

Journal #9

Many soldiers fighting in the First World War suffered from trench foot. This was an infection of the feet caused by cold, wet and insanitary conditions. In the trenches men stood for hours on end in waterlogged trenches without being able to remove wet socks or boots. The feet would gradually go numb and the skin would turn red or blue. If untreated, trench foot could turn gangrenous and result in amputation.



Propaganda came of age during World War One. It had been used in the past, but now it was much more powerful. Thinking of total war and “war as politics by other means”, explain if propaganda should be used as a weapon of war.

Letter

Sergeant Harry Roberts, Lancashire Fusiliers, interviewed after the war.

If you have never had trench feet described to you. I will tell you. Your feet swell to two or three times their normal size and go completely dead. You could stick a bayonet into them and not feel a thing. If you are fortunate enough not to lose your feet and the swelling begins to go down. It is then that the intolerable, indescribable agony begins. I have heard men cry and even scream with the pain and many had to have their feet and legs amputated.

1. How could trench foot be a problem?
2. Whose fault is it that it happens? **Explain.**
3. Why do you suppose that the incidents of trench foot decreased as the war went on?

Vocabulary

Fini Kaput: Gone, finished, *napoo*. From French *finis* and German *kaput* (done for).

Foot-Slogger: British infantryman. Eighteenth century term originally used by cavalrymen. *Foot slogging* is marching.

Go up: To go up the line into the trenches.

Napoo: Gone, finished. From French *i'l n'y en a plus*, there is no more.

Nix: Nothing, no. From German *nichts*.

Number nine: Sick. The British army's No.9 was a laxative pill. Handed out indiscriminately by the MO, but especially to those men who were classified M&D (medicine & duty) or NYD (not yet diagnosed).

On the peg: Under arrest or on charge