



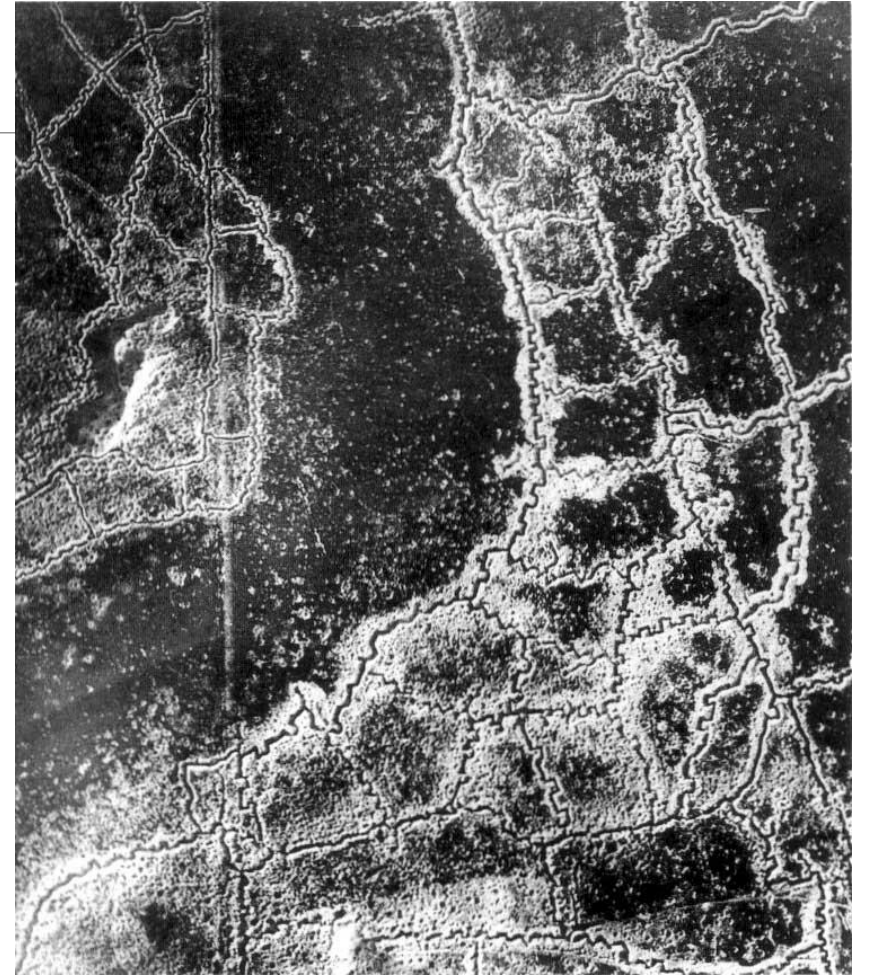
Life in the Trenches

What is a Trench?

- Trenches are defensive dugouts constructed in long lines to give soldiers a safe place to defend an area.
- Trenches were typically 6 to 8 feet deep but sometimes extended down to 12 feet deep.
- Enemy trenches ranged from being 150 to 750 feet apart, creating a middle zone known as no man's land.

Trenches cont.

- Trenches were never dug in straight lines, instead opting for a zig-zag pattern.
- This ensured that bullets or artillery fire could not proceed down an entire trench line.



No Man's Land

- No Man's Land was the strip of land between opposing trenches.
- It is characterized by having little to no cover.
- Usually marked by craters from artillery fire that filled with water.
- No Man's Land was often littered with corpses that could not be recovered.



Why Trenches?

- The dominant form of fighting in Europe was done in formations.
- Formation fighting had 2 armies Line-Up and fire upon each other.
- Dates back hundreds of years.

