

The Horror of Trench Warfare

World War I

War in Europe (1)



The Western Front

- The war became a stalemate-“**trench warfare**”
- **Trenches** were long ditches surrounded by barbed wire to protect the troops.

A WWI Trench



The Trench System

Aircraft can warn of the build-up of enemy troops before an attack



Concrete block house for a machine-gun

Reserve trench

Long-range artillery is placed about 10 km behind the front line. These guns fire at advancing enemy troops

Support trench

Front-line trench

Communication trenches allow reserves to be brought forward without exposing them to enemy fire

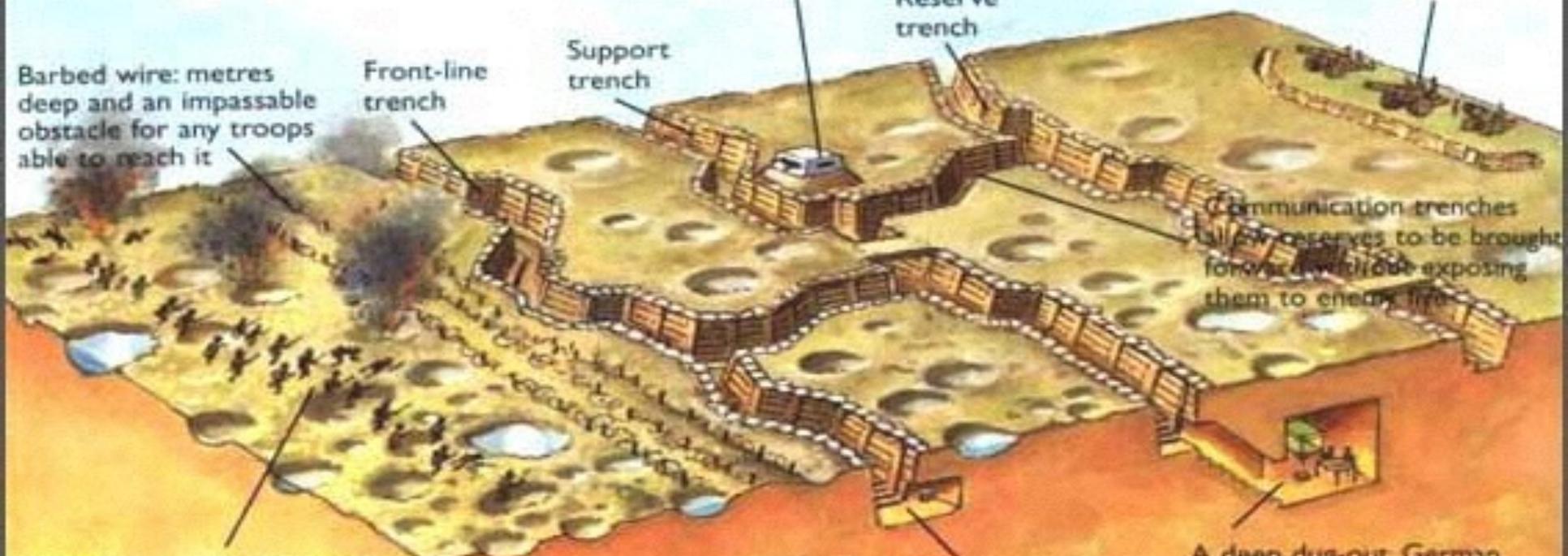
Barbed wire: metres deep and an impassable obstacle for any troops able to reach it

No Man's Land (the stretch of land between the trenches of the opposing sides) has already been churned up by shell fire. In wet weather it becomes a mass of mud, making it even harder for troops to cross

Front-line dug-outs provide protection but not against a direct hit from an artillery shell

A deep dug-out. German ones could be 15 m below ground and too well constructed to be damaged by shell fire

PROBLEMS FACING ATTACKING TROOPS



Trench Warfare

- A** Front line trench
- B** Support trench
- C** Reserve trench
- D** Enemy trench

Artillery fire "softened up" resistance before an infantry attack.

