

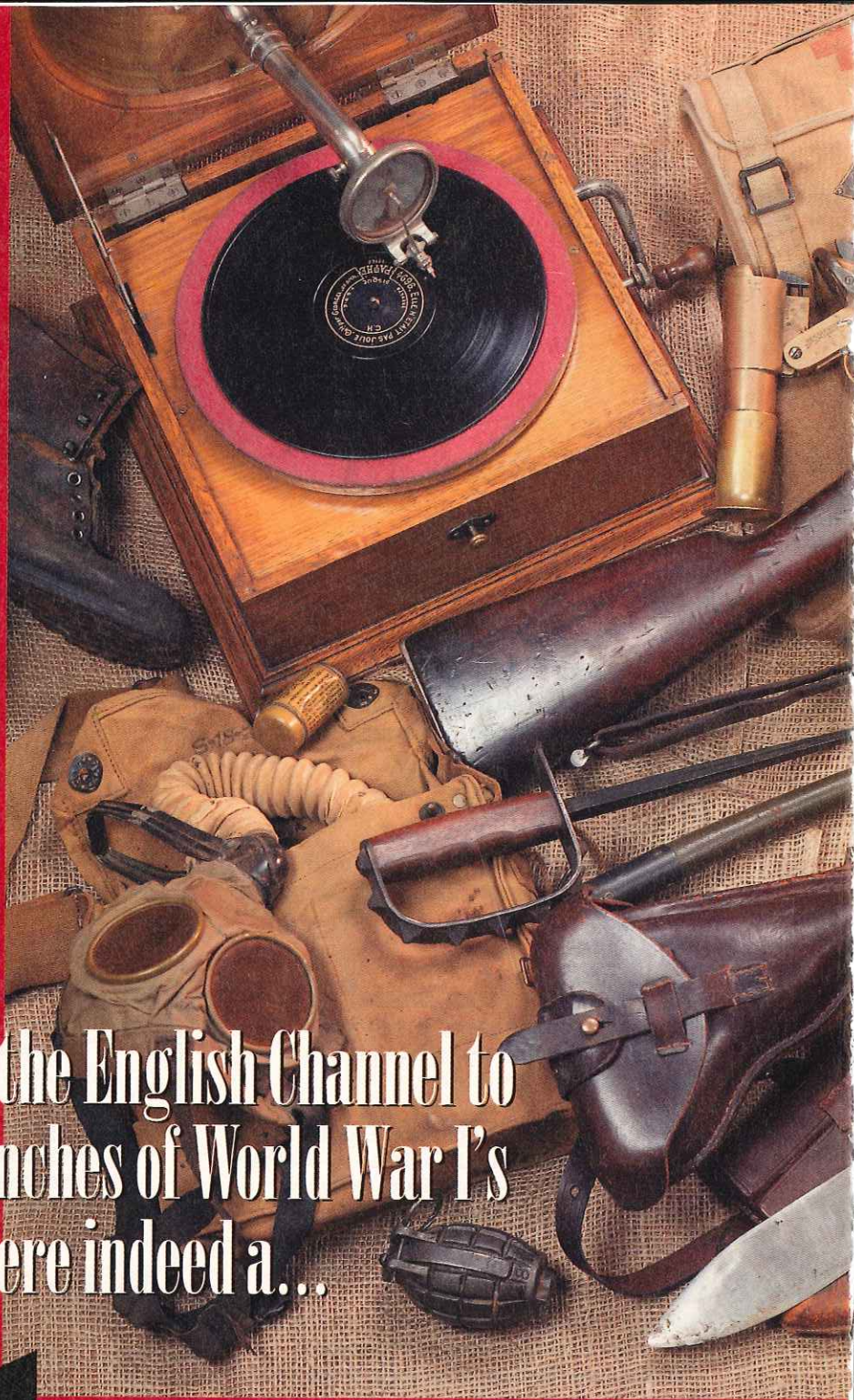
For the pickelhaubed German Army, the Von Schlieffen plan had in just 30 days delivered the military might of greater Germany to the very gates of Paris itself. For the French and their Plan XVII (which called for continuous offensive along the entire front) only death and destruction awaited those who went forward on the signal of an officer's whistle.

