

The First World War Stalemate: *The Schlieffen Plan, The Western Front and the wider world*

KEY WORDS

- Outflanked:** Move around the side of an enemy to outwit them.
- Stalemate:** A position where both sides are drawing because no side can make an attack, they are stuck, no one is winning.
- Eastern Front:** The front line to the East of Germany where Austria- Hungary, Germany and Russia fought.
- Western Front:** The front line to the West of Germany where Germany France and Britain fought.
- No man's land:** The land between the trenches.
- Attrition:** Wear away the enemy. Instead of fighting to take enemy lines, they were fighting to take lives, supplies and equipment.
- Counter-attack:** An attack which followed an enemies attack to try and regain land taken.
- Trench Foot:** A painful condition of the foot where it swells and develops open sores because it is wet and cold.
- Shell Shock:** A mental health condition that was caused by constant fear of death, usually occurred after witnessing close friends be killed in terrible ways.
- Bombardment:** A continuous attack with bombs, shells, or other missiles.
- Rifle:** A standard lightweight gun given to all soldiers that was deadly accurate.
- Bayonet:** A 40cm knife attached to the end of the rifle for close combat if a soldier ran out of bullets.
- Artillery:** A large gun that was used to fire bombs over a long distance.
- Shrapnel:** Fragments of a bomb, shell, or other object thrown out by an explosion
- Reconnaissance:** Keeping an eye on what the enemy was doing and spotting artillery.
- Dogfights:** A battle in the air between fighter aeroplanes at close range.
- Zeppelin:** A German airship used for both reconnaissance and dropping bombs.
- Blockade:** Controlling the seas and stopping supplies getting to the enemy, in hope they will starve them to surrender.
- ANZAC troops:** Troops of the British Empire from Australia and New Zealand. Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.
- U-Boats:** AKA submarine. Used under the water to wage war.
- Q- Ships :** Were heavily armed warships disguised as supply ships to trick U-boats.
- Convoy System:** Supply ships sailed close together in large groups protected by warships.

Write an account Question (8 marks)

- 1) Write an account of events that took place during the war at sea.

Factors Question (16 marks + 4 SPaG)

- 1) The resistance of the Allies was the main reason why the Schlieffen Plan failed. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

How do you know Question (4 marks)

- 1) Study Source C. The source supports the French fighting at Verdun. How do you know?

KEY INDIVIDUALS

- Winston Churchill:** Was Britain's Home Secretary in 1910 and took charge of the British Navy in 1911 during the Naval Race with Germany. Had a military background and was seen as a war hero. He led the Gallipoli Campaign.
- Anthony Fokker:** A Dutch aircraft engineer who produced the first fighter aircraft with machine guns in the propellers of aeroplanes.
- General Douglas Haig:** A senior officer of the British Army. Head of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF).
- General Erich von Falkenhayn:** Prussian minister of war and second chief of Germany's General staff (Generals who create plans of attack).
- Marshal Joseph Joffre:** A french General who served as Commander- in- Chief of the French army on the Western Front at the beginning of WW1.
- Admiral Reinhard Scheer:** Commanded the German High Seas Fleet in WW1. He devised the plan for the Battle of Jutland.
- Admiral Sir David Beatty:** British admiral of the fleet, who commanded Britain's battle cruisers at the Battle of Jutland.



Source C: From a British newspaper May 1916; it shows the Kaiser and his son; in the caption Prince Wilhelm says, 'Father, we need a higher pile to see Verdun'.

- Source Type
- Author
- Date
- Purpose



We can see the attackers coming. Our big guns fire, machine guns rattle, rifles crack. They are working their way towards us. They are French, we recognise their helmets. They have already suffered badly before they reach our trench. Our machine gun wipes out a whole line of them, but then it starts to jam, and they move in.

We retreat, and throw grenades at them as we leave. We get to the protection of the support trench and turn to face the enemy.

Our artillery fires furiously, stopping the enemy attack. We counterattack and drive them back through our original trench and beyond it. We are on the heels of our retreating enemy and reach their trenches almost at the same time as they do. But we cannot stay there long and we retreat back to our own position

Source D: Adapted from a book called 'All Quiet on the Western Front' written in 1929 by a German soldier who fought in the trenches.

Source Usefulness Question (8 marks)

- 1) Study Source D and E. How useful are these sources to a historian studying trench warfare? Explain your answer using Sources D and E and your contextual knowledge.