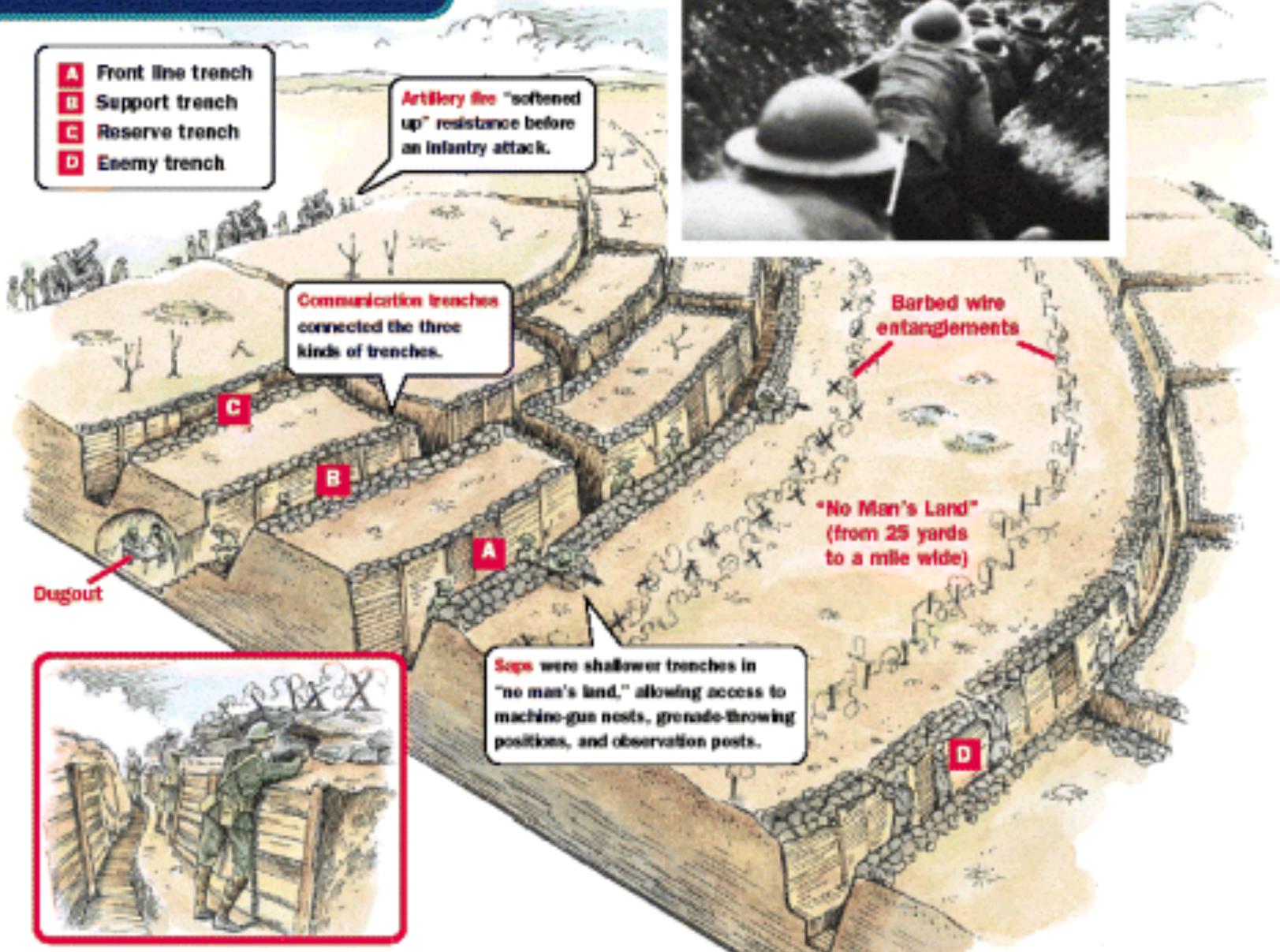
Communication trenches connected the three kinds of trenches.

Barbed wire entanglements

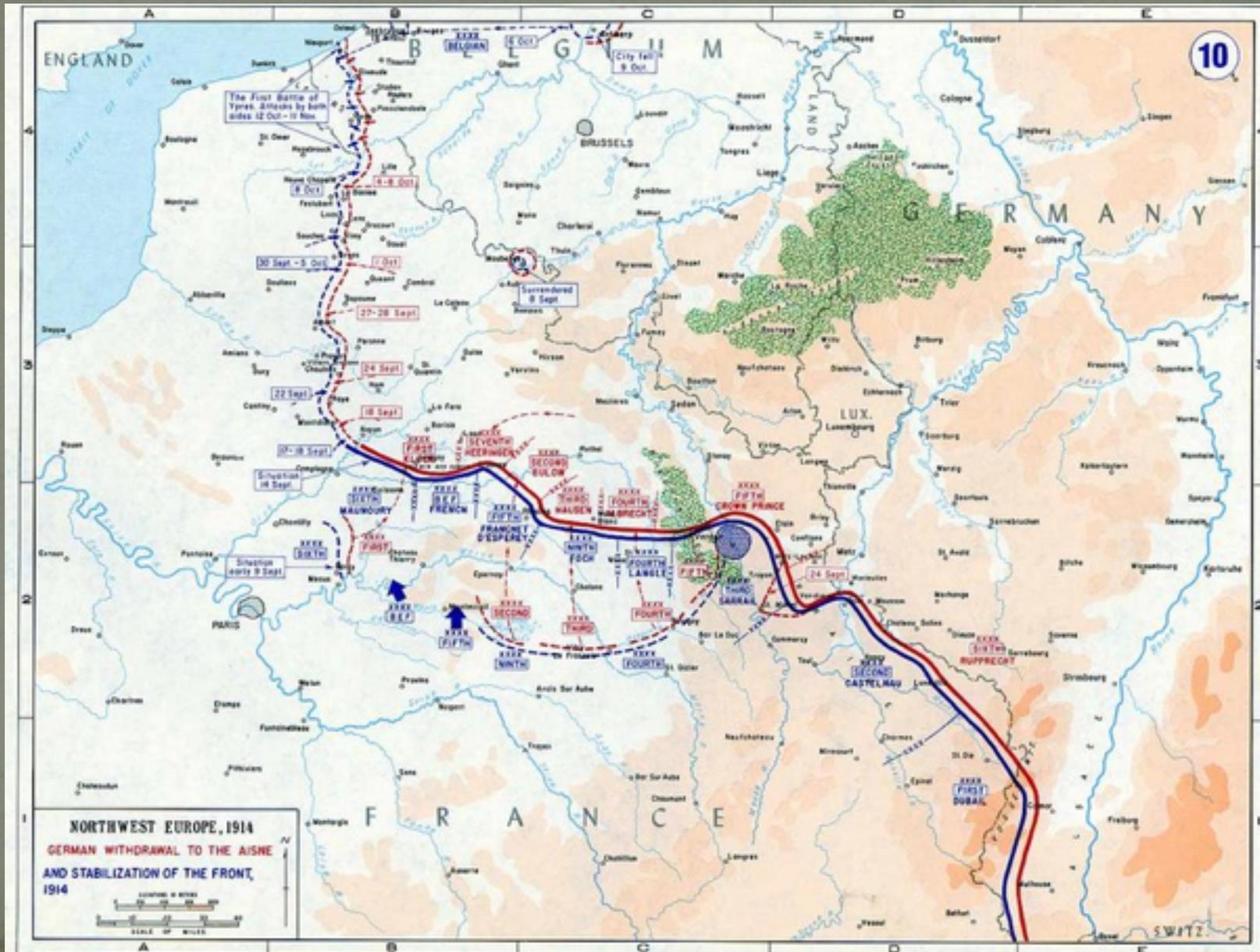
"No Man's Land"
(from 25 yards to a mile wide)