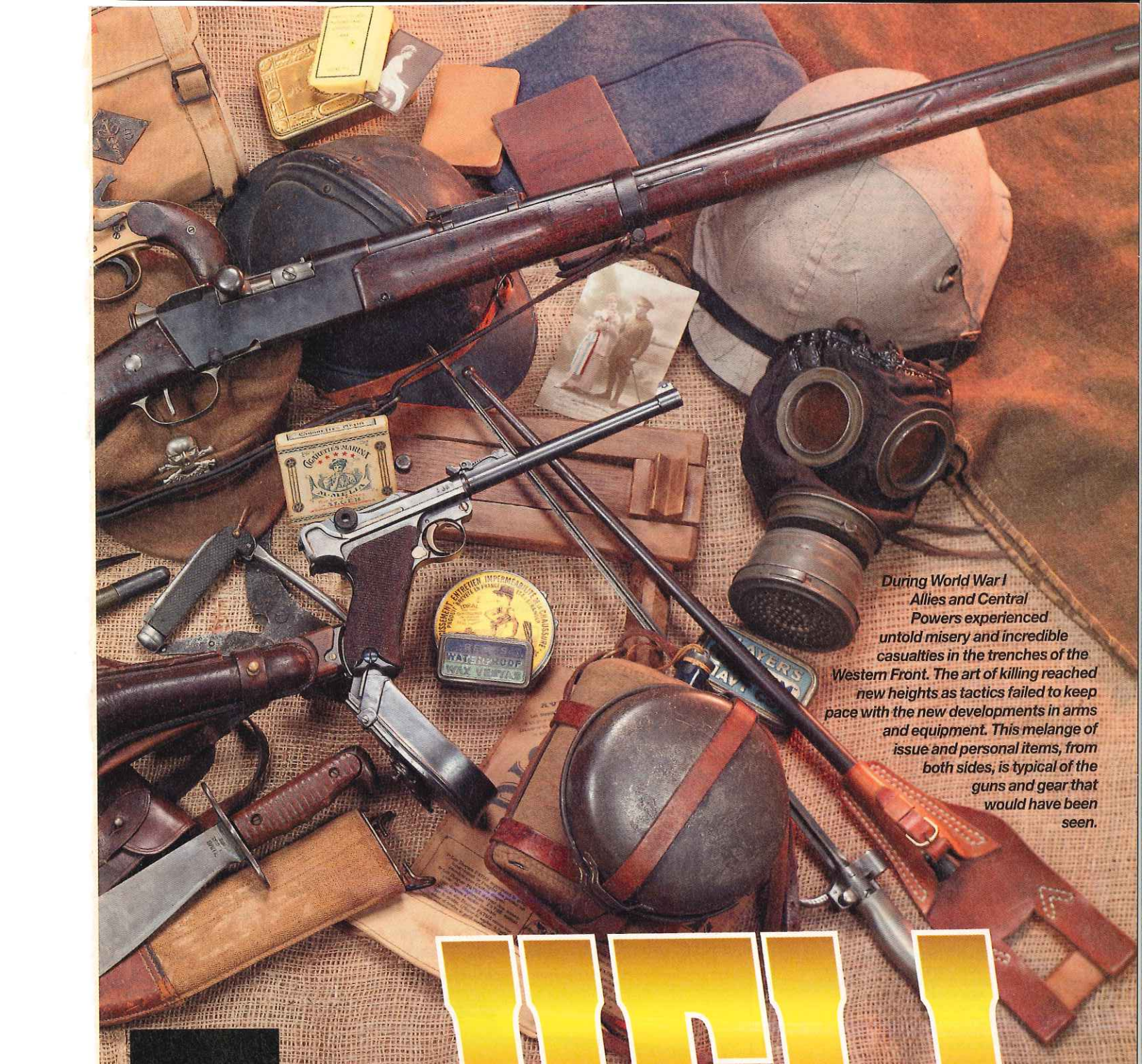
Had it not been for the "contemptible little army" that the British had landed in Europe shortly after war was declared on August 1, 1914, the Germans may have very well taken Paris and made a repeat of their great victory during the Franco-Prussian War some 40 years earlier. However, a speedy end to the war was not to be. The "miracle of the Marne" kept the Germans from entering Paris and soon gave way to a curious line of upturned earth that stretched from Neuport on the English Channel to the Swiss Alps some 480 miles away. Trench war had come to the Western Front, and the age of Napoleonic Tactics was officially over.

Stretching from the English Channel to the Alps, the Trenches of World War I's Western Front were indeed a...

