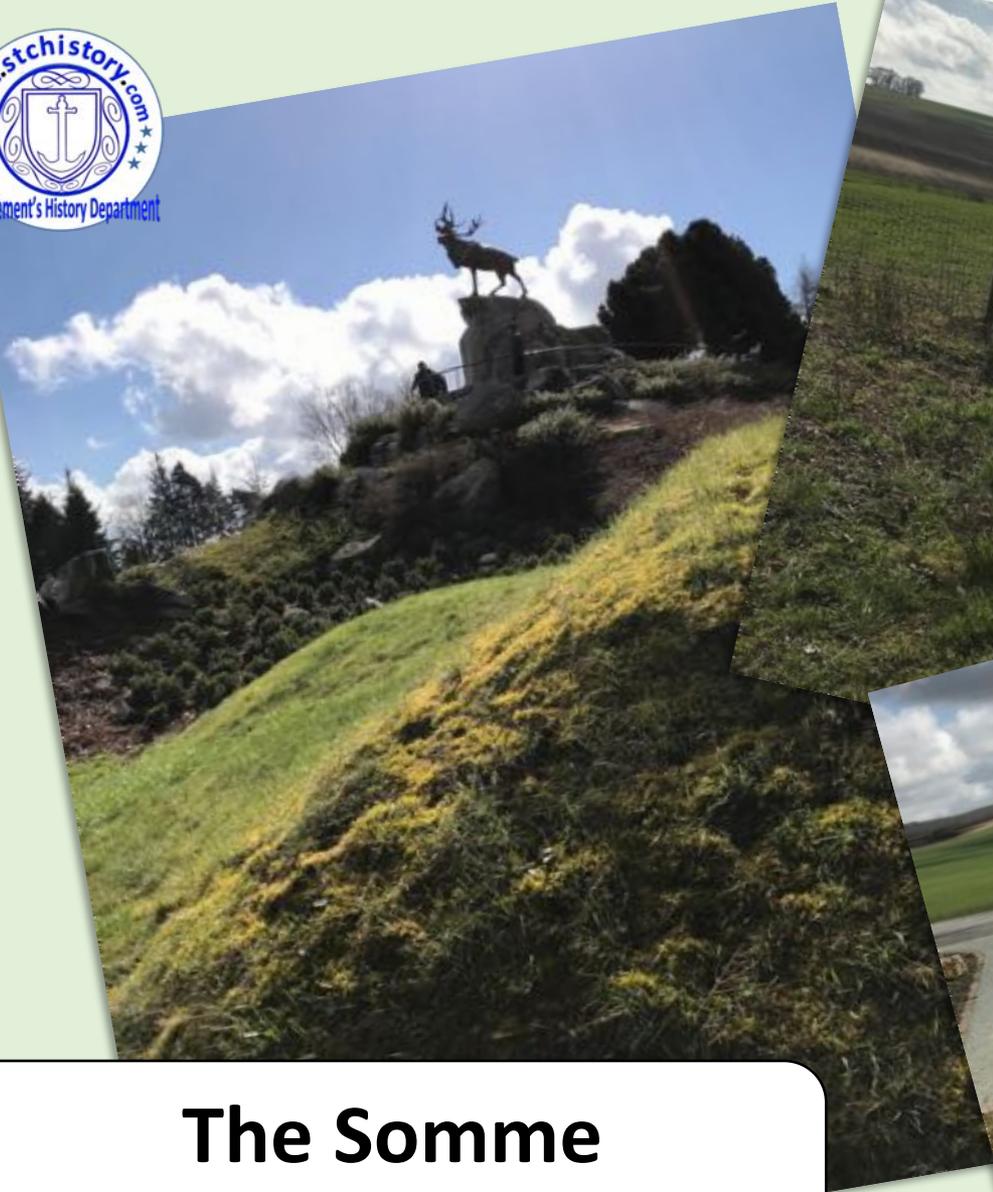
Creeping Barrage (Going over the top):

Artillery launched from the trenches towards the German lines just ahead of the British infantry as it advanced

First use of tanks:

Tanks were not used effectively, they had a lot of technical problems and of course the terrain wasn't appropriate





The Somme Battlefields...