Dugout

Saps were shallower trenches in "no man's land," allowing access to machine-gun nests, grenade-throwing positions, and observation posts.



TRENCH WARFARE: Western Front 1914



Trench Warfare

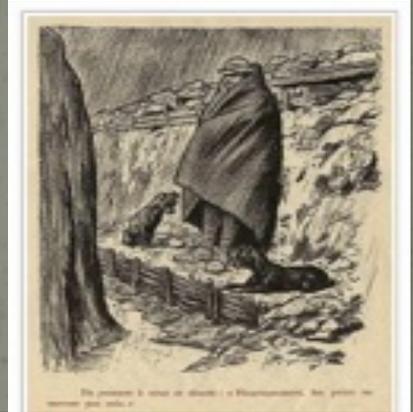
- Trench warfare resulted in huge loss of life and little gains in territory.
- The only technique became to “soften up” the enemy trenches by bombarding them with artillery fire
- Send the soldiers “over the top” to try to take the enemy lines.

Trench Warfare

- “Going over the top” was dangerous
- The soldiers had to enter **“No man’s land”** the area between the trenches where they were exposed to enemy fire.
- The trench could finally be taken with brutal hand-to-hand combat fought with bayonets, knives, and swords.

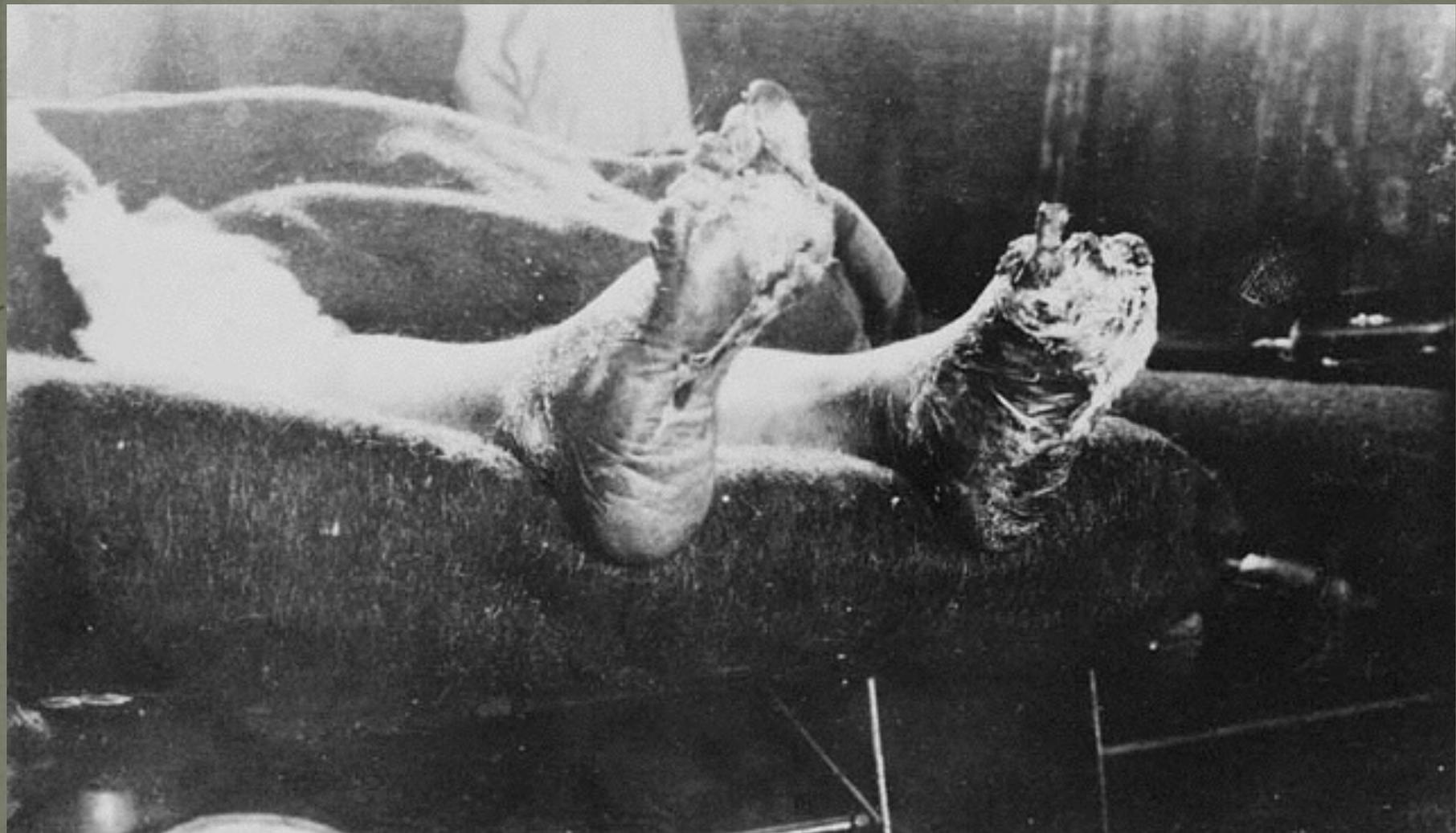
TRENCH WARFARE: Living Conditions

- Lice
- Rats
- Cramped up
- Flooded trenches
- Diseases
- Decaying flesh



Trench Warfare

- Soldiers spent a lot of time waiting in the trenches