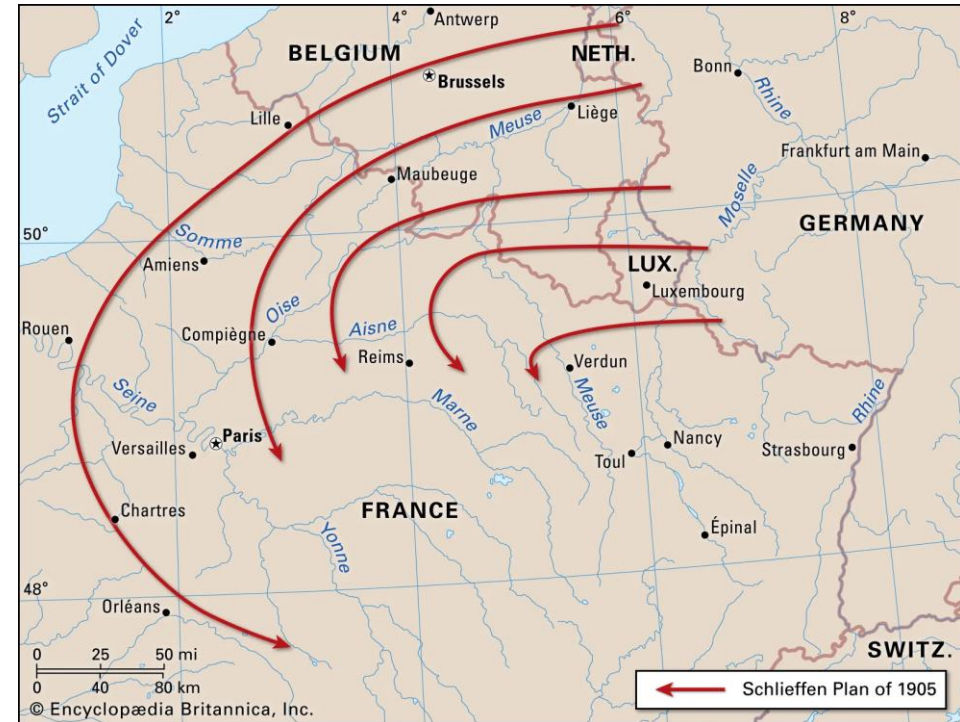


Why Trenches cont.

- New technologies made formation fighting a thing of the past.
- Artillery made large groups of soldiers an easy target with their explosive ordinance.
- Fully automatic weaponry could easily cut down a regiment of soldiers standing in the open.

The Schlieffen Plan Caused...

- The Schlieffen Plan was Germany's tactic to quickly enter France through neutral Belgium.
- Unfortunately the plan stalled due to unexpected Belgian resistance.
- This allowed time for both sides to dig a series of defensive trenches.



Trench Features- Dugouts

- Dugouts were small Caves that were carved into the sides of trenches.
- They were where soldiers slept and lived.



Trench Features- Duckboards

- Duckboards were raised wooden walkways that lined the bottom of a trench.
- This allowed for water to pool underneath, keeping soldiers dry.



Trench Features- Sandbags

- Sandbags were made by filling bags with the dirt dug when constructing trenches.
- They were piled at the top of the trench to provide additional cover.



Trench Features- Barbed Wire

- Barbed wire is long strings of metal covered in sharp points.
- It was laid a ways in front of your trench to tangle up approaching enemies.
- It was some soldier's jobs to sneak out at night to lay it in front of their own trench or cut the enemies barbed wire.



