

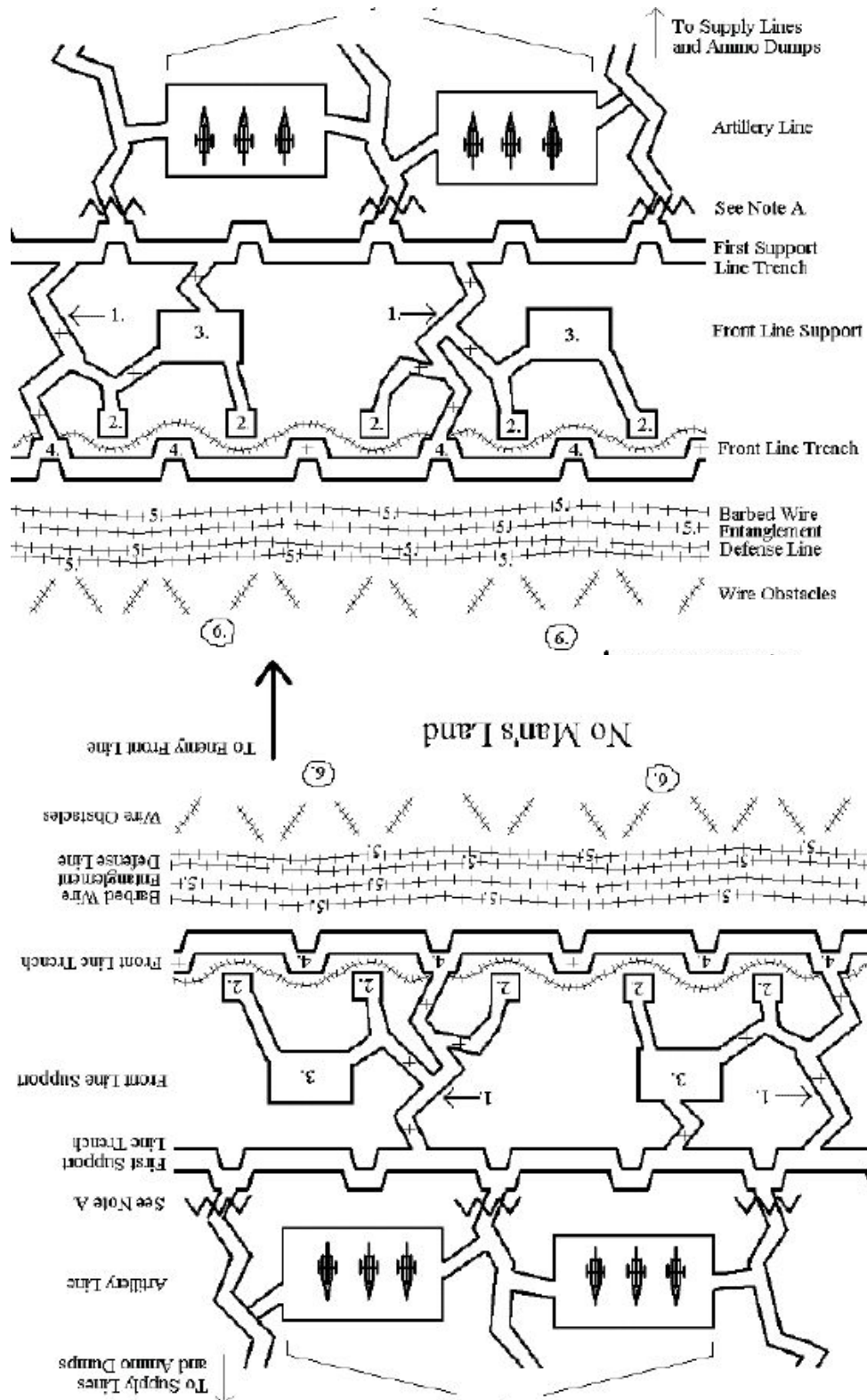


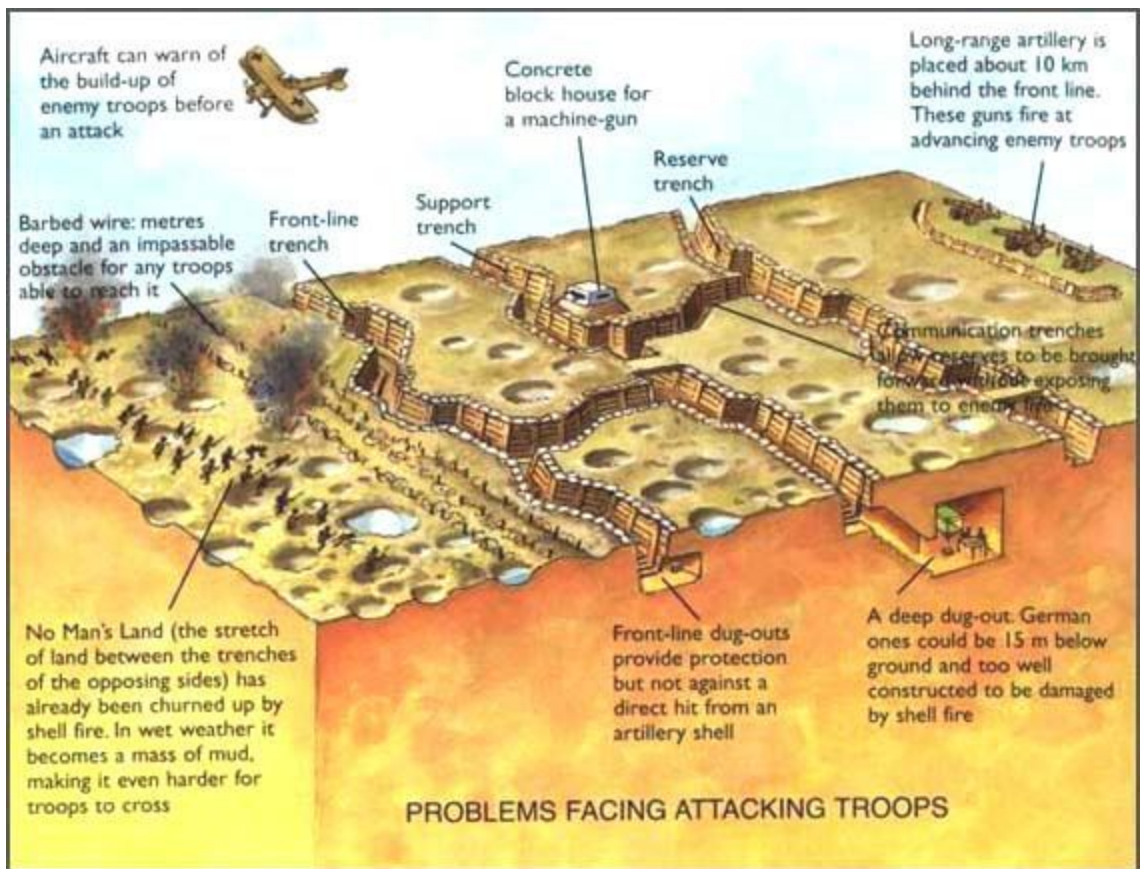