1916: The Battle of the Somme

Source C

A still from the 1916 British film, *The Battle of the Somme*.



Somme over the top clip – My boy Jack

Annotate around your copy of what you think is going on in this source:

- Nature:
- Origin:
- Purpose:

- Is it useful? Why?
- Is it NOT useful? Why?

- CAT (3xC's, Accuracy, Typicality) test:



End of the Battle of the Somme:

Look at this photograph carefully, have a discussion and we'll share your thoughts...



You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

End of the Battle of the Somme:



Conditions in the trenches were horrendous and the surgeons, medics and stretcher bearers had to **adopt, adapt and improvise** with whatever materials and supplies they could to treat the ever increasing numbers of wounded.

This included dealing with those not physically injured but mentally suffering from 'shell shock', which can clearly be seen on the face of the soldier crouching on the left in the photograph.



November 1916

—

400,000

casualties

60,000 dead



You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

1917: Battle of Arras

Tunnels, caves and quarries at Arras:



- **Aim:** To break through the German lines
- **24,000 men** who had been hiding in the tunnels dug near the German trenches and attacked
- Initially it seemed they had been successful with an advance of 8 miles
- Following this early success, there was virtually no further advancement or progress
- **160,000 casualties** (British & Canadian)



1917: Battle of Arras

Tunnels, caves and quarries at Arras:

Source D

From 'The General', a poem written by Siegfried Sassoon in 1918. Sassoon served as an officer on the Western Front from 1914. He was treated for shellshock (a psychological condition caused by prolonged exposure to bombardment) in 1917, after which he returned to fight on the Western Front.

"Good morning, good morning," the General said,
When we met him last week on our way to the line.
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
"He's a cheery old card," muttered Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.
But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

Stick in and Study Source D:

- Does the detail in the poem match the events at the Battle of Arras?
- What questions should you ask before using a poem as a piece of historical evidence?

- Arras was easy to tunnel through due to it being very chalky.
- Tunnels and quarries had been built here since Roman times.
- 1916 – British decided to link these existing tunnels, caves and quarries to create an underground network around Arras to act as a shelter to the Germans.
- They would also enable safe underground movement
- More than 2.5 miles were dug in 5 months
- 25,000 men could be stationed in the tunnels
- The tunnels had electric lights, running water, a light railway system and a **FULLY FUNCTIONING HOSPITAL**

Do your features of Arras on your Features Log sheet



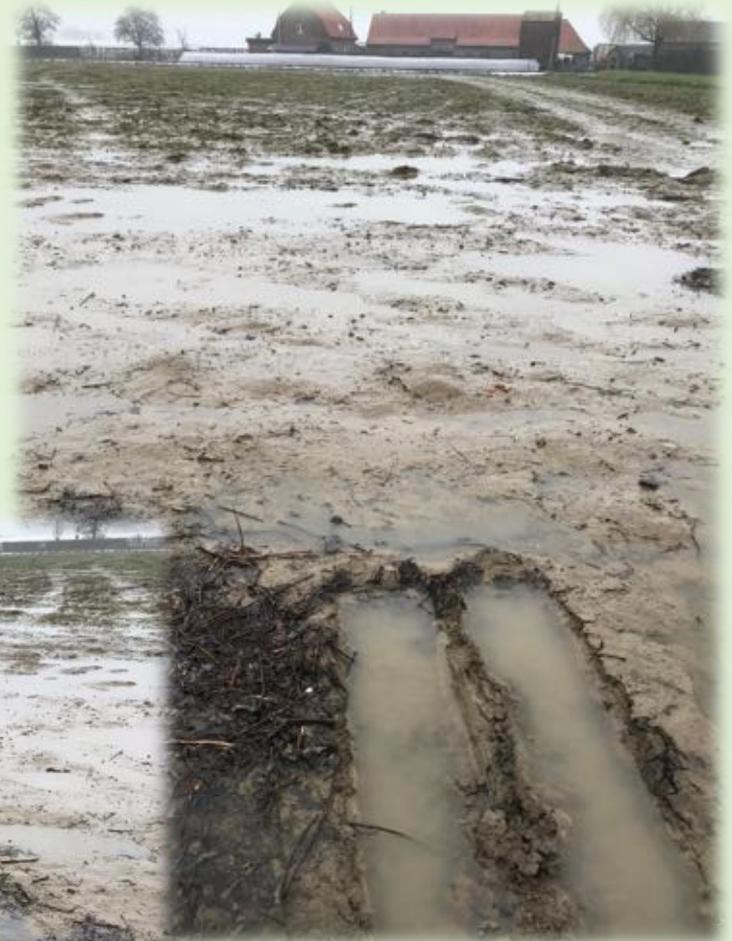
1917: 3rd Battle of Ypres, Passchendaele:

