

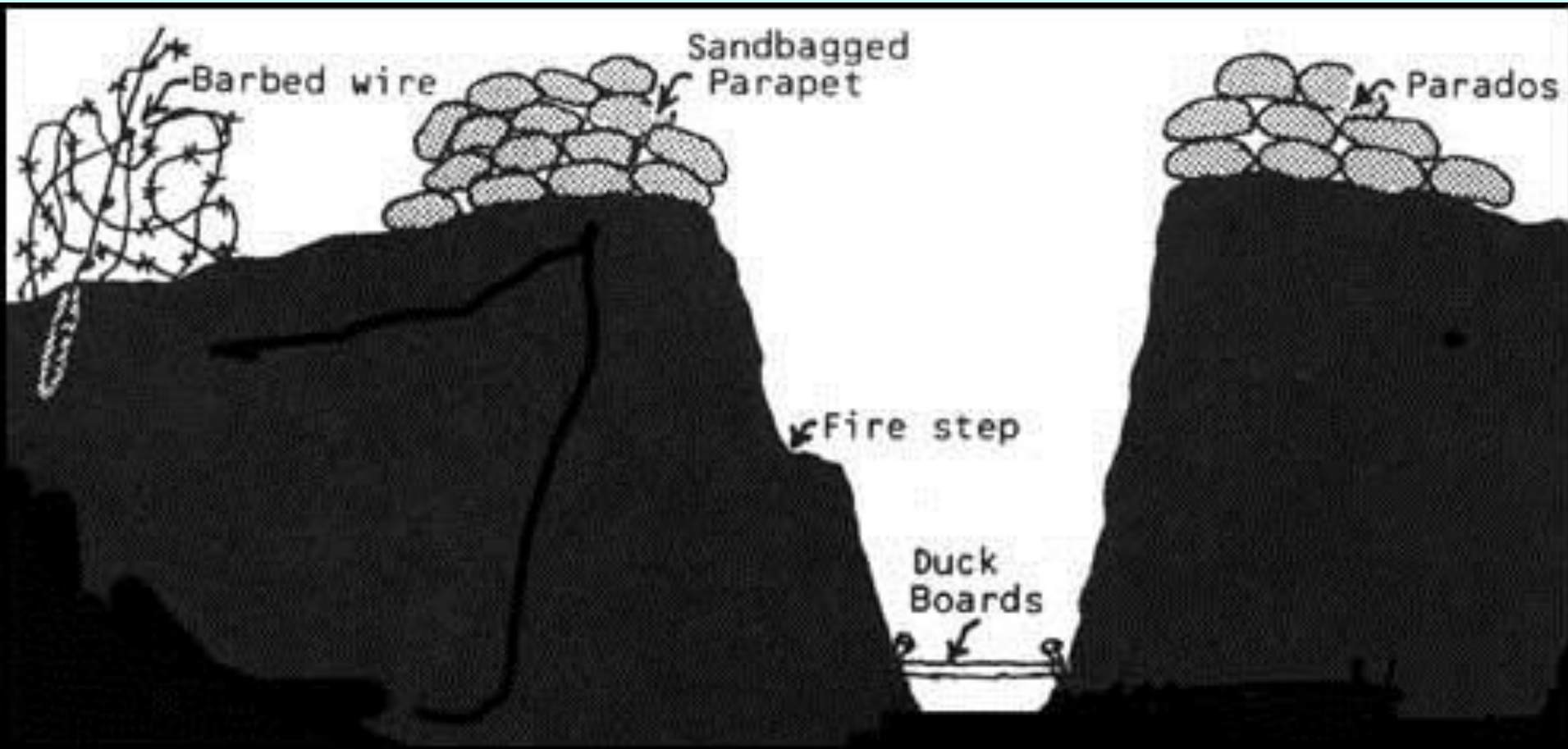
Objective: To examine the horrors of trench warfare.

USHC 5.4



Trench Warfare

Trench Warfare – type of fighting during World War I in which both sides dug trenches protected by mines and barbed wire



