

World war 1 trench warfare

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World War 1 Trench Warfare The Western Front during World War 1 stretched from the North Sea to the Swiss Frontier with France. Both sides dug themselves in ending any possible chance of a quick war; this caused a stalemate, which was to last for most of the war. Over 200, 000 men died in the trenches of WW1, most of who died in battle, but many died from disease and infections brought on by the unsanitary conditions. The Great War lasted from 1914-1918 simply because of the fighting in the trenches, where taking ground from the enemy was a slow process because when men tried to attack in the trenches they were shot down almost as quick as they emerged from their own trench.

Life in the Trenches The first thing a new recruit would notice on the way to the Frontline was the smell, rotting bodies in shallow graves, men who hadn't washed in weeks because there were no facilities, overflowing cess pits, creosol or chloride of lime, used to stave off the constant threat of disease and infection. Cordite, the lingering odour of poison gas, rotting sandbags, stagnant mud, cigarette smoke, and cooking food. Although overwhelming to a new recruit, they soon got used to the smell and eventually became part of the smell with their own body odour.

Rats and Lice Rats were a constant companion in the trenches in their millions they were everywhere, gorging themselves on human remains (grotesquely disfiguring them by eating their eyes and liver) they could grow to the size of a cat. Men tried to kill them with bullets shovels or anything else they had at hand, but they were fighting a losing battle as only 1 pair of rats can produce 900 offspring in a year. Some soldiers believed that the rats knew when there was going to be a heavy bombardment from the enemy lines because they always seemed to disappear minutes before an attack.

Lice were a constant problem for the men breeding in dirty clothing they were impossible to get rid of even when clothes were washed and deloused there would be eggs that would escape the treatment in the seams of the clothes. Lice caused Trench Fever, a particularly painful disease that began suddenly with severe pain followed by high fever. Recovery - away from the trenches - took up to twelve weeks. It was not discovered that lice were the cause of trench fever though until 1918. Millions of frogs were found in shell holes covered in water; they were also found in the base of trenches. Slugs and horned beetles crowded the sides of the trench. Many men chose to shave their heads entirely to avoid another prevalent scourge: nits. The cold wet and unsanitary conditions were also to cause trench foot amongst the soldiers, a fungal infection, which could turn gangrenous and result in amputation. Trench Foot was more of a problem at the start of trench warfare; as conditions improved in 1915, it rapidly faded, although a trickle of cases continued throughout the war. Common illnesses trench foot shell shock blindness or burns from mustard gas There was also trench fever, that was found to be cause by lice, and in the last year of the war, the " Spanish Flu" hit the world, including the trenches of Europe.