Gateway

by Philip Schreier





*During World War I
Allies and Central
Powers experienced
untold misery and incredible
casualties in the trenches of the
Western Front. The art of killing reached
new heights as tactics failed to keep
pace with the new developments in arms
and equipment. This melange of
issue and personal items, from
both sides, is typical of the
guns and gear that
would have been
seen.*

TO HELL

Military Classics

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Gateway To HELL



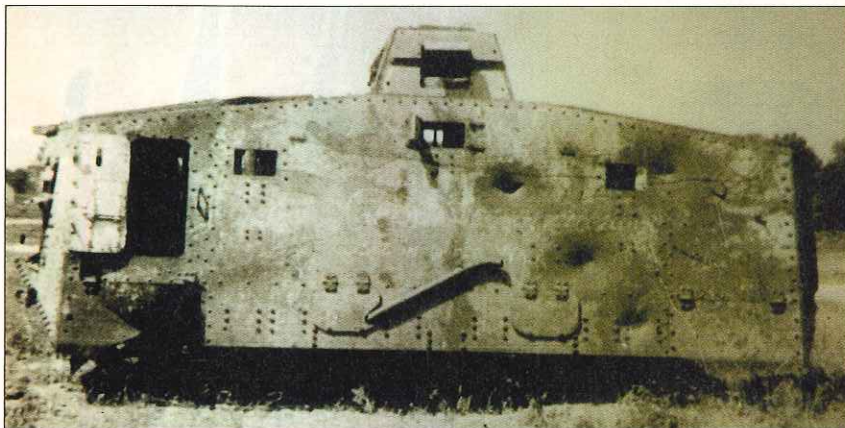
Unquestionably one of the worst horrors of the trenches was gas. From the time of its introduction by the Germans as the Battle of Ypres in 1915, many styles of respirators and masks were designed to deal with mustard, chlorine and phosgene gases, more or less effectively.

Trench fighting may have been a new phenomena in Europe but it was nothing new to Americans. Their own "war between the states" had concluded after a number of campaigns ended with both Union & Confederate troops going to ground, especially during the battles of Vicksburg and Petersburg. Statisticians have written that the average Civil War soldier of the 1861 to 1865 period saw combat one day in 50. For the soldier of the Great War, combat was a mind-numbing experience that lasted for weeks and months at a stretch. During the American Civil War combat casualties averaged out, over four years, to be 500 casualties per day,

during the Great War that number was an astounding 5,000 men per day!

DRAWING THE LINE— THE STALEMATE BEGINS

The German army saw the immediate advantage in choosing the high ground as they retreated across France and Belgium and selected ridges and terrain that would favor them defensively. For the Germans a defensive strategy was defiantly in order. Their strategy was to hold the lines that they had and to "bleed the enemy white" as the enemy wasted themselves on barbed wire in front of their Maxim machine guns. Their trenches, once



Tanks, first used by the British at the Battle of Cambrai, were thought by experts to be just the ticket for breaking up the trench warfare stalemate. Unfortunately they were cranky, miserable to man and prone to breakdown. The behemoth German A7-V, for instance, had a crew of 18 and weighed 33 tons.



ALMOST BURIED

During the war, the grim facts of battle were sugar-coated for civilians, and heavy censorship was imposed. Soon after, however, antiwar factions, were only too glad to publish photos showing the stark reality.

established, took on a palatial look to them. Some dugouts were so deep that a few were recorded as having as many as 30 steps to reach the bottom where entire rooms opened up to reveal all the major comforts of home, four-poster beds, fireplaces and mantels and in one recorded dugout... a grand piano to entertain the troops.

The British and French on the other hand were not so comfortable and that condition was by design. The French battle plan for the war called for "élan" a doctrine of "always forward." No attack could pass without an immedi-

ate counterattack, no lost ground would be given up without immediate attempts to regain the real estate. The British, though not as attack happy as their French comrades, felt that their trench system, if given in to too many creature comforts would become far too comfortable and result in a less than enthusiastic response from the men if called upon to leave them for an attack. Therefore improvements such as grand pianos and other curiosities were strictly forbidden.