Cross-section of a front-line trench

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

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

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

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

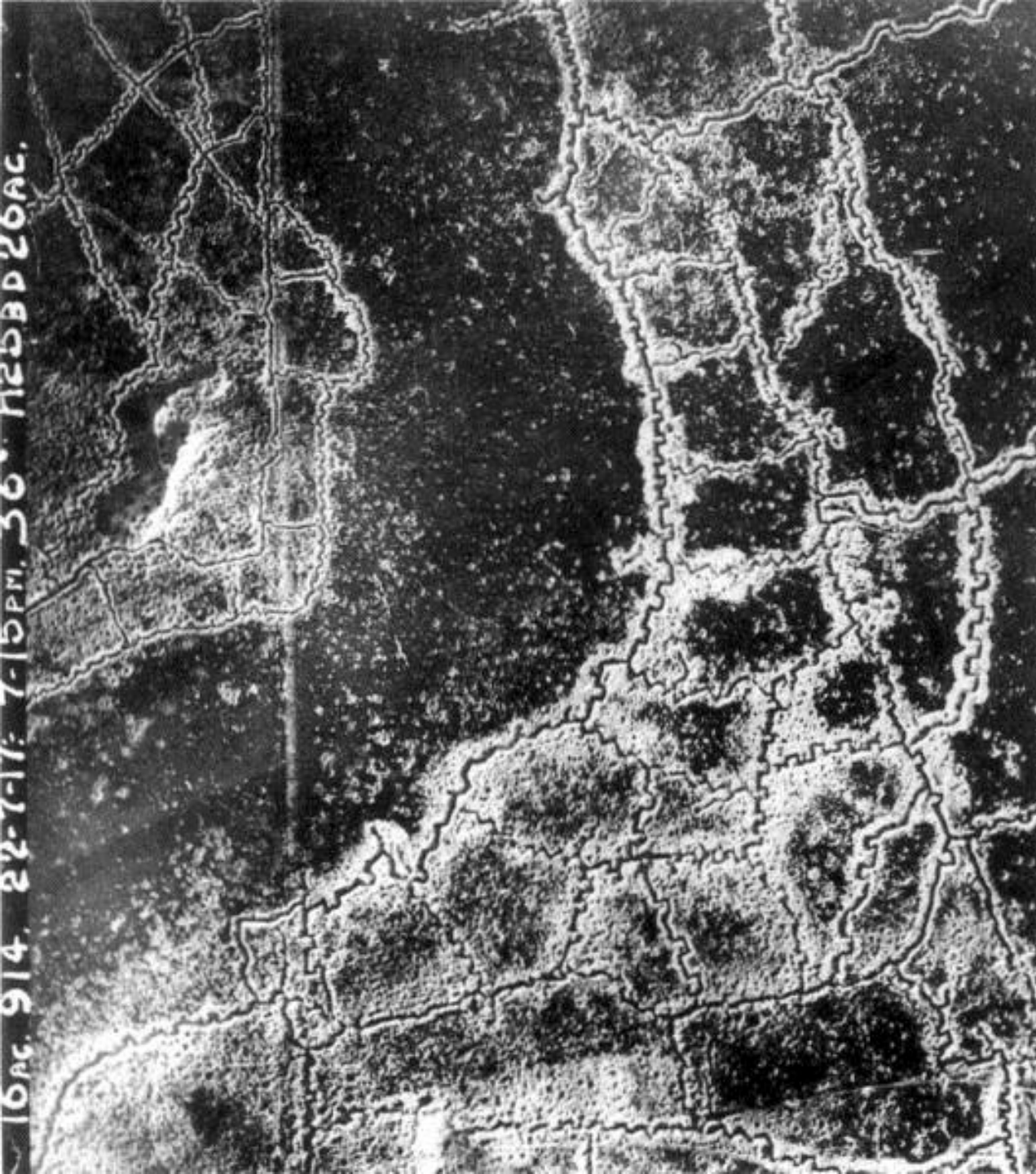
PROBLEMS FACING ATTACKING TROOPS



*British trench, France, July 1916
(during the Battle of the Somme)*



French soldiers firing over their own dead



An aerial photograph of the opposing trenches and no-man's land in Artois, France, July 22, 1917. German trenches are at the right and bottom, British trenches are at the top left. The vertical line to the left of centre indicates the course of a pre-war road.

Trench Rats

Many men killed in the trenches were buried almost where they fell. These corpses, as well as the food scraps that littered the trenches, attracted rats.

Quotes from soldiers fighting in the trenches:

"The rats were huge. They were so big they would eat a wounded man if he couldn't defend himself."

"I saw some rats running from under the dead men's greatcoats, enormous rats, fat with human flesh. My heart pounded as we edged towards one of the bodies. His helmet had rolled off. The man displayed a grimacing face, stripped of flesh; the skull bare, the eyes devoured and from the yawning mouth leapt a rat."



Officers walking through a flooded communication trench.



*A photograph of a man suffering from **trench foot**.*

Dulce Et Decorum Est, by Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of disappointed shells that dropped behind.

GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!-- An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering like a man in fire or lime.--
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,--
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori. (“How fitting and sweet it is to die for one’s
country.”)



