

Effect of artillery in ww1 essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In many sources the artillery had not broken the barbed wire and when the soldiers had to go over the top they couldn't get past the barbed wire and the German machine guns cut them to ribbons. Craig mare says this and I think that his source is unbiased as it was after the war and he made it for history students so it is unlikely to be biased. Jack cousins agrees with source an as he says the wire was untouched by the artillery. Liddle hart also agrees and he says that defence was slack and the Germans performed drills.

AJP Taylor says that the guns were useless and could not penetrate Germans dug out. Russell says that it was useless, as the fence had not been touched. Agreeing with source B field Marshall Haig said the nation must bear the losses, as we cannot win without a few deaths was written before battle.

Agreeing with source B 'spirits are high' he also says that 'the barbed wire was cut'. Private George Coppard Agrees with source A, hundreds were dead and there was no gap in the fence and the artillery makes it worse.

I think that A is more reliable as there is more evidence to support it and we know why it was made. However we can understand why the photograph was taken when everything was going badly. Siegfried Sassoon Siegfried Sassoon was born at Weirleigh, Kent, England, in 1886, the second son of Alfred and Theresa, who subsequently separated when Sassoon was five years old. (Alfred died of TB when Sassoon was nine.) Sassoon was educated at Marlborough and then at Clare College, Cambridge. He studied both Law and History at Cambridge before leaving without taking a degree.

After leaving Cambridge, Sassoon lived the life of a sportsman, hunting, riding point-to-point races and playing cricket until the outbreak of the War.

Although Sassoon wrote poetry before the War he was no more than a minor Georgian poet. His best poem prior to the War was *The Daffodil Murderer* - a parody of John Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy*. Sassoon wrote *The Daffodil Murderer* one day in December 1913.

He had been feeling particularly uninspired about his poetry, and was looking at the books on the shelves in his room out in the Studio when he picked up Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy*. Sassoon sat down to attempt a parody and did it so well that it was a real success. Sassoon enlisted on 2 August 1914, two days before the British declaration of war, and initially joined as a trooper in the Sussex Yeomanry. However, after a riding accident whilst doing some field-work (he had put his horse at a fence blind with summer vegetation and a hidden strand of wire brought the horse down on top of him, leaving Sassoon with a badly broken right arm), Sassoon was commissioned in the Royal Welch Fusiliers (May 1915). Between November 1915 and April 1917 he served as a second lieutenant in both the First and Second Battalions R. W.

F. On November 1, 1915 Sassoon suffered his first personal loss of the War. His younger brother Hamo was buried at sea after being mortally wounded at Gallipoli. Sassoon subsequently commemorated this with a poem entitled *To My Brother* (published in the *Saturday Review*, February 26, 1916). Then on March 18, 1916 second lieutenant David C.

'Tommy' Thomas (the 'Dick Tiltwood' of *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man*) was killed whilst out with a wiring party. He had been hit in the throat by a rifle bullet, and despite the Battalion doctor being a throat specialist had died of

the wound. These losses upset Sassoon and he became determined to “ get his revenge” on the Germans. To this end, he went out on patrol in no-man’s-land even when there were no raids planned. Such reckless enthusiasm earned him the nickname “ Mad Jack”, but he was saved from further folly by a four-week spell at the Army School in Flixecourt. Returning to the front a month later some of Sassoon’s desire for revenge had abated, and when his platoon was involved in a raid on Kiel Trench shortly afterwards, his actions in getting his dead and wounded men back to the British trenches earned him a Military Cross, which he received the day before the start of the Battle of the Somme, in July 1916.

During the first day of the Battle of the Somme Sassoon was “ in reserve”, in a support trench opposite Fricourt. He was not involved in the Battle of the Somme and was sent home from France in late July after an attack of trench fever (or enteritis). From Oxford’s Somerville College, Sassoon was sent home to Weirleigh for convalescence. He reported to the Regimental Depot in Liverpool in December 1916, and returned to France in February 1917. Sassoon was only back in France for two days before going down with German measles, which forced him to spend nearly ten days at the 25th Stationary Hospital in Rouen.

On March 11 Sassoon rejoined the 2nd Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers on the Somme front. He was “ in reserve” during the Battle of Arras before spending a month in the Hindenburgh Tunnel. Sassoon participated in the second Battle of the Scarpe where he was wounded in the shoulder. This particular incident started a train of events which culminated in Sassoon’s Declaration, for it was whilst on convalescent leave after being wounded that

Sassoon talked to several prominent pacifists (including John Middleton Murry and Bertrand Russell). His Declaration of "wilful defiance" was written during this time, and he returned to the Depot in Liverpool having sent his statement to his Colonel, miserably determined to take whatever punishment was meted out. Fortunately for Sassoon, his friend and fellow Welch Fusilier, Robert Graves, intervened, pulled strings with the authorities and managed to persuade them to have Sassoon medically boarded (or referred), with the result that in July 1917 he was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital, Edinburgh officially suffering from shell-shock.

It was at Craiglockhart that Sassoon met the poet Wilfred Owen (also diagnosed with shell shock). Sassoon's encouragement of Owen's writing has been well documented. Sassoon himself wrote a good deal of poetry whilst at Craiglockhart and the material he wrote at that time later appeared in *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*. After four months at Craiglockhart, Sassoon was again passed fit for General Service abroad.

He had spent many hours talking to his psychiatrist, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers and eventually realised that his protest had achieved nothing, except to keep him away from his men; his decision to apply for General Service seems to have been based on his perceived responsibilities at the front.