The trenches themselves took on



U. S. Official

DECAPITATED

distinct appearances and soon became quite standardized in their composition. Sandbags became the coin of the realm on the front lines. Every soldier approaching the front often carried half his body weight in supplies and building materials such as sandbags, planking and wire. Eyewitnesses reported that in the rain-soaked fields of Flanders, soldiers often disappeared into sink holes, never to be seen from again as the weight of their equipment often prevented them from escaping



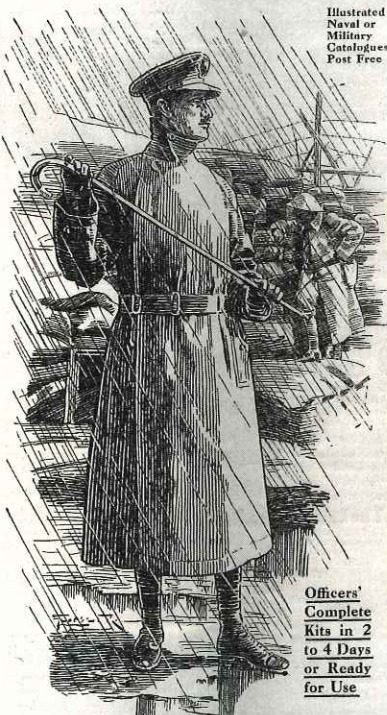
These Yanks are stationed in some pretty tidy digs. The sandbagged firing holes and steps were common. In fact, filling sandbags became most soldiers' second occupations. While all looks comfy now, a serious rainstorm could turn this shelter into a muddy, sodden morass.

Gateway To HELL

death's grasp. British Captain Bruce Bairnsfather, who would become the Great War's Bill Mauldin, drew a cartoon of a Tommy cavalryman being helped out of a rain-swollen shell crater. As his comrades struggle to rescue him he begs their indulgence while he tries to free himself from the stirrups of his now submerged horse.

As fate would have it, the weather on the Western Front between 1914 & 1918 was the coldest and wettest during those four years than for the rest of the century.

THE TIELOCKEN BURBERRY



Illustrated Naval or Military Catalogues Post Free

Officers' Complete Kits in 2 to 4 Days or Ready for Use

A Double Shield Where Most Needed.

Made in exclusive Burberry materials, The Tielocken doubly covers every vulnerable part of the body, providing, from chin to knees, the most comfortable, healthful and efficient safeguard against rain or cold.

Reliably Protective, Yet Hygienic.

The Tielocken, being self-ventilating, relies for its protective powers entirely upon the weaving and proofing of its cloth, and gives satisfying security without recourse to rubber, oiled-silk or any other heat-condensing agent that would make it unhealthy and cumbersome.

No Buttons to Fasten or Lose.

Another distinctive feature of The Tielocken is the avoidance of buttons. Except for the adjustment of the upright collar, the coat is securely held by a single strap-and-buckle.

Every Burberry garment is labelled "Burberry."

BURBERRYS Haymarket LONDON
8 and 10 Boul. des Capucines PARIS, also Provincial Agents

It seems like every war lends its name to some kind of garment. Such was the case with World War I and the famous "trench coat." These practical rigs were purchased by officers in the thousands from a number of different makers.

Each side constructed a front line trench that was between 6 and 12 feet deep. The parapet was the wall of the trench that was closest to the enemy while the rear of the trench wall was called the parados. The trench walls were revetted with sandbags and wood planking and the floors of the trench were covered with a planking called duck boards. In some regions where mud and water were more prevalent than a dry trench floor, the duck boards were pulled up before an expected attack or raid to allow incoming hand grenades to sink deep into the ooze and explode with only a fraction of the power that they would have produced had they gone off while sitting in the clear and open on a wooden platform.

A shallow trench zigzagged its way to the rear of the lines every 25 yards or so and was called a communications trench. This allowed not only runners access as the name implies but also it allowed the swift deployment of reserves and reinforcements to reach the front trench without exposing themselves to enemy fire. Dugouts, kitchens and aid stations comprised most of the improvements to the reserve line of trenches.

Both sides made use of shell holes to establish "listening posts" close to enemy lines at night. From these positions intelligence officers could often-times overhear careless talk from the enemy and acquire very useful information in addition to discerning where enemy weaknesses may be.



The American-designed Lewis gun was very popular with the British in .303, and later with the Yanks in .30-06. Like the Maxims, it was adaptable to use on land and in the air.

"Lifeguard" Collapsible Periscope

"I say, old man, just look at that Hun sniper through my 'Lifeguard' Periscope."

By Gad! the definition is topping!

What's the price?"

"Only 20/- complete, and they fitted these special mirrors to my old 'Lifeguard' for 1/6."

"I'll send for one."

From all Officers or Sole Makers.

F. DUERR & SONS,

Manchester, S. W.

Wholesale Agents: Raphael's, Ltd., London.

Instantly closes to 4 1/4 x 4 1/4 x 2 in.

Sight elevation 20 inches.

Large Field.

Weight 23 ozs.

Strong, Simple, Rigid.