- Soldiers had to develop ways to pass the time and had to deal with the smell of rotting corpses, body parts, rats and mud that often filled the trenches.



Dead bodies....

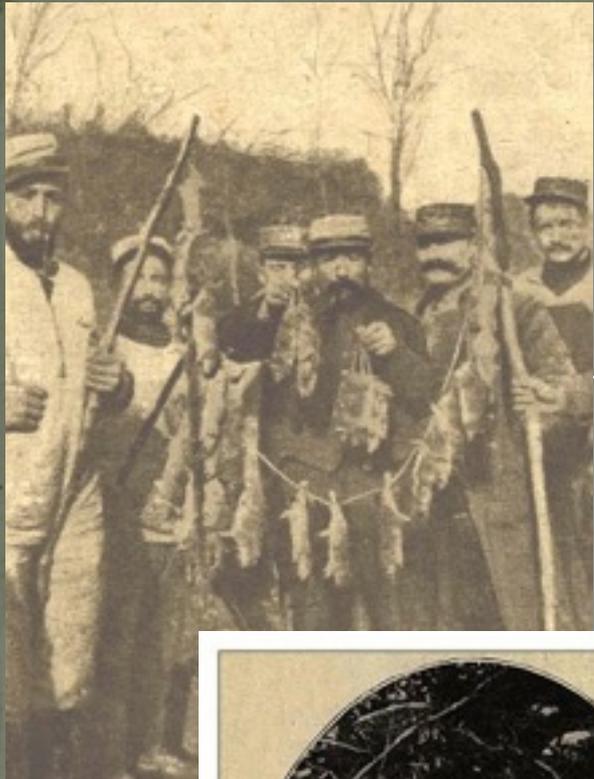


Left to rot in the trenches because of the machine gun fire that kept the soldiers in the trenches



An easy food source for rats and a place to breed disease





La chasse aux rats

À l'approche de l'hiver, les petits rongeurs et autres habitants terrestres émigrent vers des endroits moins froids. Aussi est-ce un sport des poilus que de détruire le plus grand nombre de rats, mulots, taupes, etc., qui infectent nos champs et leurs demeures souterraines.



Soldiers of all nations
hunted the rats— sometimes
rations were short and meat
was added to their diet

Picking lice from clothes



New War Technology



TRENCH WARFARE: Technology

- New advancements in technology made WWI more deadly and dangerous than any war before it



The Machine Gun

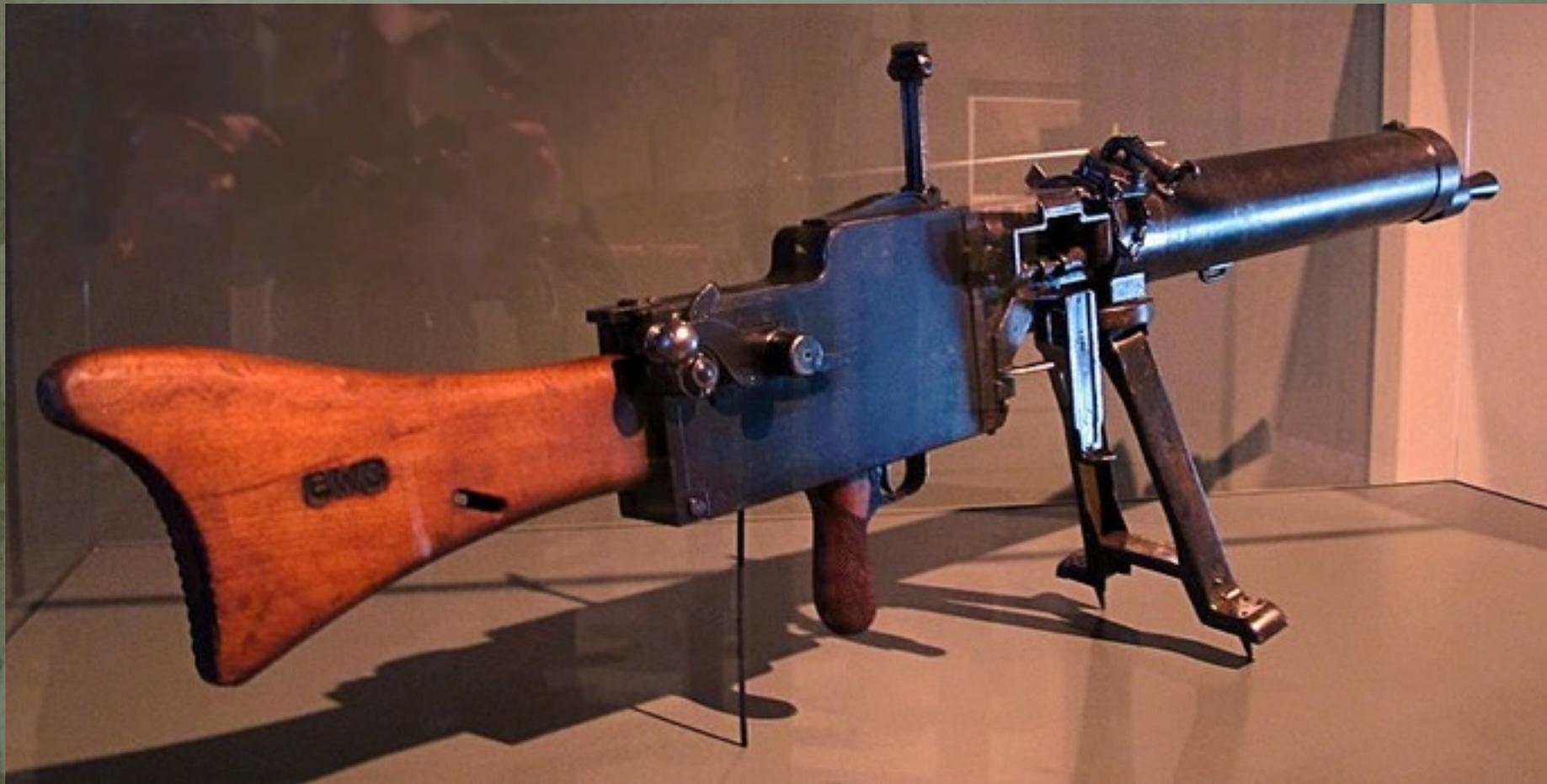
- The **machine gun** (a gun that can be repeatedly fired without loading each time) increased the danger of going “over the top”.



