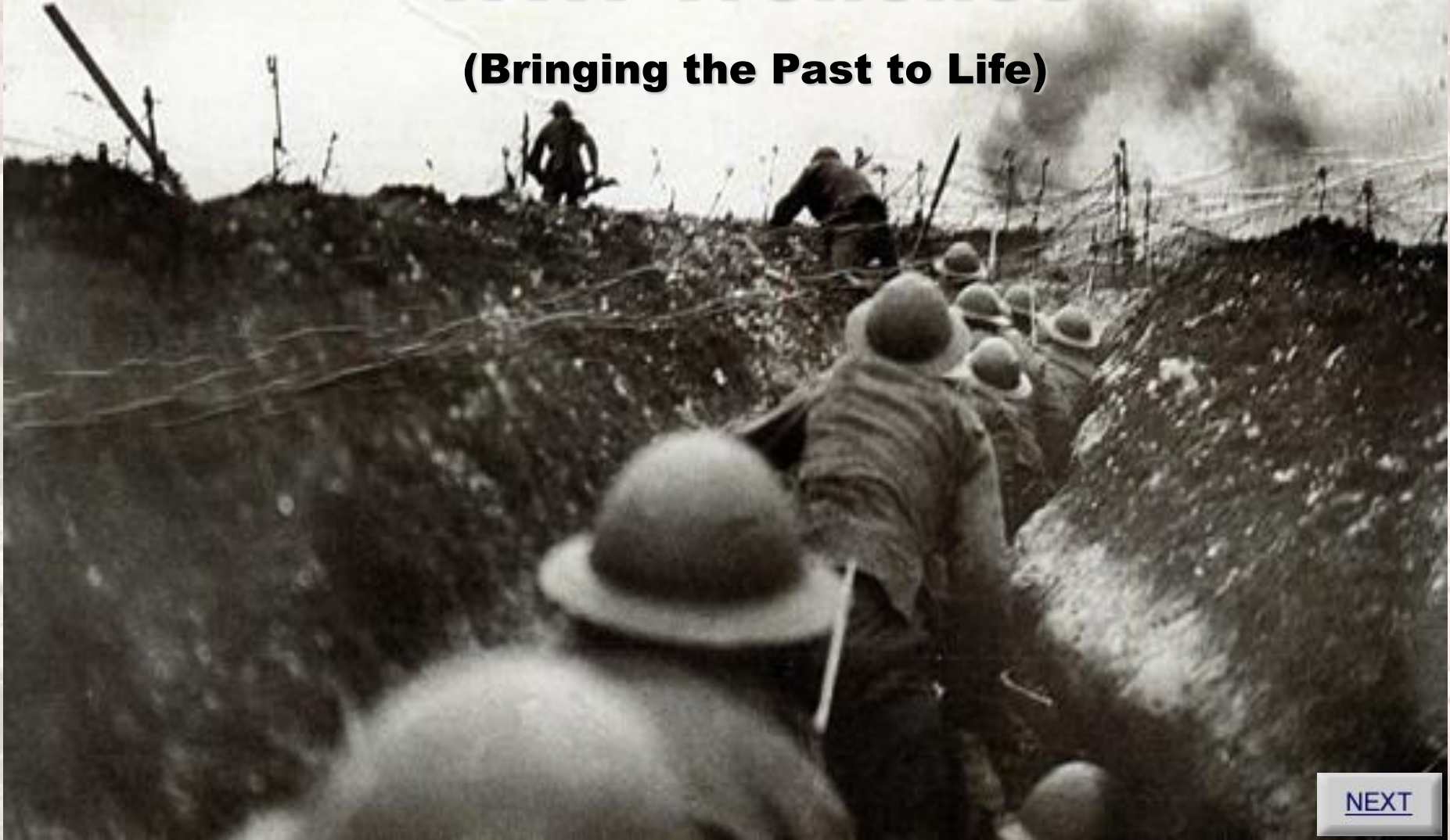


RAF Halton WWI Trenches

(Bringing the Past to Life)



[NEXT](#)

History of Halton's Trenches

Halton Park was used by the Army during WW1 for training prior to front line deployment



The terrain provided ideal conditions for training

Some 700 acres were used for the accommodation and training of up to 20,000 troops

Restoration Project

- **Students awaiting trade training formed the workforce and began to re-dig the original WW1 trench systems.**
- **The trench system was constructed using WW1 Field Engineering Manuals from the time period.**



- **An ecologically sound plan was developed to restore the land and make the best use of existing materials and resources.**
- **An historical perspective was maintained throughout the project in order to preserve the memory of the original WWI volunteer soldiers.**

Trench Tour



1. Time Line

2. Preparing to Dig

3. Trench Layout and Construction

4. Technical Overview

5. Kitchener's Army

6. Trench Conditions which Faced the Soldiers of 1914-18

NEXT



Timeline

1913 – An army brigade and 3 Squadron RFC camp in Halton Park during military manoeuvres.

