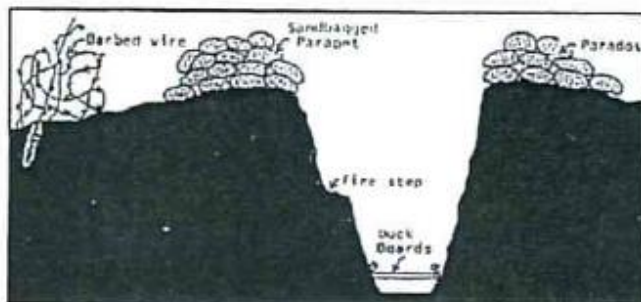


Soldiers in the Trenches in World War I

The weight of clothing, rifle, 100 rounds, trench tools, webbing, the pack, rations and water has been estimated at 55 lbs. This was a minimum. Spare underwear, shaving and washing kit, cigarettes and matches etc. had to be added. Often spare pieces of equipment like flares, periscope and wire cutters would be shared out.

Typically, a battalion would be expected to serve a spell in the front line. This would be followed by a stint spent in support, and then in reserve lines. A period of rest would follow - generally short in duration - before the whole cycle of trench duty would start afresh. In reality the cycle was determined by the necessities of the situation. As an example - and the numbers varied widely - a man might expect in a year to spend some 70 days in the front line, with another 30 in nearby support trenches. A further 120 might be spent in reserve. Only 70 days might be spent at rest. The amount of leave varied, with perhaps two weeks being granted during the year.



What is in a Trench?

Barbed wire: to make running at the trench difficult.
 Sandbagged parapet: to stop the trench collapsing.
 Parados: to stop 'shrapnel' getting into the trench.
 Fire step: to shoot from.
 Duck Boards: stopped the bottom of the trench getting very muddy and slippery.