Almost Invisible.



Entrepreneurs were quick to realize that the misery of the trenches could actually be turned into a source of tidy profit. Some were useless, while others were eminently practical like this "Lifeguard" periscope. Periscopes of various styles were sold privately, and even issued for use in observation and sniping.

Barbed wire, an American invention, made its appearance shortly after the first spade full of dirt was turned on the front lines. Each side sent out "wiring parties" on a nightly basis to put up new wire and fix existing wire damaged by shell fire during the previous day. At first both sides mounted their wire on wooden stakes hammered into the ground with shovels



Fantasy and reality. This 1916 cover of *Punch*, showing Tommies writing letters and watering geraniums in cozy surroundings was meant for home consumption. The men were more familiar with the less salubrious effects of shot shell and gas (above).



padding with sandbags to deaden the noise of the repeated blows.

On moonless nights, thought to be the best for wiring parties and Zeppelin raiding, enemy scouts in established listening posts would keep an acute ear to the noises from the enemy lines. Any signs of wiring parties about and a signal would be sent back to the company machine gunner who would commence shooting into the darkness in the general vicinity of the sounds of stake pounding. As he traversed the horizon with lead the gunner would keep his eyes open for the sudden appearance of "fire flies" in the enemy's front. This was the signal that the bullets from the Maxims were

sparking as they struck barbed wire. Once the level of the sparking wire was found the gunners could work their way up and down the lines making the job of a wiring party extremely hazardous.

It wasn't long before iron stakes made the job somewhat easier. The new design had a corkscrew-style base so that a soldier could effectively just twist it directly into the ground with a minimum of noise. Wire was then just placed over loops that resembled pig tails and twisted a bit further to lock the wire in place.

Wire was never really much more than a nuisance to either side. It was a risky job to put it in place as well as to



Some specialty arms were developed for the trenches. This rare Gew98 Mauser has an extended 20-round magazine, giving the soldier 15 extra shots before reloading.



Though they had been used for centuries, hand grenades, such as this French racquette style, achieved new levels of sophistication during the Great War.

Gateway To HELL



British trenches, while not as agreeable as their German counterparts, were at least serviceable. It was not uncommon for enemy bodies to be piled into parapets. Often soldiers would use projecting arms and legs as handy pegs on which to hang their equipment. The smells of decaying bodies of men and horses, sewage and human waste were pervasive.



If there is one weapon that seems to personify the great war, it's the machine gun. Its deadly chatter forever changed the face of warfare. Both the British and the Germans used a version of the Maxim medium MG. The Brits', in .303 caliber was called the "Vickers" while the 8mm German repeater was termed the "MG-08."

attack it from the front. Unending artillery barrages were supposed to "soften" the enemy and destroy his entanglements but more often than not, the men who survived long enough to make it to the wire emplacements directly in front of the enemy, found most of the wire still in place and in more of an impassable heap than it was before the shelling began. The British developed a wire cutting device that affixed to the end of their No. 1 MK III SMLE rifles. A curious contraption, it resembled a fish hook that caught strands of wire, and as you thrust forward in a bayonetting style with an upward turn of your gun the device was supposed to sever the wire. It worked well on paper and even in practice with a few well trained drill instructors; however, when it came time to the combat tests it was found to be next to useless. No one in GHQ had taken into account that German wire was two

strands thicker than conventional British and French wire, resulting in a cutting tool whose opening was inadequate to accept the thicker German wire!

A FATE WORSE THAN A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH!

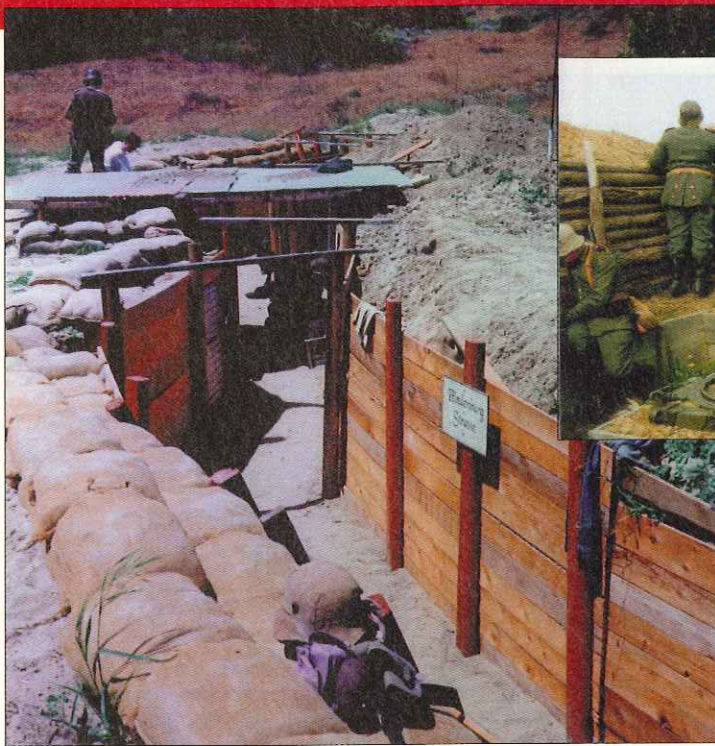
Life in the trench had hazards above and beyond the expected attack from the enemy. Perhaps more troublesome than flying bullets or falling mortar rounds were the elements that ravaged the effective fighting strengths of all combatants.