1922 - RAF Apprenticeship training begins.

1920 – Halton Park purchased by the Air Ministry.

1917 – RFC takes over the camp to train aircraft mechanics.

1914-7 – Grounds used for infantry training prior to deployment to the Front.

1880-4 – Alfred Rothschild builds Halton House as a country retreat for private entertainment.

2009 – Trench reconstruction begins.



Then...

g to Dig

- **Trench Digging was a major part of the soldier's initial training.**
- **Phase 1 consisted of digging shallow shell scrapes.**
- **These were linked into a continuous line.**

We used the same methods

➤ **This was deepened and linked with communication trenches to the support trenches.**

➤ **Thus a complete defensive system evolved.**



Now...

[BACK](#)

Trench Layout & Construction



No Man's Land

- Barbed wire defences
- Observation & listening posts were placed in front to prevent attack



Front Line Trench

- Zig-zag shape prevents straight line enemy attack
- Fire Bays & Traverses prevent enfilade & reduce shell blast damage



Communication Trench

- Allowed supply & withdrawal under cover
- One way system to & from front lines
- Zig-zag shape prevents enfilade



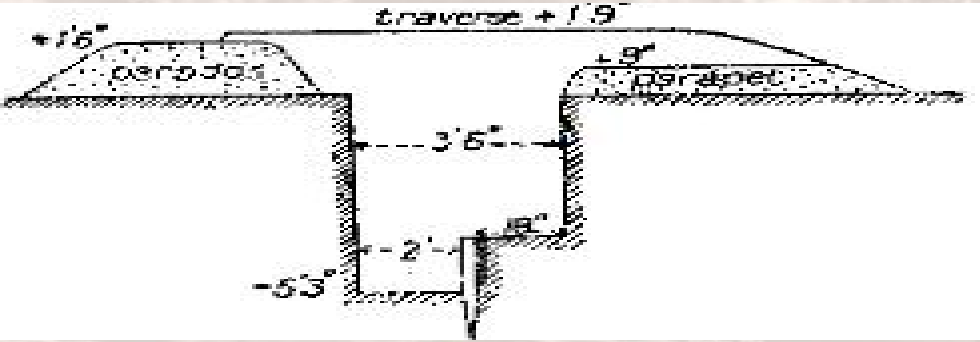
Rear Support Trench

- Parapet build at front of bay to protect head & shoulders
- Parados at back to protect from rear fire & minimise silhouettes