British Vickers gun team @ the Battle of the Somme



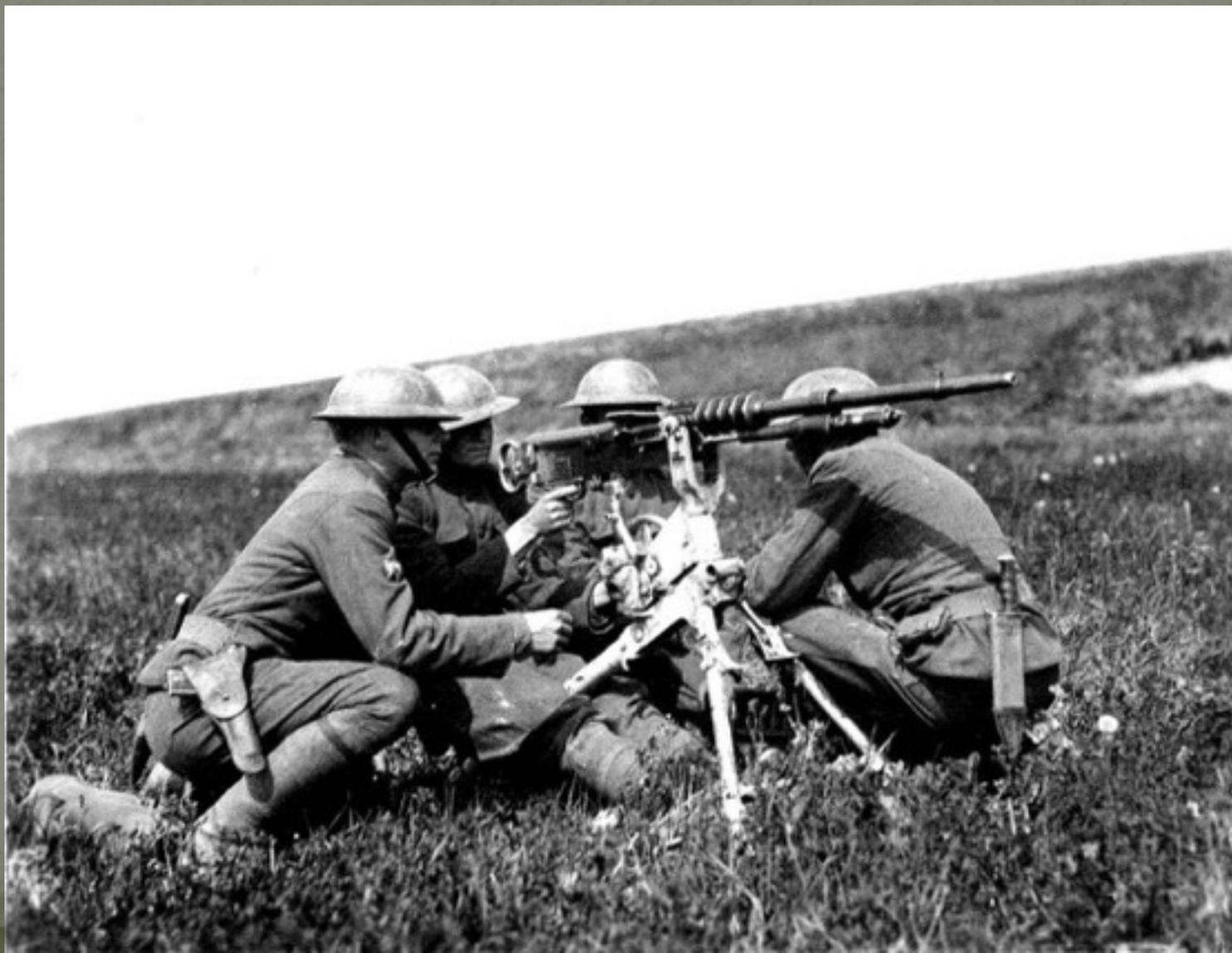
German Maxim MG 08/15 (for infantry soldier)



Italian Fiat-Revelli 6.5MM MOD.14



French Hotchkiss M1914



Austro-Hungarian MG-M.-07 / 12



Grenades

- 1st made of empty bottles.
- American soldiers- many of whom had played baseball- introduced more accurate ways of throwing them.