Copious amounts of rain brought with it a series of problems that vexed the common infantry man as much as the enemy did. Trench foot was a condition where the foot physically began to rot away due to prolonged exposure to moisture. This malady was not uncommon with troops who had served constant stretches of time in the

front lines without the ability to tend to their feet or access to the needed supplies to combat the ever-present danger of foot rot. Three pairs of dry clean socks were standard issue as well as treating the foot in a solution of lard and paraffin that acted as a sealant. In practice the foot oil did more to trap moisture in than keep it out.

Failure to tend to ones feet was a serious offense. In 1915, when stalemate became de rigueur and morale sunk to low levels, incidences of trench foot escalated to a point where, at least in the British Army, foot neglect was seen as serious a crime against his majesty as a self-inflicted wound.

Vermin and pestilence also found their way into the trenches. As if life wasn't miserable enough, the soldiers of both sides were visited by plagues of lice and rats. The lice epidemic was combatted by shaving one's head and



Trenches took on their own personalities. Invariably the Germans' were the most organized and elegant. Some even sported rec rooms with grand pianos!

by "chatting," the art of de-lousing one's clothing. This was accomplished by sitting around with a candle and heating up a spoon or wire until it was red hot and running it along the seams of your tunic and trousers to kill hidden lice eggs. It effectively killed off the lice for a period of almost one day, if one was lucky. More often than not it had the effect of killing off eggs as well as seams, resulting in uniforms that became unserviceable in record time.

Rats posed another problem. The never-ending supply of fresh corpses created a bounty of abundance for the pink-tailed vermin. With perfect ecological conditions, one breeding pair of rats can produce over 500 offspring in one year alone! Tens of millions of rats prospered and grew fat on the Western Front, devouring everything from corpses to wounded who couldn't protect themselves. Though methods to control the population were by most accounts ineffective, fun was had at their expense by at least a few who sought a way to seek revenge upon those furry creatures who often woke them in the middle of the night by running across their faces in search of food. One account described a company of men who affixed bits of food to their bayonets and held their rifles inverted over the parapet. A rat would eventually lumber along the sandbags

until he found the prize and positioning himself under the muzzle would raise on his hind legs to grasp at the meal. Seeing the rat approach the soldier raised the rifle high enough to make it really stretch for the food. Then, just as the rat laid its hands upon it, the soldier pulled the trigger, sending bits of rat, as well as a bullet, toward the Hun.

TRENCH RAID!

Of greater concern to the average soldier were the chances that they might get bombed, shot, gassed or mortared during their stay in the front lines. Snipers made quick work of any who carelessly exposed themselves above the trench line. One report indicated that a British officer, new to the front, had a look about and was hit by two different snipers before his lifeless body collapsed out of their view. The Germans were the first to efficiently make use of snipers and their ability to eliminate those who would recklessly endanger them-



The constrictions of trench warfare, often dictated that grenades have a greater ranges than could be achieved by simply throwing them by hand. This German is about to send Tommy such a surprise from the grenade launching cup fitted to his Gewehr 98 Mauser.