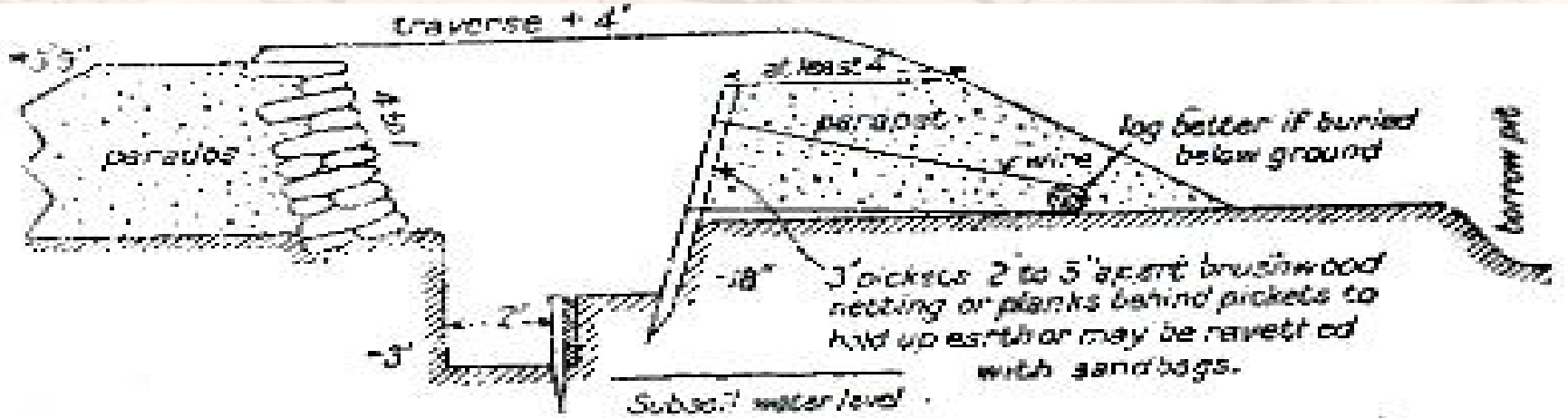
Technical Overview

- Diagram from 1925 engineering manual guides dimensions for digging



Fire trench in wet soil

- Diagram shows extra supports and drainage



Come on chaps! You've all seen the diagrams now hop to it!

That's alright for him to say; he's not doing any digging!

Kitchener's Army

➤ Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener is perhaps most famous for his recruitment campaign, which has been immortalised by the poster 'Your country needs you!'

➤ At the outbreak of WW1, Kitchener was the minister for war.

➤ Kitchener identified the need for men on a mass scale; therefore he organised a recruitment campaign which saw thousands of men swell the ranks of the British Army.



➤ It was not just a case of recruiting the troops, however, Kitchener needed to train them.

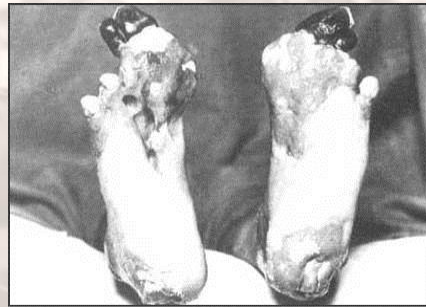
➤ Kitchener and his Army of men travelled to Halton and the Rothschild Estate in order to dig trenches and begin their training.

➤ The training, which the troops received at Halton, was to prepare them for the battle of Loos, the Somme and Passchendale.

Trench Conditions which Faced the Soldiers of 1914-18

As well as reconstructing the trenches, we felt that it was important to understand the conditions which faced the Troops whilst they were stationed on the front line. Through extensive research we discovered the horrors of trench foot, rats, shell shock and lice.

➤ Soldiers who served on the front line were forced to stand in freezing, waterlogged trenches every day; they scarcely had the opportunity to dry out their feet. Consequently, their feet swelled to twice their normal size and went completely numb. In some cases the soldier's feet had to be amputated.



➤ Rats were rife within the trenches. They feasted on the flesh of dead bodies and had little fear of the soldiers. Due to the amount of dead bodies which were in and around the trenches, the rats grew to the size of cats!

➤ Shell Shock, which today would be called post traumatic stress syndrome, was caused by the extreme trench environment; regular explosions, the loss of friends and colleagues, and the constant fear of death all contributed to unhinge the minds of the soldiers. In the early 20th century, however, Shell Shock was not considered a serious condition; indeed, the term post traumatic stress had not yet been coined. Therefore, soldiers suffering from the condition were said to be merely afflicted by cowardice.

➤ Lice infestation was a serious problem for the soldiers. The lice lived and bred in the seams of uniform and irritated the soldiers' skin. With no washing facilities in the trenches, all the soldiers could do was burn the lice out with a match



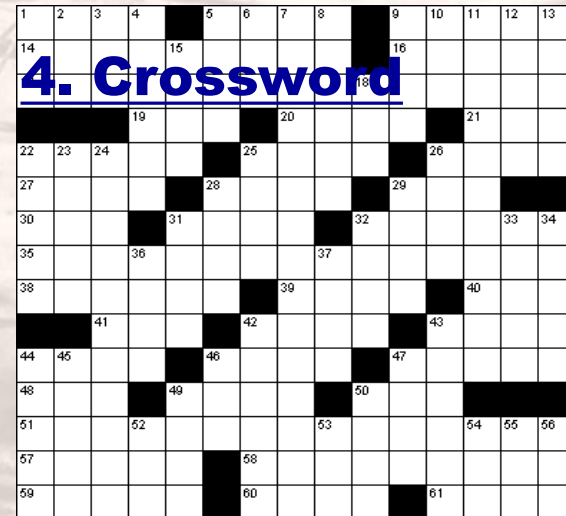
[Primary Schools](#)



[Secondary Schools](#)

[Useful Links to Other Resources](#)

Primary Resources



Letter Home



- *Imagine you are living in the front line trench*
- *Write a letter to describe how you feel*
- *Imagine the things you may be experiencing such as the mud, rats & gunfire*
- *Include a small drawing of how things look from your trench*



Soldier's Equipment



Helmet

Rifle

Haversack

Ammunition
pouches for
bullets

Eating Tin

Water Bottle

Puttees

Boots

Other equipment would include a shovel, for digging trenches and carrying out maintenance, gas mask, grenades and a cape to keep off the rain.