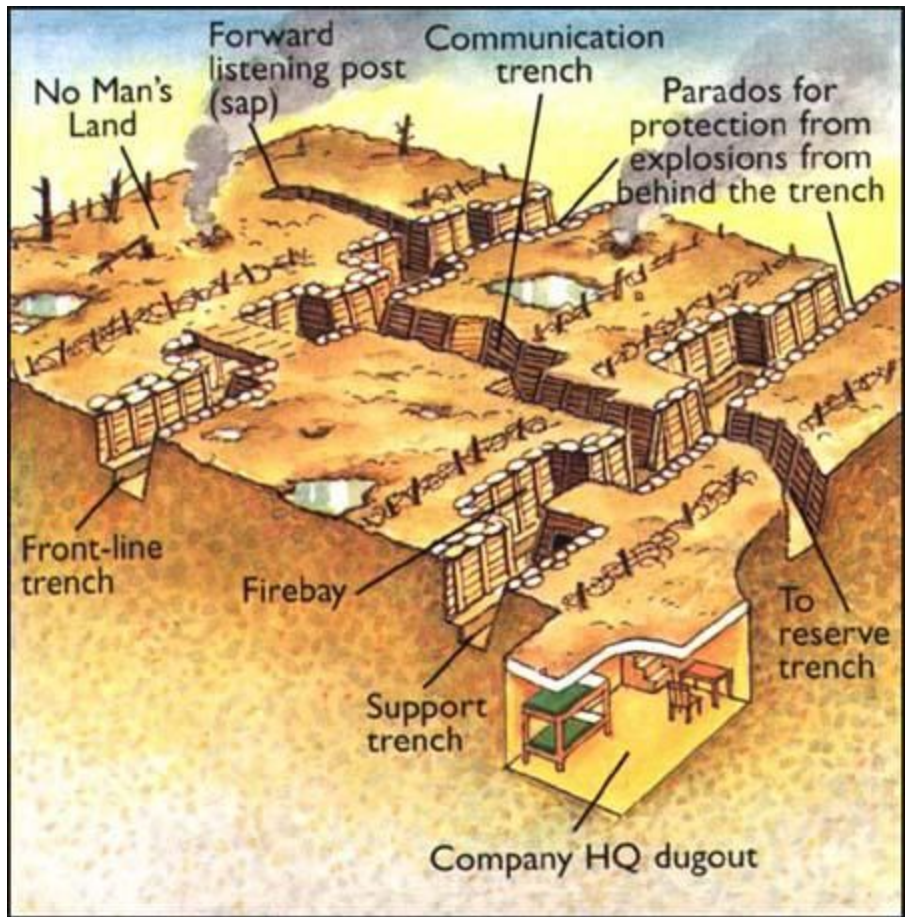
WW1 Trenches: The Heart of Battle