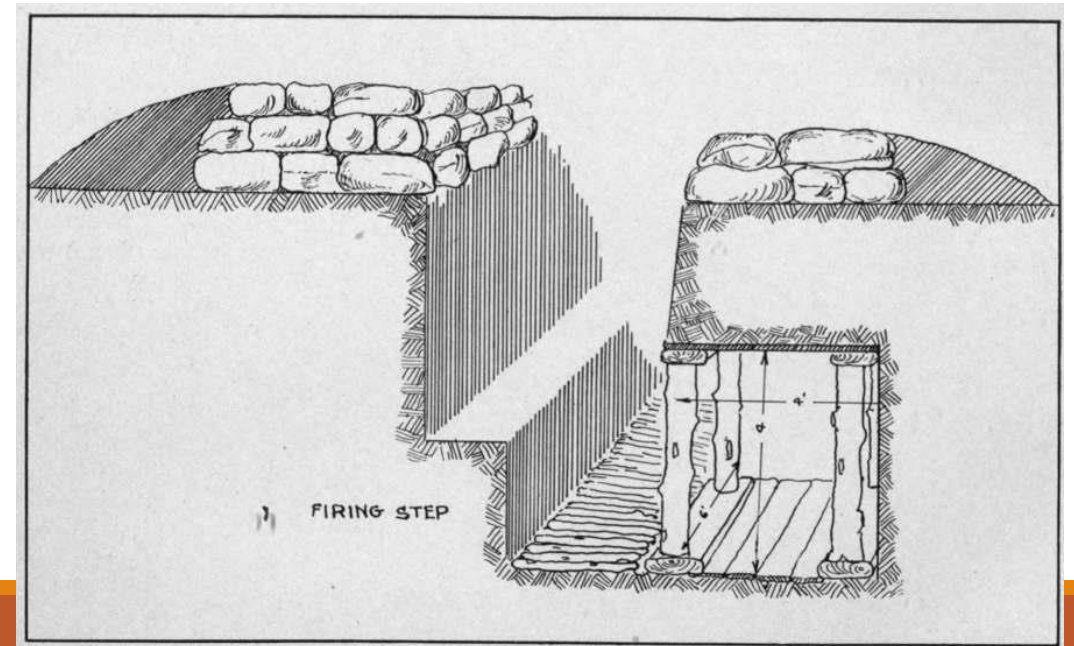
Trench Features- Machine Gun Nests

- Machine gun nests were areas of a trench built up with a small building or sandbags that contained room for a machine gun and a crew.
- These were responsible for stopping most charges due to their overlapping fields of fire



Trench Features- Firing Platform

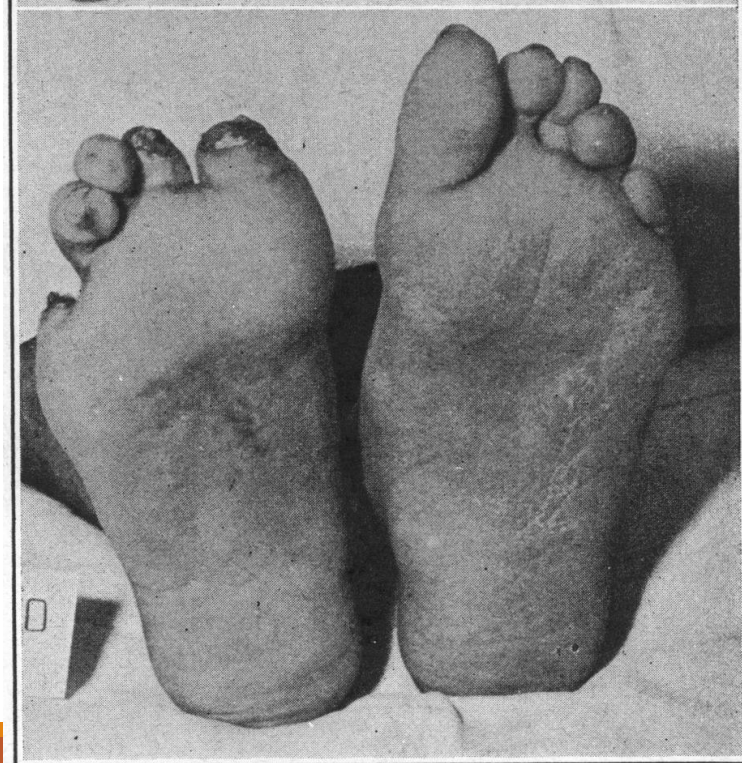
- Trenches featured raised platform where someone could fire their weapons freely.
- It was easier to have raised platforms for firing than having everyone stoop inside the trenches to avoid enemy fire.



Harsh Reality- Trench Foot

- Trenches naturally collected rainwater and would often flood over duckboards.
- Soldiers whose feet were stuck in the cold water for extended periods of time would develop trench foot, a disease that caused your feet to swell and rot.





Harsh Reality- Rats

-The dead bodies of thousands of soldiers attracted rats who feasted upon them and spread disease

-"I can't sleep in my dugout, as it is over-run with rats. Pullman slept here one morning and woke up to find one sitting on his face. I can't face that, so I share Newbery's dugout."

-" If you left your food the rats would soon grab it. Those rats were fearless. Sometimes we would shoot the filthy swines. But you would be put on a charge for wasting ammo, if the sergeant caught you."



A "BAG" OF RATS FROM THE FRENCH TRENCHES.



Harsh Reality- Trench Raids

- At any moment in the night, a trench raid could occur.
- A trench raid is a small band of soldiers sneaking into the enemy trench to cause havoc before escaping.

- Canadians were highly skilled at trench raiding.



Harsh Reality- Artillery Bombardments

-Artillery would fire explosive shells over allied trenches and into enemy trenches.

-Much easier to hit inside a trench than with bullets.

-One could hide in a dug out, but soldiers needed to guard the trenches.

-This developed into an anxiety called “shell shock” that eventually became renamed PTSD (post Traumatic Stress Disorder).



Trench Diorama Exemplars



