

The length of ww1

[War](#), [World War 1](#)



fighting across vast lengths of trenches stretching from the English Channel to the northern borders of Switzerland as each army tried to outflank the other. No one in 1914 would have predicted the stalemate that was to follow; it was a common belief back home in Britain that it would all be 'over by Christmas'. The Germans had similar views at the start of the war; they thought they could rapidly capture France before invading Russia, therefore preventing a war on two fronts. But the failure of the Schlieffen plan halted Germany in 1914 slowing down any advances. This critical failure was one of the main reasons the war was such a long drawn out affair. It was no longer each side trying to capture the other in a war movement but, trench warfare. Defence was now the key to winning the war and was far superior than the offensive. For example the Hindenburg line that the Germans were in possession of was around 70 miles in length and stretched from Arras to St Quentin. It boasted a huge defensive system with concrete forts and gun emplacements backed by deep trenches. It was similar at Verdun, which was a vital fortress town. In February 1916 Falkenhayn launched a huge attack against the French but the French under command of Pétain defended Verdun obstinately and the Germans eventually had to retreat. This is one of the many battles, which proves that defence is stronger than the offence. The trenches were hard to capture by advancing troops because of increasing firepower from machine guns. Crossing no-mans land was committing yourself to suicide as far as many troops were concerned as machine guns could inflict enormous damage on advancing infantry even as early as Mons in 1914. But their full potential and power was not recognised until late 1917. The realisation of the advantage of defence resulted in the

enhanced rate of advancing technology. This was one of the core reasons for stalemate upon the Western Front because technology was advancing at such a rapid rate and new inventions were being introduced in a hasty manner. Many of the new inventions were not sufficiently tested and many of the ideas were not thoroughly thought through which