Adopted from: <https://www.historyonthenet.com/ww1-trenches-what-is-a-trench>

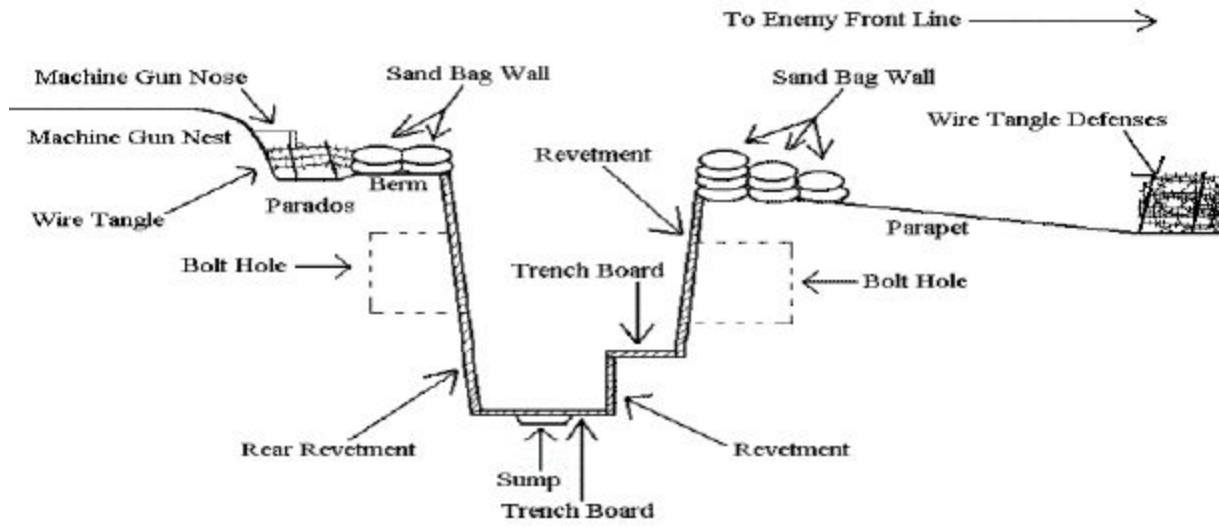
WW1 Trenches: The Central Nervous System of Battle

Trench warfare characterized much of the fighting during World War One, particularly along the Western Front. Trench systems were complicated with many interlinking lines of trenches many times zig-zaging the battlefield.





Front Line Trench Cross Section





Artillery Line

The artillery line was where the big field guns were located. They were used to fire shells at the enemy. The noise from a barrage of guns was deafening.



Communication Trench

The communication trenches were used to move between the front and rear trenches. They were also used to transport injured men to the field hospitals. These trenches ran towards the enemy lines as they connected one line of the trenches to another.



Support Trenches

The support trenches provided a second line of defense in case the front line trench was taken by the enemy. They stood behind the front line trench. They also contained first aid stations and kitchens to ensure men in the front line had medical treatment and hot food.