*Soldiers digging trenches while protected against **gas attacks***



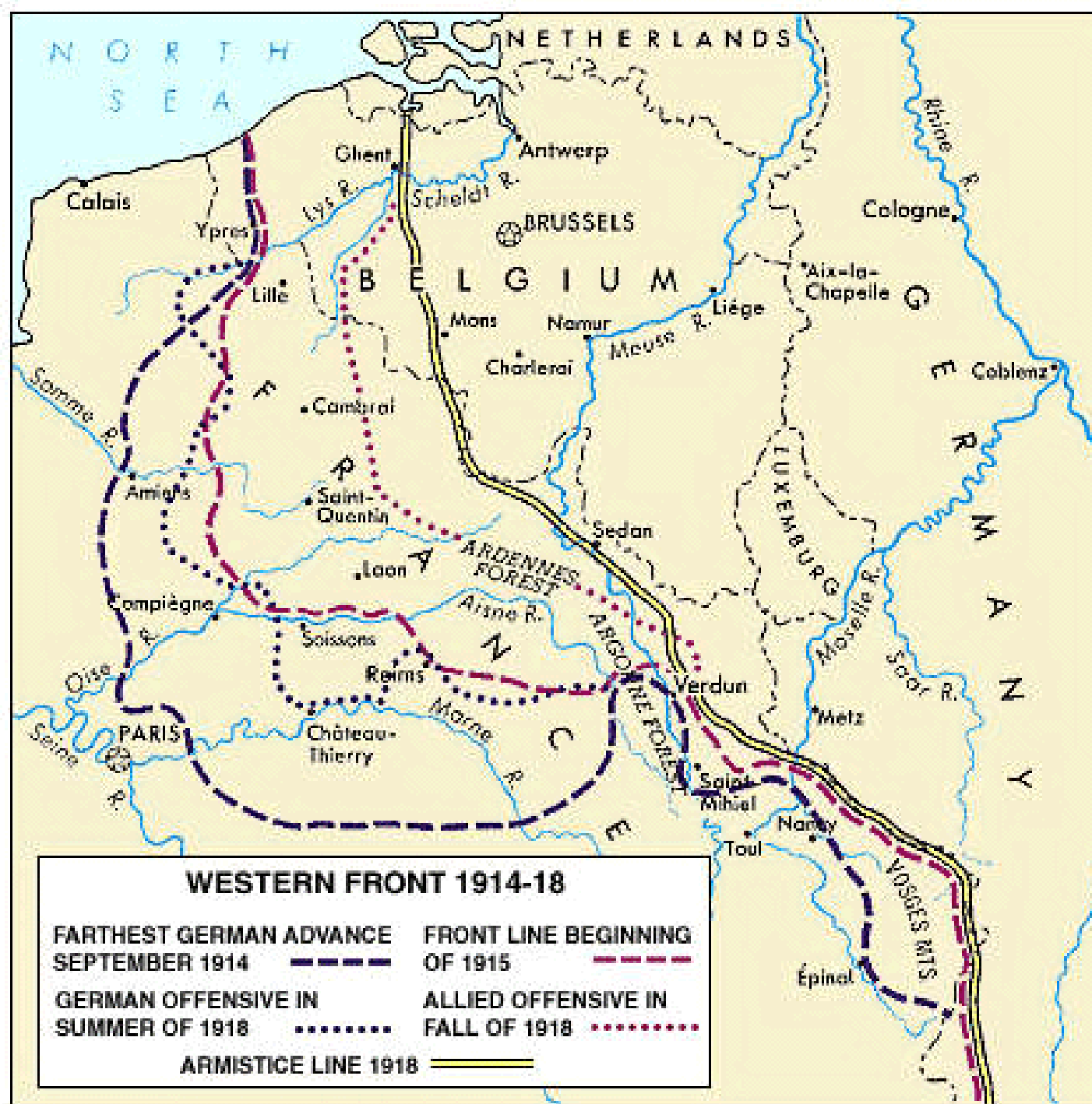
'Gassed'. Painting by John Singer Sargent, 1918/1919.

Poison Gas Deaths: 1914-1918

Country	Non-Fatal	Deaths	Total
British Empire	180,597	8,109	188,706
France	182,000	8,000	190,000
United States	71,345	1,462	72,807
Italy	55,373	4,627	60,000
Russia	419,340	56,000	475,340
Germany	191,000	9,000	200,000
Austria-Hungary	97,000	3,000	100,000
Others	9,000	1,000	10,000
Total	1,205,655	91,198	1,296,853



*British Vickers **machine gun** crew, western front, World War I.*



Western Front – over 400 miles of trenches across Belgium and France

- Most offenses resulted in heavy casualties but gained little territory.

Military Casualties in World War I: 1914-1918

Germany 1,935,000

United States 116,516

Russia 1,700,000

Bulgaria 87,495

France 1,368,000

Belgium 45,550

Austria-Hungary 1,200,000

Serbia 45,000

British Empire 942,135

Greece 23,098

Ottoman Empire 725,000

Portugal 8,145

Italy 680,000

Montenegro 3,000

Romania 300,000

Japan 1,344