Wordsearch

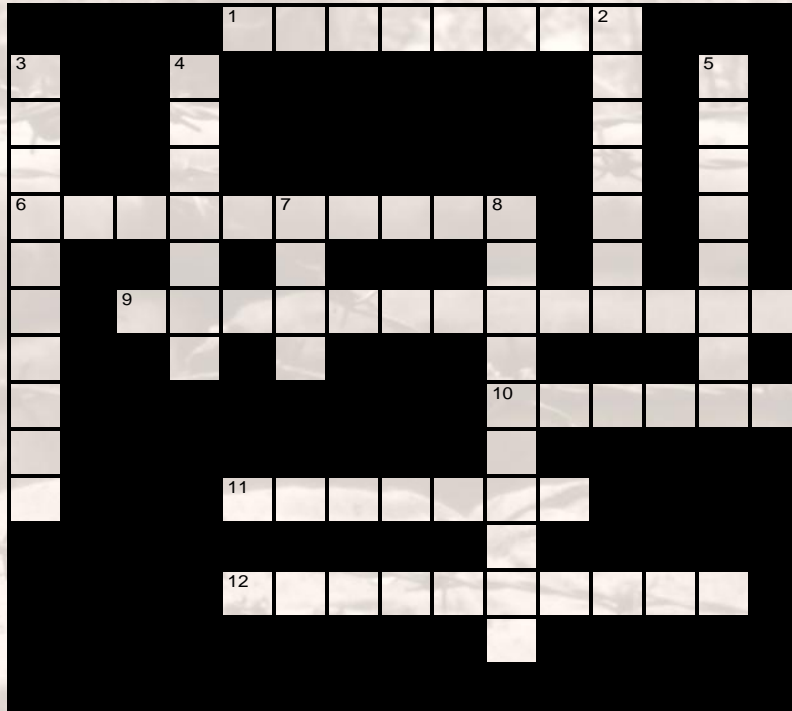
Trenches Wordsearch

K	S	W	T	R	E	N	C	H	F	O	O	T	U	U	I	E
U	E	U	C	J	B	U	W	K	S	A	N	D	B	A	G	Q
P	F	L	P	O	L	A	L	A	I	F	S	U	M	P	A	G
G	P	R	F	P	M	L	R	Q	X	P	I	Z	E	R	B	M
B	E	P	D	B	O	M	G	B	S	D	T	G	T	U	A	O
P	T	D	I	U	K	R	U	Q	E	R	Q	I	N	C	Z	Q
Z	S	E	S	N	C	Z	T	N	E	D	L	Z	H	F	D	M
F	E	S	N	K	O	B	X	N	I	L	W	I	U	U	Z	Z
R	R	R	S	E	L	R	C	C	E	C	N	I	C	E	E	Z
O	I	E	O	R	B	H	W	R	E	E	A	K	R	P	Q	P
N	F	V	D	E	H	E	Y	Z	G	F	B	T	A	E	W	R
T	Y	A	A	C	C	E	T	U	W	O	W	R	I	A	O	N
L	V	R	R	N	N	Q	N	P	A	I	A	A	L	O	D	X
I	X	T	A	E	E	G	V	R	A	P	N	U	A	Y	N	H
N	B	T	P	F	R	H	D	T	E	L	O	H	T	L	O	B
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X	P	M	F	D	L	E	D	N	A	L	S	N	A	M	O	N

COMMUNICATION
TRENCHBLOCK
MACHINEGUN
BARBEDWIRE
NOMANSLAND
TRENCHFOOT
ARTILLERY
FRONTLINE
DUCKBOARD
TRAVERSE
FIRESTEP
BOLTHOLE
SUPPORT
DEFENCE
SANDBAG
PARADOS
PARAPET
TRENCH
BUNKER
SUMP

Crossword

Trench Crossword



Across

- 1 Get on this to shoot (4,4)
- 6 Area between opposing front lines (2,4,4)
- 9 Trench between front and support trench (13)
- 10 Underground storage area (6)
- 11 Used for protection (4,3)
- 12 Cutters needed to get through this defence (6,4)