You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

Aim: To break out of the Ypres Salient and remove the German advantage of having the higher ground

- Throughout June, the British prepared for the main attack in the battle of **Messines**
- 31 July 1917 – British marched east from Ypres towards Passchendaele
- Heavy rain slowed progress with the ground becoming waterlogged, so much so, men fell in the mud and drowned
- **End:** The British had moved the Salient back about 7 miles.
- 245,000 casualties





Battlefields of Passchendaele

You'll need your Features Log as we go through the main battles, you will be given information that we will discuss and watch clips and then complete 2 features of each battle.

1917: Battle of Cambrai:

Aim: To threaten the rear of the German line at Calais

- 20th October 1917
- Artillery barrage was changed so that less warning of the attack was given to the Germans
- First **LARGE SCALE** use of tanks (nearly 500)
- Could move easily across the barbed wire and their machine guns were very effective, however on the 2nd day ½ had become unusable
- **First use of blood bank**
- **End:** Showed that a surprise attack could pay off.
- Germans counter attacked with ferocity

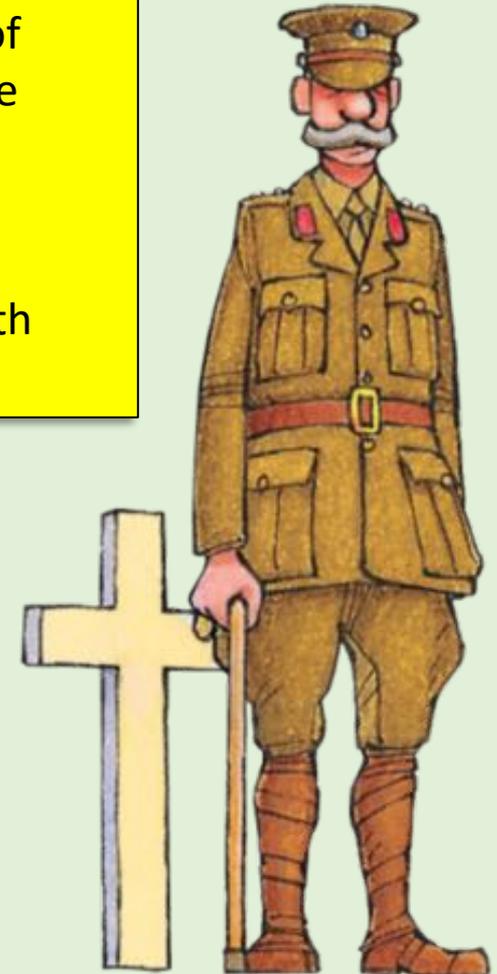


By the end of this unit, you should now be very confident on these battles and have completed a large part of your **Features Log** sheet.



Our next topic will be the problems of transporting injured troops across the terrain...

Knowing what we now know, what problems do you think they faced with transport?



Movies to give you context:

- War Horse
- Passchendaele – **Warning very graphic**
- The Trench – **Warning very graphic**
- My Boy Jack – Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter) Battle of the Somme
- Black Adder goes forth (6 episodes) – **Warning some offensive language** and inuendo
- All quiet on the Western Front
- Beneath Hill 60 – **Warning graphic**
- All the Kings Men – Norfolk regiment's story

