

Intro Question -

- A conflict is about to begin. You are the leader of a country and must choose between two opposing countries:
 - One country is weaker militarily, but has a large empire and is led by your cousin.
 - The other country is stronger militarily and is close to your borders.
- With which country do you support and why?

Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia

- Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia were cousins.
- But, Germany was allied with Austria-Hungary and Russia is allied with Serbia.
- So: stick to your alliance or choose your family?

The war that may never have been -



Kaiser Willy

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“I now receive authentic news of serious preparations for war on my Eastern frontier. Responsibility for the safety of my empire forces preventive measures of defence upon me. In my endeavours to maintain the peace of the world I have gone to the utmost limit possible. . . . My friendship for you and your empire, transmitted to me by my grandfather on his deathbed has always been sacred to me and I have honestly often backed up Russia when she was in serious trouble especially in her last war. The peace of Europe may still be maintained by you, if Russia will agree to stop the milit[ary] measures which must threaten Germany and Austro-Hungary. Willy.”



Tsar Nicky

[@king_tsar_nicky7](#)

“We are far from wishing war. As long as the negotiations with Austria on Serbia’s account are taking place my troops shall not make any *provocative* action. I give you my solemn word for this. I put all my trust in Gods mercy and hope in your successful mediation in Vienna for the welfare of our countries and for the peace of Europe. Your affectionate Nicky.”

The war that may never have been



Kaiser Willy

@_wilhelm25

“suspend every war measure against Austria-Hungary and ourselves.”



Tsar Nicky

@king_tsar_nicky7

“Understand you are obliged to mobilise but wish to have the same guarantee from you as I gave you, that these measures **do not** mean war and that we shall continue negotiating for the benefit of our countries and universal peace dear to all our hearts. Our long proved friendship must succeed, with God’s help, in avoiding bloodshed. Anxiously, full of confidence await your answer. Nicky.”



Kaiser Willy

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Farewell cousin.

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Europe Plunges into War

The Schlieffen Plan

- General Alfred Graf von Schlieffen of Germany
- 1905: Devised a strategy that would be able to counter a joint attack (war on two fronts)

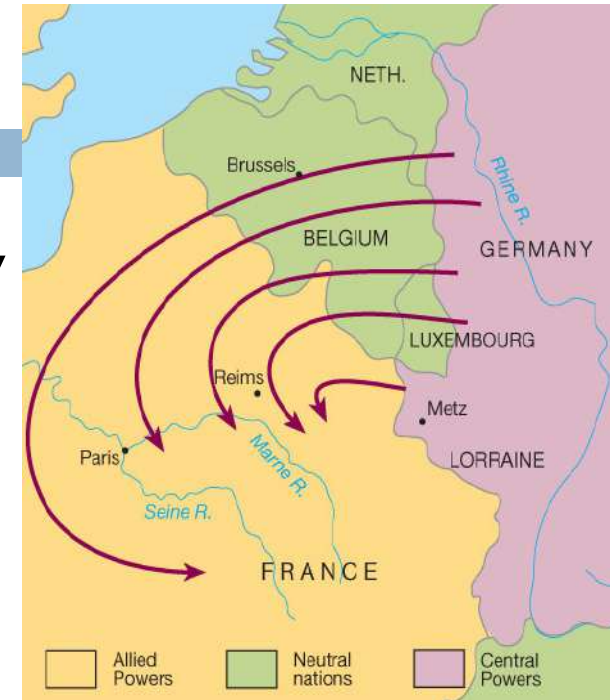
1. Quickly get through the Belgian lowlands to Paris and capture France

- Thought Russia would need time to help.

- Important to force France to surrender before Russia was ready.

2. German armies would help defeat the Russians

3. After the defeat, France & Russia would be unwilling to keep fighting



The Schlieffen Plan

- Aug. 2nd, 1914: Schlieffen Plan put into operation.
 - German Army invaded Luxembourg & Belgium
 - Germans were held up by the Belgian Army.
 - Surprised by how quickly the British reached France and Belgium.
 - Shocked by the Russian army's advance toward Germany.



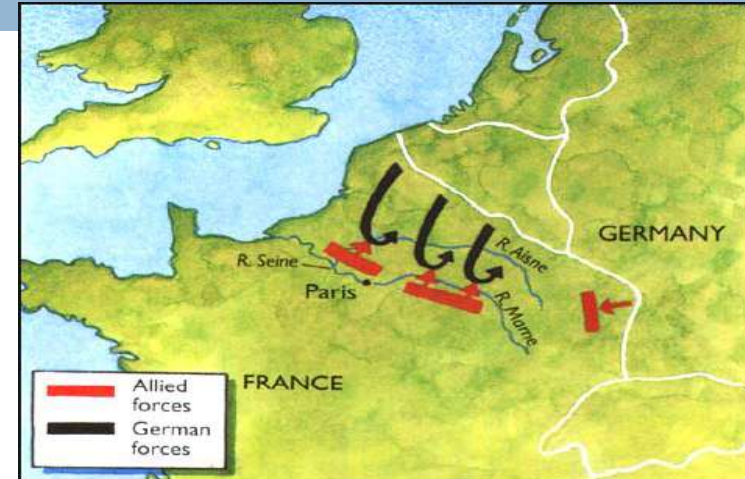
Western Front

- Deadlocked region in northern France.