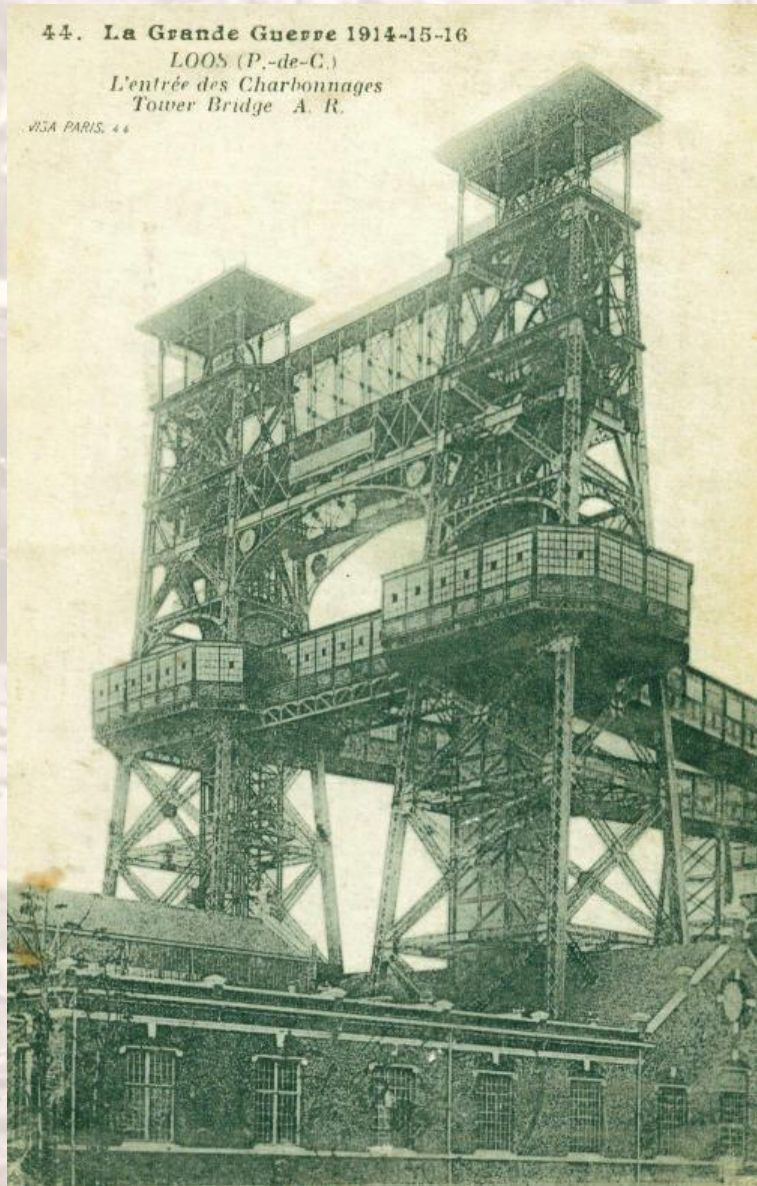
Down

- 2 The front wall of a trench (7)
- 3 Caused by standing in water (6,4)
- 4 The back wall of a trench (7)
- 5 Trench hiding place (4,4)
- 7 Drainage channel (4)
- 8 Wood at the bottom of the trench (4,6)

