

# Medicine topic 5a knowledge organiser: Key question: What was the Western Front and why was it hard to treat the wounded?

## Lesson 1: How had medical breakthroughs helped treatment in the Western Front?

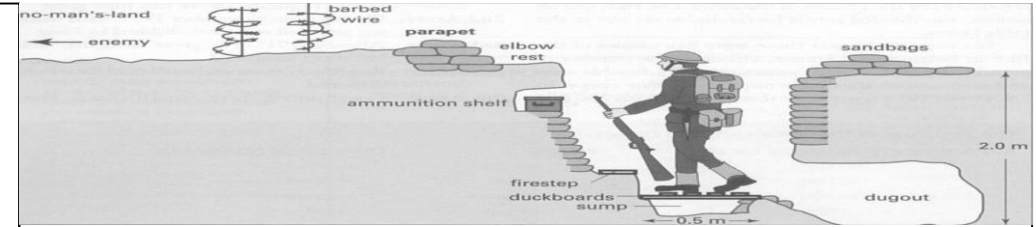
### Key words for this lesson:

**Steam sterilisation:** Steam cleaning equipment

**Universal blood group:** Can be given to a person in any blood group

**Radiology department:** In a hospital where X-Rays are carried out

**Core knowledge:** **Xrays:** First used to locate a needle in a woman's hand. Problems with X-Rays: Health risks, radiation levels were 1,500 times stronger than those today, so patients could lose hair or suffer burns. Glass tubes were fragile and they were unmovable. **Blood transfusions:** James Blundell did the first experiments on human to human blood transfusions. Karl Landsteiner discovered blood groups in 1901, e.g. A,B,AB and O, and O was the universal blood group. This meant donor and patients could be matched but blood could not yet be stored so had to be used straight away. **Aseptic Surgery:** Joseph Lister: By 1900 most operations were carried out using these methods. It had a huge impact on reducing infection in surgery Aseptic Surgery included: All medical equipment was steam sterilised whilst the room was air sterilised to kill germs. All medical staff had to wash before entering the surgery and wore clean gowns and rubber gloves.



## Lesson 2: The Western Front (WW1 was 1914-1918.)

### Key words for this lesson:

**Terrain:** The land that people were fighting on

**Salient:** An area of battlefield that extends into enemy territory, surrounded by the enemy.

**Creeping barrage:** Artillery attacks followed by advances by the military

**Core knowledge:** The main WW1 fighting took place in trenches on the Western Front in Belgium & France. **First Battle of Ypres:** The British needed to stop the Germans capturing the ports. Mines were dug and explosives used at Hill 60 to blow the German occupied hill up. **Second Battle of Ypres:** In 1915 the Germans used chlorine gas for the first time. **Third Battle of Ypres:** The mud was so waterlogged it was referred to as 'liquid mud.' **Battle of the Somme (1916):** 57,000 casualties and 20,000 dead British soldiers on the first day alone. **Arras:** tunnels were dug. **Cambrai (1917),** the British used tanks on a large scale for the 1st time.

## Lesson 3: The system of trenches

### Key words for this lesson:

**Front line trench:** Where the main attacks were based out of this world

**Artillery:** The heavy weapons that were fired at the enemy trenches

**No man's land:** The land between the opposing lines of trenches



**Core knowledge:** **Support trench:** 80 meters behind the front line trench. **Reserve trench:** Where reserve soldiers were. The trenches were connected by **communications trenches.** Soldiers would use dugouts to shelter from the artillery. It was hard to move around trenches as they were narrow & built in **zig zags.**

## Lesson 4: Infection, communication and transportation

### Key words for this lesson:

**Terrain:** The land/ conditions that the soldiers were fighting on

**BEF:** British Expeditionary Force: The soldiers sent from Britain to fight

**Stretcher Bearers:** They carried the wounded soldiers to safety

**Core knowledge:** It was hard to transport the wounded as the artillery had caused holes in the ground & the trenches were narrow & in zig zag patterns. Infection was common as trenches were dug in fields previously fertilized with animal manure. Horses were used to transport the wounded but then a campaign from the Daily Telegraph saw the introduction of motorised ambulances. Soldiers could be evacuated slowly and more comfortably to hospitals by canal or more quickly by train.



## Lesson 5 The nature of injuries on the Western Front

### Key words for this lesson:

**Trench foot:** Swelling in the feet caused by the damp conditions

**Shrapnel:** Metal fragments that scattered out of shells.

**Trench fever:** Flu like symptoms caused by lice

**Shell shock:** Psychological condition, flashbacks, headaches and nightmares.

Injuries were caused by artillery and machine guns. The introduction of the Brodie Helmet reduced the amount of head injuries. They tried to prevent **trench foot** with whale fat. **Trench fever,** as it was caused by lice, meant people needed delousing.

**Shell shock** was not properly understood at the time. The main infection caused by shrapnel was **gas gangrene,** which spread through the body quickly, potentially killing in a day.