Bunker



The underground bunkers were used to store food, weapons and artillery. They were also used as command centers and had a telephone link to report information and receive instructions. The underground bunkers also offered the men protection from fire and the elements.

Traverse Trenches



Trenches were not built in straight lines. This was so that if the enemy managed to get into the front line trench they would not have a straight firing line along the trench. Trenches were therefore built with alternating straight and angled lines. The traverse was the name given to the angled parts of the trench.

Machine Gun Nest



The machine gun nest was where the machine guns were located. They were manned by two or three soldiers who fired on any advancing enemy and helped to keep “no mans land” free of advancing enemies.

Front Line Trench



The front line trenches were generally about 8 feet deep and between 4 and 6 feet wide. Soldiers would spend around a week in the front line trench then would spend a week in the rear trenches or a rest camp. Life at the front line was not pleasant; soldiers were liable to be hit by enemy fire or sometimes by their own artillery. The soldier in the picture is standing on a fire-step – built to enable men to see out of the trench and also to climb out to venture into no-man's land.

Barbed Wire



Barbed wire was used extensively in the trench warfare of world war one. It was laid, several rows deep, by both sides to protect the front line trench. Wire breaks were placed at intervals to allow men access to no man's land. However attackers had to locate the wire breaks and many men lost their lives through becoming entangled in the wire and shot.

Listening Post



Listening posts were used to monitor enemy activity. They were usually approximately 30 metres in front of the front line trench. The man in this picture is using a stethoscope to listen to the enemy.

No Man's Land



No Man's Land was the name given to the area between the two lines of trenches. It was the land that both sides were fighting to gain control of.

Sandbags



Sandbags were used to protect the soldiers from enemy rifle fire. They were, however, less effective in the event of shell fire. Sandbags were also sometimes placed in the bottom of the trench to soak up water.

Parapet/Parados



The parapet was the name given to the front wall of the trench – that is, the wall nearest to the enemy. It would often be strengthened with wood and then covered with sandbags. The sandbags protected the heads of the men standing on the fire step from rifle fire. A Parado was the back wall of the trench that was constructed the same as the Parapet.

Bolt Hole/Dug Out



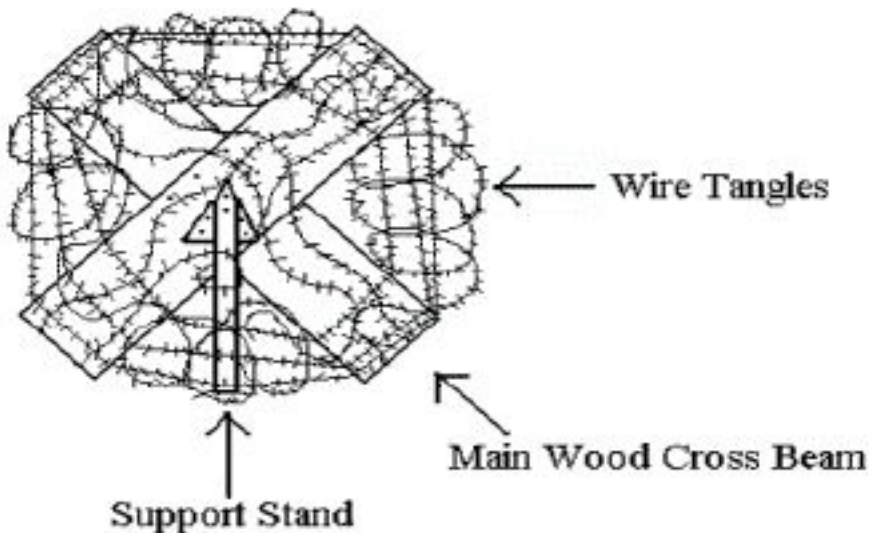
The bolt hole or dug out was built into the sides of the trench. The earth was shored up with wood and the roof often lined with corrugated iron. The men used the bolt hole for protection, eating and sleeping.



Soldiers who spent prolonged periods of time standing in waterlogged trenches were liable to suffer from frostbite and/or trench foot. To prevent trench foot, soldiers were instructed to change their socks frequently, wear waterproof footwear and to cover their feet with whale oil. To keep soldiers out of the accumulating water in some areas

boards were used to keep the water below their feet in what was called a sump.

Trench Block



A trench block was a wood and wire structure that was made to block the trenches and prevent the enemy from advancing through a trench system.