In November 1917 he was passed fit for General Service and returned to the Regimental Depot, from whence in January 1918, he was posted to Limerick. In February 1918, Sassoon was posted to Palestine with the 25th Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers. After three months in Palestine the Battalion was

posted to France and Sassoon eventually found himself in the Front Line near Mercatel. From there he moved to St.

Hilaire and the Front Line at St. Floris where his old foolhardiness took over, despite the responsibility of being a Company Commander. Sassoon decided to attack the German trenches opposite them, and he went out with a young Corporal. His actions were paid for with a wound to his head on July 13, 1918, and Sassoon was invalided back to England. That was the end of Sassoon's War. After a period of convalescence he was placed on indefinite sick leave until after the Armistice, eventually retiring officially from the Army in March 1919.

Much of Sassoon's poetry written during the War was epigrammatic and satirical in nature. Several poems, particularly those in Counter-Attack and Other Poems are aimed at those on the Home Front. Sassoon used his poems to hit out at those at Home whom he considered to be making a profit out of the War, or those whom he felt were helping to prolong the War. Only a few of his poems were actually about the generals and other senior officers - the two best known of these being Base Details and The General. After the War Sassoon spent most of the years between 1928 and 1945 writing his six volumes of autobiography.

The first three volumes *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man* (1928), *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) and *Sherston's Progress* (1936) were the semi-fictional accounts of Sassoon's life. *Sherston* was based on Sassoon's outdoor self, omitting the literary side of his personality. *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man* was published anonymously because Sassoon was worried

about presenting himself to the reading public as a prose writer, when he was better known as a poet. The next three volumes of Sassoon's autobiography were *The Old Century and Seven More Years* (1938), *The Weald of Youth* (1942) and *Siegfried's Journey* (1945). Sassoon married Hester Gatty in 1933, and their son, George, was born in 1936.

The marriage ended a few years later. He did not serve during the Second World War, but lived quietly at Heytesbury House in Wiltshire, where he died in 1967, and one week short of his eighty-first birthday. *Life in the Trenches*. In this essay I will use evidence to evaluate the reliability of the source (a cigarette carton depicting men at war happy and smiling, apparently having a good time, going over the top idly). There are reasons that infer that this is a bad description, for one it could be used as propaganda encouraging young men to "join the army and have a good time". It also is an advertisement and showing a bad picture would not encourage sales of the product.

Also from my own knowledge from visiting a trench, it seems that even in the best weather the trenches are wet and muddy where this shows a clean nice trench which would not be true. Trenches were built wherever they found the enemy, regardless of what the conditions were like in the area. Trench warfare was the only hope for the allies after failure in Gallipoli, this meant that the generals had to hope there would be some break in the stalemate. They were built wherever the enemy was found without any regard to what was already there; a German soldier wrote- "Part of our trench went straight through a cemetery."

We cleared out the contents of the family vaults and used them to shelter ourselves from artillery fire; hits from heavy shells would hurl the coffins and semi-rotted corpses high into the air. " Trenches were about 2 metres deep and wide, built in zigzags so that blasts from shells were only in small areas of the trench. They had three lines of trenches on each side of no mans land that divided enemy armies. Front line trenches had firing steps and elbow rests so soldiers were able to fire over the top, behind these were the support trenches and behind them the reserve trenches. Communication trenches connected these, some of which were ' blind alleys' to confuse the enemy in case of a back attack and ' saps' which were shallow trenches leading to machine gun posts. Some of the following accounts show what life in the trenches was like.

Every soldier felt horrified at the idea of ' going over the top'. This was when they climbed over the parapet and charging at the enemy trenches trying to gain control of them and pushing the enemy further back into no mans land. A young German soldier tells us what happened- At noon we went over the top. After less than a hundred yards we ran up against an almost concrete wall of whistling and whining machine gun bullets.

My company commander had his face shot away; another man yelling and whimpering held his hands to his belly and through his fingers, his stomach protruded. A young boy cried for his mother, bright red blood spurting from his face. " The precaution taken before they went over the top was to bombard the enemy trenches with shellfire in an attempt to kill the enemy soldiers based in the trenches. Another idea was that it would destroy the

enemy's barbed wire defending the trenches. A British sergeant said this about the affects of shelling- " It was on May 2nd that..

. this single high explosive shell killed 7 and wounded 18- yet the day before 400 shells came over the trench and no one was hurt. The trench after the dead and wounded were removed presented a ghastly sight- it was red with blood like a room papered in crimson. " The sounds of the shells exploding caused another problem to the men; constant noise caused them to become ' shell shocked'.

This shows how a British soldier from Wiltshire was affected- " His steel hat was on the back of his head and his mouth slobbered, and the two comrades could not hold him still. These badly shell-shocked boys clawed their mouth ceaselessly. Others sat in the field hospital in a state of coma, dazed as though deaf, and actually dumb. " Life in the trenches was miserable as the soldiers spent their day knee in water or mud which caused a condition known as trench foot.

" Your knees swell up to two or three times their usual size and go completely dead. You could stick a bayonet in them and not feel a thing. If you are fortunate enough not to lose your feet and the swelling goes down, it is then that the..

. agony begins. I have heard men cry and even scream with pain and many have had to have their feet and legs amputated. " Another major problem was rat infestation; a pair of rats can produce 880 offspring in a year and even clean and dry trenches were infested, " There are millions! Some are

huge fellows nearly as big as cats. Several of our men were awakened to find a rat snuggling down under the blankets alongside them.

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