POISON GAS (*used by both sides)

- A new weapon used in the war
- Different types
 - Blind (bromacetone)*
 - Choke (chlorine)*
 - Burn/blister (mustard)*
- Limited value
 - wind
 - gas masks







Belgian Uniforms and masks



Australian Gas mask



Japanese gas mask



U. S. gas mask





Gas Training



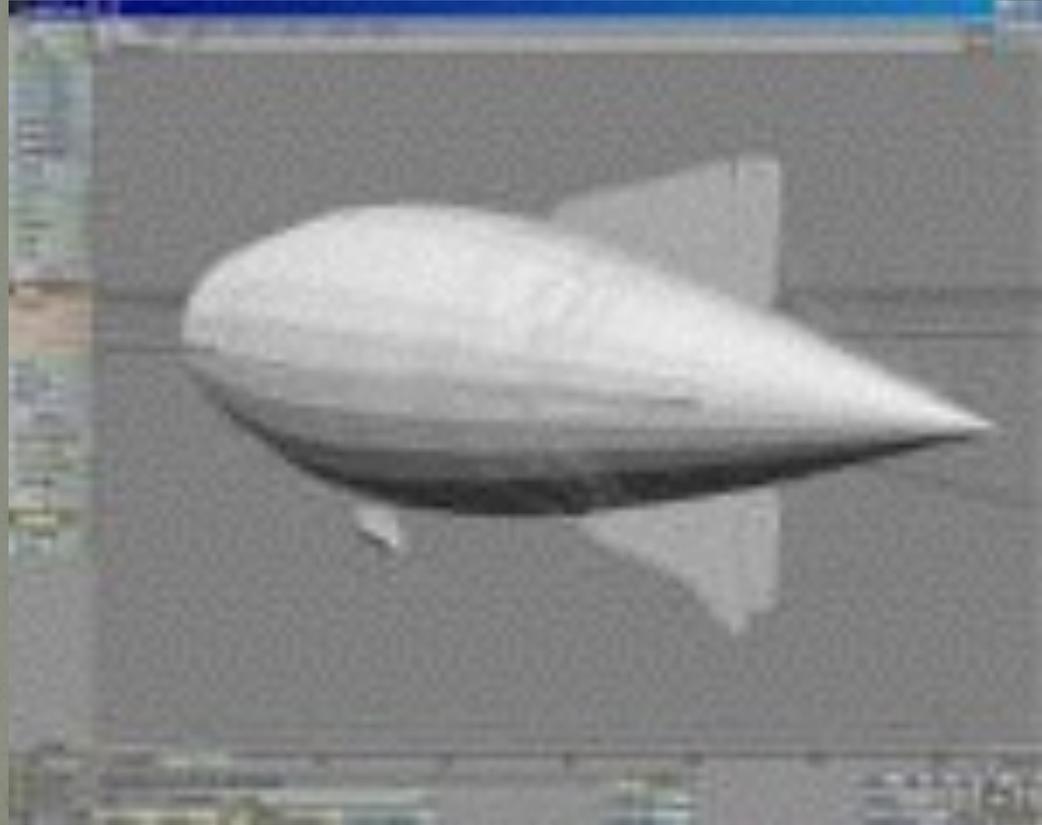
Airplanes

- **Airplanes** are 1st used in World War I- are used in trench warfare to scout the position of enemy lines.