Gateway To HELL

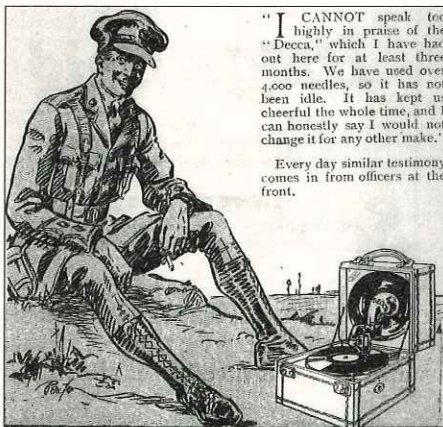


Though some were on the drawing boards and under development, despite being ideal for trench raids, few sub-guns were used during World War I. The one seen the most was the 9mm German MP-18 Bergmann. Its "snail-drum" magazine held 32 rounds.

selves. Special Mauser rifles with practical optics became the standard from which others were measured all the way up until World War II. Although the Allies made an effort, it was the

Germans who truly owned no-man's-land during the day due to the effective deployment of excellent marksmen.

One way to break up the consistent misery was to participate in a trench raid. Raids were conducted as intelligence gathering exercises and seldom for their tactical effect. Usually a company or units of even larger



"I CANNOT speak too highly in praise of the "Decca," which I have had out here for at least three months. We have used over 4,000 needles, so it has not been idle. It has kept us cheerful the whole time, and I can honestly say I would not change it for any other make."

Every day similar testimony comes in from officers at the front.

THE "Decca" is without doubt the best Gramophone for the Front. Though so small its tone and clearness of reproduction are unsurpassed. The "Decca" is entirely self-contained, has no loose parts, is no case, is ready to play immediately opened, has no loose parts, is light and can be carried as easily as a handbag, and takes all makes and sizes of needle records.

DECCA The truly Portable Gramophone

Patented, Nov. 20, 1917, 631877.

In Leather Cloth Case, \$4 10s. 0d.	Compressed Filter Case, \$5 10s. 0d.	Solid Conchoid Case, \$6 8s. 0d.	Of Harrods, Army and Navy Stores, Whiteley's, Selfridge's, Gamage's, and all leading Stores and Music Dealers.
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Illustrated Folder, and name of nearest agent, free on application to the Manufacturers—

Trench warfare often involved frenzied periods of activity, spaced out by endless hours of boredom. Some geegaws were bought by the men to while away the time, such as this British Decca phonograph. The Decca was one of the first portables sturdy enough to withstand harsh usage.



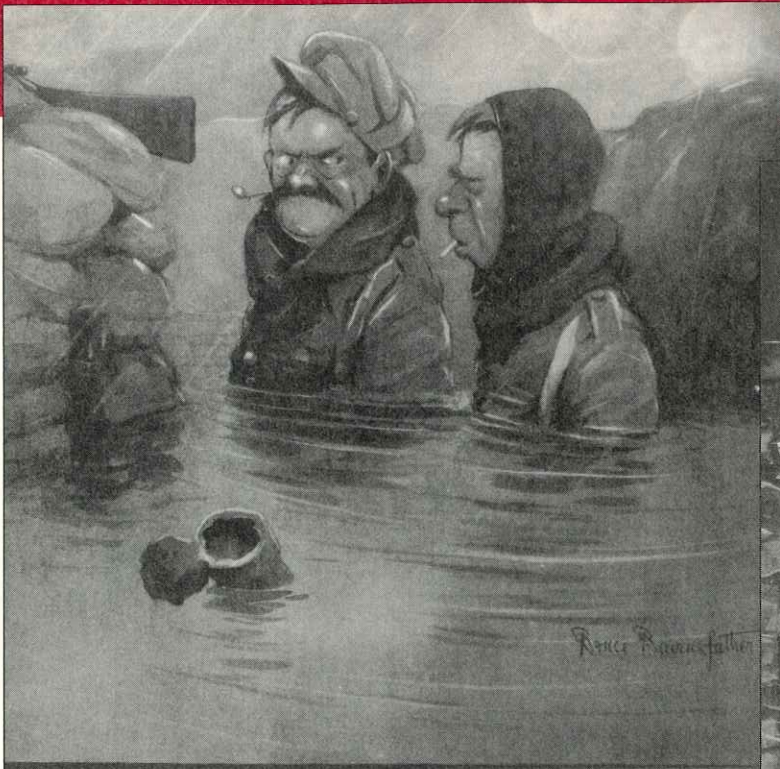
Barbed wire was a constant nuisance, and many ways were devised to deal with it. This English Enfield-mounted cutter worked well in tests on British and French wire, but failed to cut through the German double-strand style.