Source E: A painting by the Canadian artist William Barnes, of Canadian troops fighting at the Western Front in May 1915; it shows an attack which left 150 Canadian troops alive.



Key Events Timeline

KEY:

Land – Western Front

Land – Other Fronts

Sea

Air

First aeroplanes in Warfare (1914)

Used mainly for reconnaissance. Later machine guns were fitted to the front of the plane and pilots could take place in dogfights.

The Battle of Jutland (31st May 1914)

The Germans sent out a small number of ships as bait into the North Sea to see if the British went in to attack but there was a larger number of German ships to attack them. A British ship was sunk in 20 minutes, 4 more followed. When the rest of the British fleet got there the German ships sailed North. Fearing another trap the British Navy did not follow.

Japan declare war on Germany (August 1914)

Japan Capture all of Germanys colonies in the Pacific Ocean.

Italy Joins the War (1915)

Italy joins Britain, France and Russia. They fight Austria-Hungary through the Julian Alps between 1915-1917.

North Sea declared a 'war zone' (November 1914)

Ships who enter that area, enter at their own risk. Britain starts a naval blockade of Germany, cutting off their supplies by sea.

The Gallipoli Campaign (February 1915)

The British aims were to capture Constantinople, remove Turkey from war and relieve Russians. Instead when Britain attempted their Naval attacks they found that their were mines in the water so had to change to an attack on land. Turkey who sided with Germany were prepared and waiting for the British and ANZAC troops. In the end the Gallipoli campaign was a massive failure for the British for a variety of reasons including poor planning, heat spreading disease, poor leadership and out of date maps.

Convoy System (April 1917 onwards)

Supply ships sailed close together in large groups protected by warships. **July- August 1917** only 5 of 800 ships bringing supplies to Britain were sunk.

2nd U-Boat Campaign (February 1917)

Germany had over 100 U-Boats. They destroyed 500 supply ships heading for Britain in 8 weeks and by April left Britain with food supplies that would last for only 6 weeks.

Battle of Tannenburg (23rd- 30th August 1914)

Battle of Tannenburg between Germany and Russia. German defeat the Russian Second Army.

The Sinking of the Lusitania (May 1915)

As part of their U-boat campaign, Germany sank a British passenger liner from New York to Liverpool. 1000 passengers drowned including 128 Americans. German scaled back their U-Boat attacks after this.

1915

1917

1914

1st U-Boat Campaign (May 1914 onwards)

Germany sent their U-Boats to attack all ships entering British waters. This was 'unrestricted submarine warfare'. Britain responded with mines and Q-Ships.

The Battle of Marne (5th – 12th September 1914)

Advancing German army stopped before Paris at Battle of Marne. German advance stopped by BEF and French forces, including those sent from Paris in taxi cabs. Germans dig in and four years of trench warfare begins.

Race to the Sea (12th September 1914)

Both sides moved north, trying to outflank each other as they headed to the Channel ports

First Battle of Ypres (October – November 1914)

Allies managed to hold onto the Channel port. 'Slaughter of the Innocents' occurred.

The Schlieffen Plan(3rd August 1914)

Germany declares war on France. Initiates Schlieffen plan..

Battle of Mons (23rd August 1914)

Greatly outnumbered BEF met German army and surprised Germans with 'rapid fire'

Trench warfare begins (12th September 1914)

The first trenches were dug. Technology such as machine guns, artillery and gas were used to try to break the stalemate. Young soldiers live in dirty, unhealthy, frightening trench conditions.

1916

Battle of Verdun (21st February – 18th December 1916)

Germans attempt to inflict crippling losses on French army. Britain responds with action in the Somme.

Battle of the Somme (1st July – 18th November 1916)

Main allied attack on Western front. Over 1m casualties on both sides. Britain lost 20,000 troops in the first day with 60,000 casualties.

Battle of the Passchendaele (July – November 1916)

Also known as the Third Battle of Ypres. Britain and its Empire fought Germany in extreme muddy conditions to gain control of the hills of the south. Britain lost 400,000 soldiers and Germany 300,00 soldiers.

The first tank is used (15th September 1916)

A British invention the tank was bullet proof and could go over rough ground and crush barbed wire. It was first used at the **Battle of the Somme**.

Bomber planes (By 1917)

Aeroplanes were being used to drop bombs on their enemies and their home fronts.