Secondary Resources

1. Aerial View of the Battle of Loos

3. A Soldier's View



2. A Soldier's Experience

Aerial View of the Battle of Loos

1. Identify and label the following features:

No Man's Land

1 x Front Line

Trenches

1 x Communication

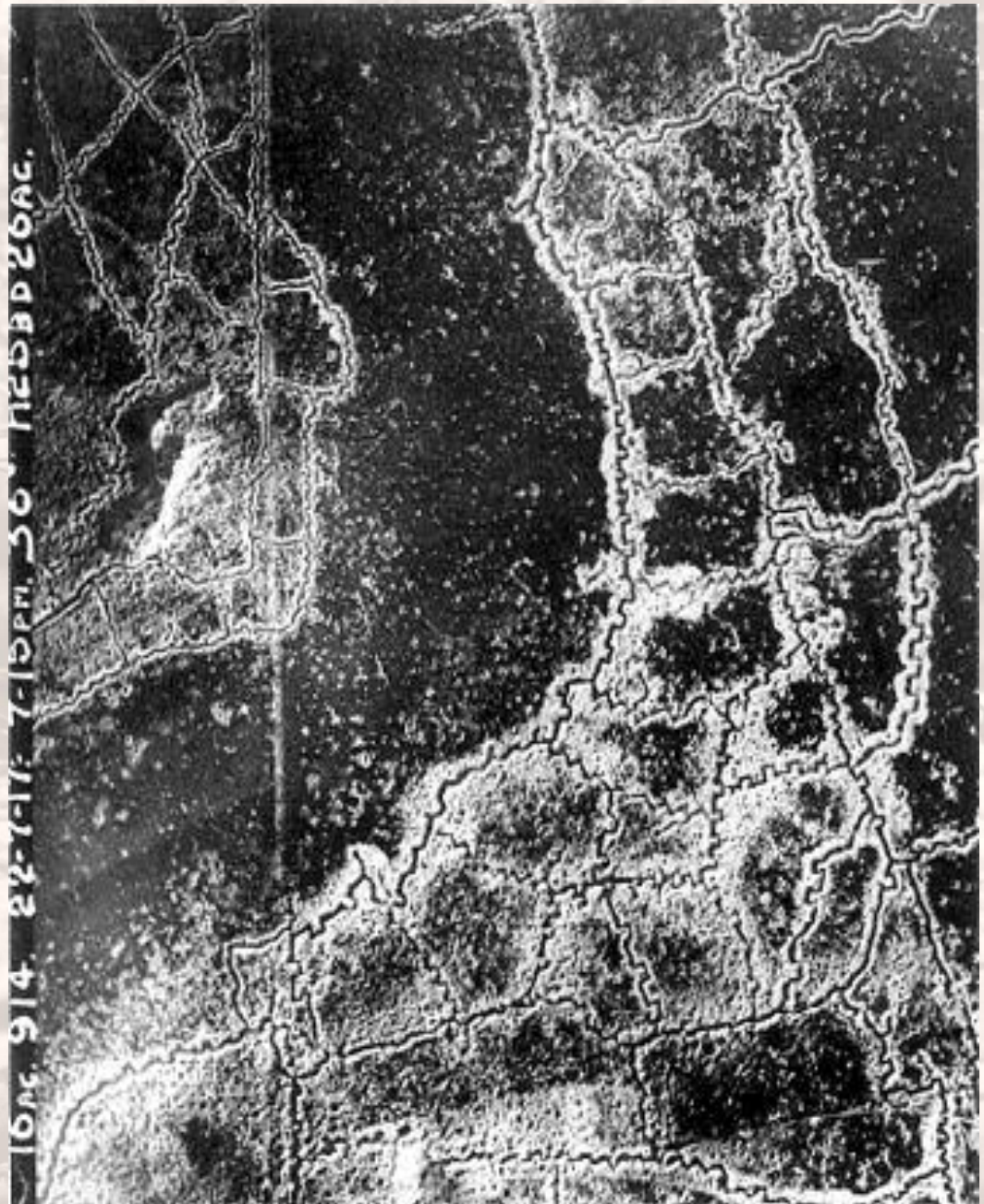
Trenches

1 x Rear Support

Trenches

2. From the photograph, draw and label a diagram of the battlefield

3. Write one or two sentences describing the uses for each part of the trench

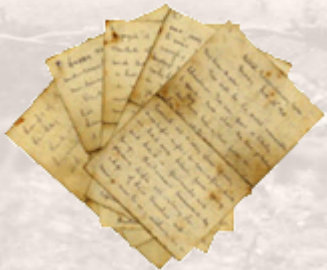


A Soldier's Experience

Read the following extract from Private Peter McGregor's (1871-1916) letter to his wife, 21 June 1916

We travelled miles of trenches to reach the point we occupy. Some of the places we passed were liquid mud up to our knees. The town we passed through was an absolute ruin, not a house that is not blown to bits. I never saw the like of it, not a soul anywhere. I can't describe the look it has. It made me shiver - wooden crosses on the roadside and in places in the town marking the heroes' death - what devastation - a day of judgement more like. Man builds and then builds machines to destroy, well he seems to have made a better job of destroying this town.

List the phrases he uses to describe his experiences to his wife.



A Soldier's View

1. What protects a soldier's head and chest from enemy fire when he is on the fire step?

2. What is used to help drainage in the trenches?

3. What was the purpose of the Parados?

4. Explain the purpose of barbed wire entanglements

5. Describe the view of a soldier standing on a fire step.



Contacts



- <http://www.haltonhouse.org.uk/>
- <http://www.trenchardmuseum.org.uk/>