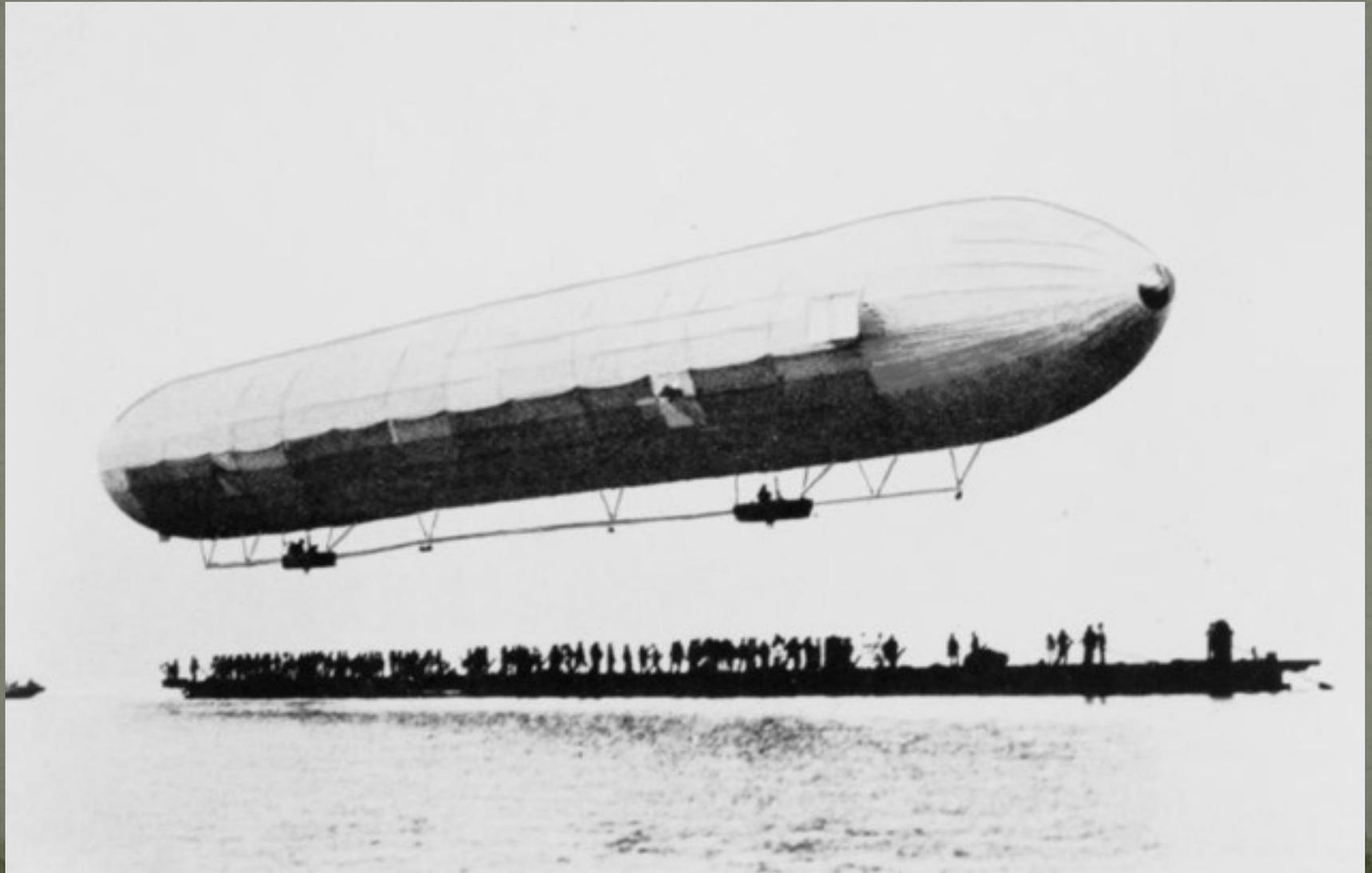


Airplanes

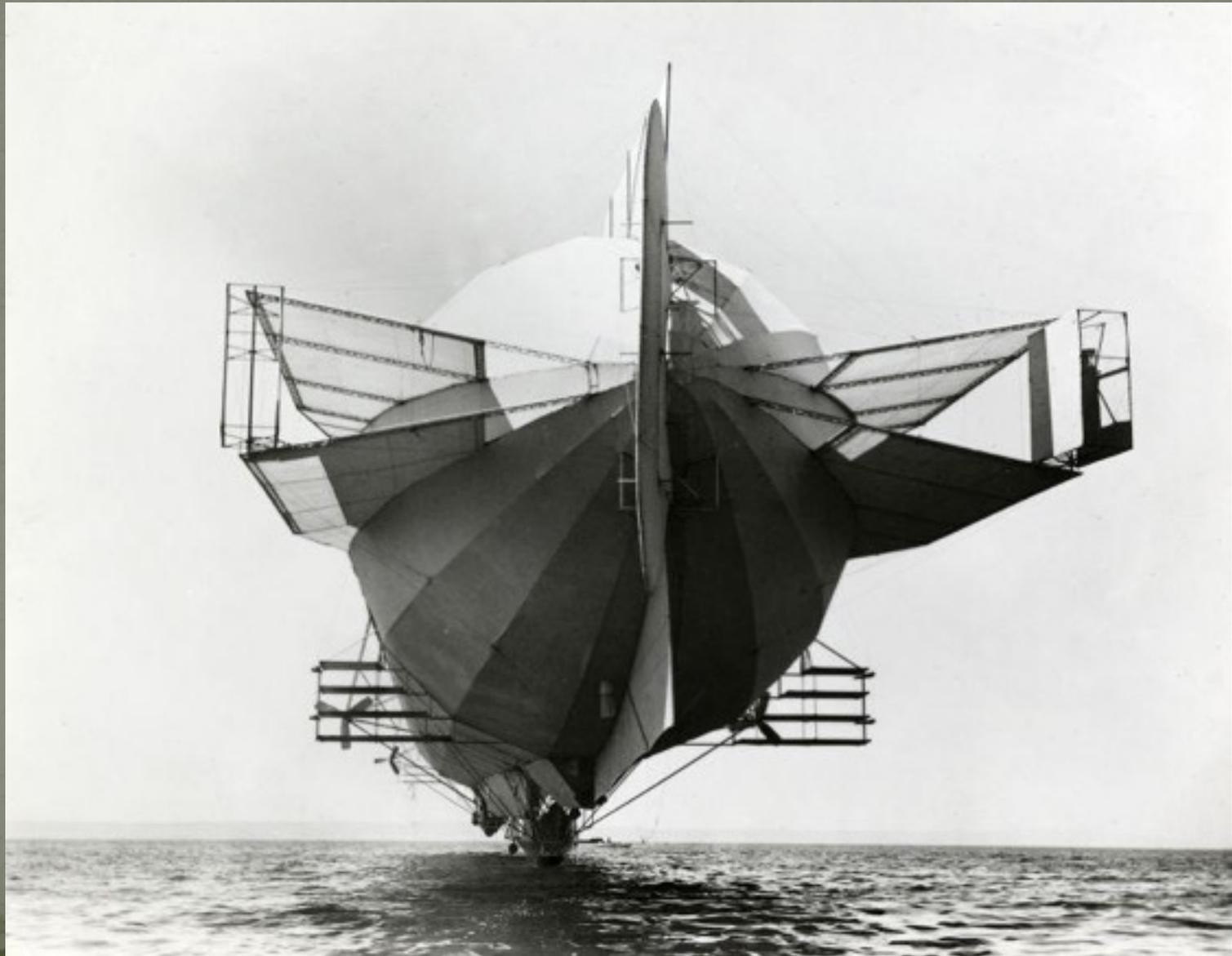
- Later in the war, machine guns are mounted to planes and **zeppelins**- giant blimps- and are used to drop bombs on the enemy.