Generally speaking, the French trenches had the least number of amenities, as their officers, steeped in the philosophy of "the attack" didn't want them to get too comfortable. In the later years of the war some French units mutinied, refusing to leave their lines for what they viewed as senseless slaughter.

strength would be put on alert and given a set of orders and objectives for the raid. The actual raid itself would be prefaced by a "box barrage," which was a way of laying down a cover of artillery fire that would create a veritable wall of exploding shells behind, and to the sides of, the targeted enemy trench. The trench raiders could attack from the open end of the box, across no-man's-land, and access the trenches of the stunned enemy. Raiders were cautioned to leave all personal effects behind as well as most of their equipment save for their rifles and a bandolier of cartridges and perhaps a knife or mace for close combat. In addition to personal effects, raiders also tended to remove all regimental markings and insignia to further frustrate enemy intelligence in case they were captured or killed.

Primary objectives of raids were live prisoners. One prisoner could be a fountain of information to his enemy. In addition to his personal dissemination of information, volumes could be garnered by information generated by captured papers and pay books. Australians made a game of going on



The New Submarine Danger

"They'll be torpedoin' us if we stick 'ere much longer, Bill"

Despite the horrors of the trenches, the human spirit frequently managed to rise above them and find humor in adversity. British Captain Bruce Bairnsfather was the most popular cartoonist of the war, and his work achieved great popularity at home as well as on the front, where the authenticity and irony of the situations was particularly appreciated. Here are two typical examples of his work.

trench raids and commenced a contest to see who could gather the most German unit marked shoulder loops of differing units. (A fantastic display of shoulder boards can be seen at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.)

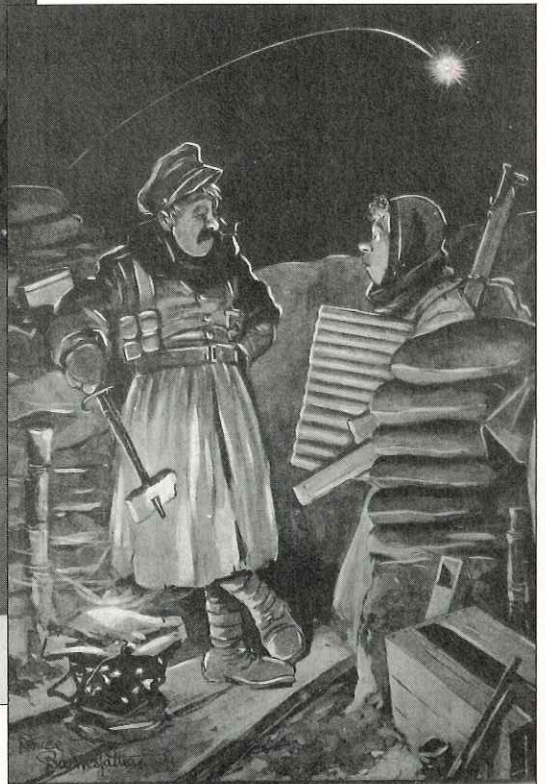
When not filling in sandbags, staking barbed wire, trench raiding, chatting or preparing for the big push, soldiers found what little free time they had was best spent with thoughts, not so much of home and loved ones, but by thoughts of distraction that would temporarily provide an escape from what one soldier termed as "endless stretches of misery and discomfort only broken by moments of sheer terror."

Games of chance were popular with the men of both sides. The Australians introduced a game called "two up," which is still played on ANZAC Day, where two Aussie pennies are tossed up into the air and bets are placed on whether they would land heads, tails or odds. Germans often reported seeing the copper pennies bounding through the air and

catching the glint of the sun, but had no idea as to their significance.

Distractions could hardly help to camouflage the purpose and eventual fate of those who went into the front lines. On both sides men began to resent passes for home as it became too painful to leave loved ones and return to a more than certain fate in the trenches. Movie adaptations of contemporary writings such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Westfront 1918* accurately portray the fatalistic mindset that gripped both sides.

When all was said and done and the guns fell silent on the front, some 20 million soldiers had become casualties in what was and still is considered the most arduous combat ever witnessed by man. The war didn't end with the traditional parade through a conquered capital by the victors but rather an agreement to cease fire ended the hostilities with no clear tactical winner. Only another world war 20 years later would finally settle matters...for the time being.



The Intelligence Department

"Is this 'ere the Warwicks?"
"Nao, 'Indenburg's blinkin' Light Infantry"



A pair of Aussies during a lull in the fighting. In fact, a good deal of the action, especially later in the war, was done at night. Both men are kitted out with "tin hats" (generally hated by the Australians, who much preferred their slouch hats), box respirators, P-08 web gear and bandoliers of .303 ammo.