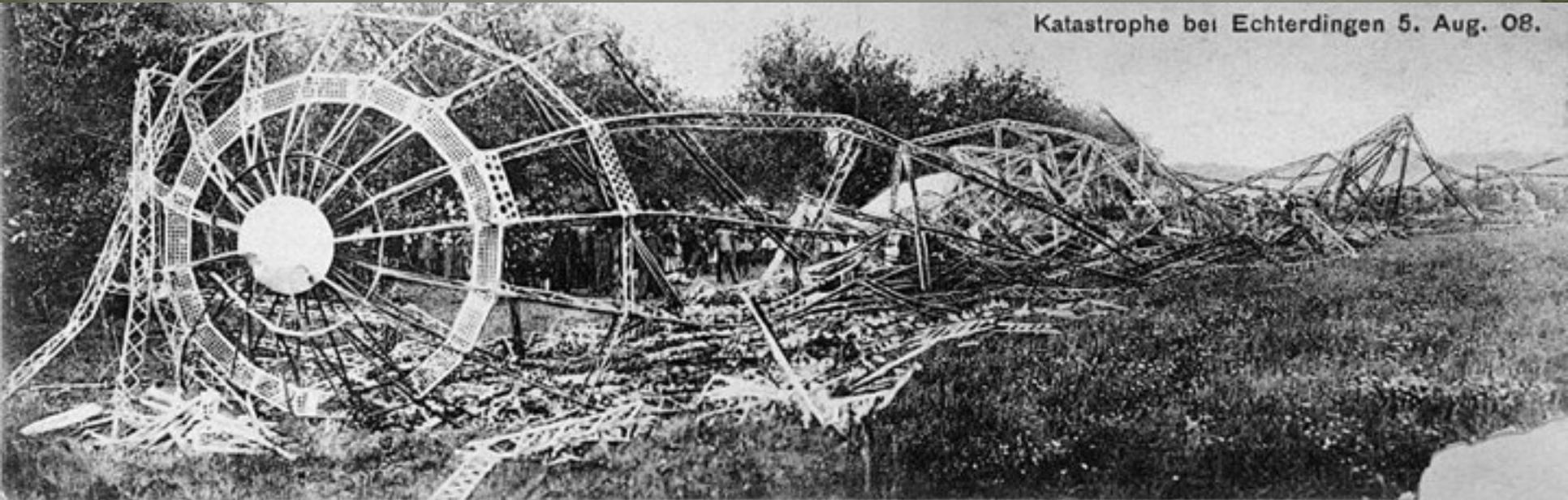
1st flight of a zeppelin (LZ1) in 1908 in Germany



The LZ4 w / stabilizers (1908)



LZ4 Wreckage after being caught in a storm



Katastrophe bei Echterdingen 5. Aug. 08.

British Poster



**IT IS FAR BETTER
TO FACE THE BULLETS
THAN TO BE KILLED
AT HOME BY A BOMB**

**JOIN THE ARMY AT ONCE
& HELP TO STOP AN AIR RAID**

GOD SAVE THE KING

Crater of a zeppelin bomb in Paris



A zeppelin bomb in the National Flight Museum (from 1916)



Old Trench Pictures in WWI



Boer Trench @ Battle of Magersfontein in 1899 during the 2nd Boer War



German Western Front in 1915 guarding entrance to a trench line in front of Arras



Cheshire Regiment Trench on the Somme in July 1916





1st Lancashire Fusiliers in a communication trench in 1916



French trench in northeastern France



Aerial view of opposing trench lines in 1917—British at top left, German at right and bottom



Australians using a periscope rifle





Breastwork trench at Armentieres in 1916



French 87th Regiment Cote 34 at Verdun in 1916



A barber in the French trench



FRENCH TRENCH BARBER

4468-5

Le Barbier dans la tranchée

Battle of the Somme—1916



British tank rolling over a trench



Canadian soldiers prepare for action



British soldiers fighting in the trenches



Trenches today—German frontline



A surviving trench at Verdun (2009)



German command bunker—Somme



Trench near Ypres



German trench and bunker near Verdun



TRENCH WARFARE: Analysis

- This was their new tactic in war.
- After the war, it had left horrific scars.
- Made many people not want to have another World War ever again; which is why WWI was called “The War to End All Wars”