- German forces were unable to break through Allied lines.

- 1st Battle of the Marne

- 1st major clash
- **Germany was forced to retreat.**
- British & French forces were able to cross the Marne.
- Most important event of the war
 - Defeat of Germans and left Schlieffen Plan in ruins

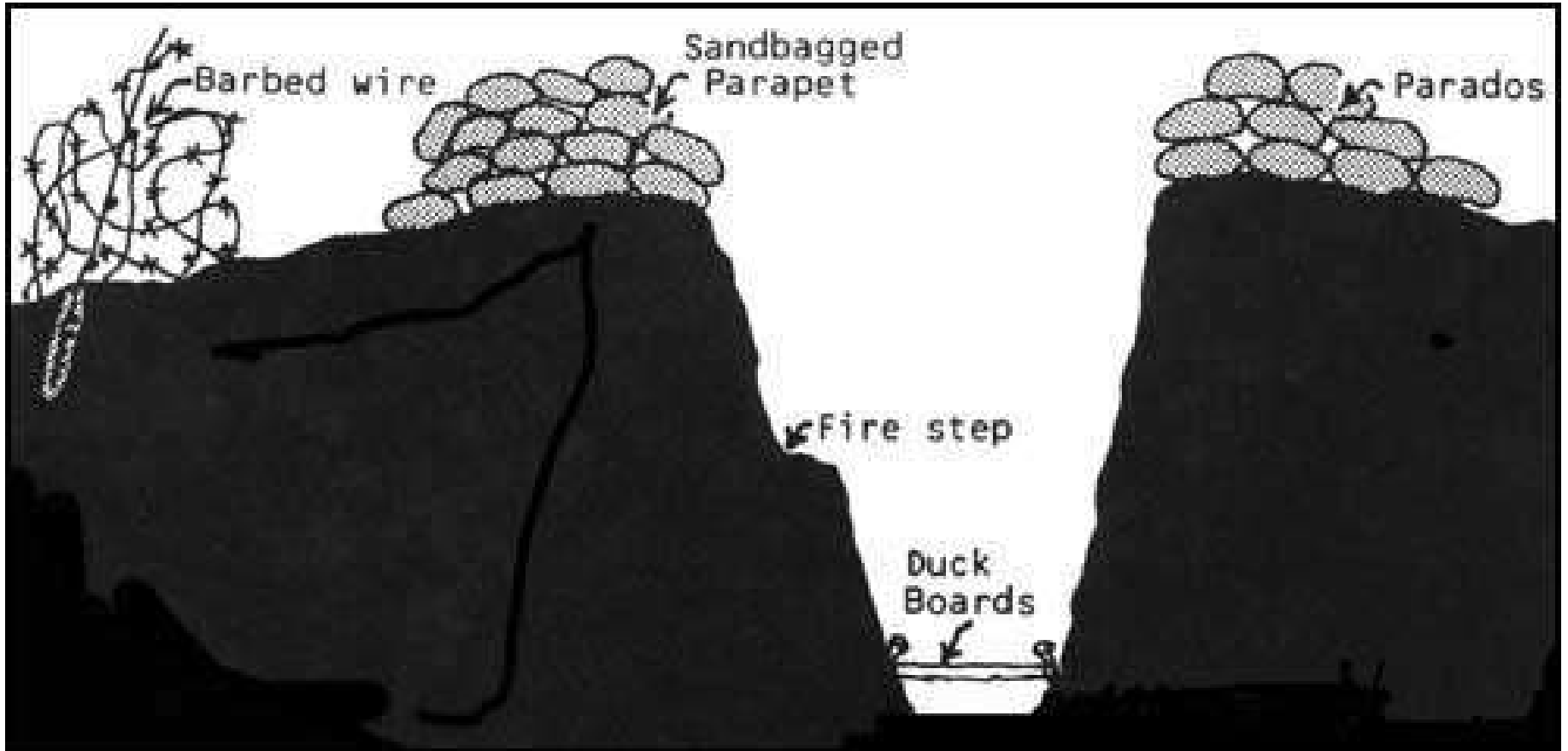


Western Front



- Germany had to fight a war on 2 fronts
 - Germany sent thousands of troops from France to aid forces in the east
 - War in the west became a stalemate
- Early 1915: Trench warfare
 - Dug miles of trenches to protect themselves from enemy fire
 - Germans were 1st to decide where to dig & chose the higher ground
 - Gave the Germans a tactical advantage
 - Forced the British & French to live in the worst conditions
 - Usually found water 2-3 ft below surface
 - Never-ending struggle against water and mud in trenches.
 - Duck-boards were placed at the bottom to protect soldiers feet

Trench Design



Trench Warfare

- A** Front line trench
- B** Support trench
- C** Reserve trench
- D** Enemy trench

Artillery fire "softened up" resistance before an infantry attack.

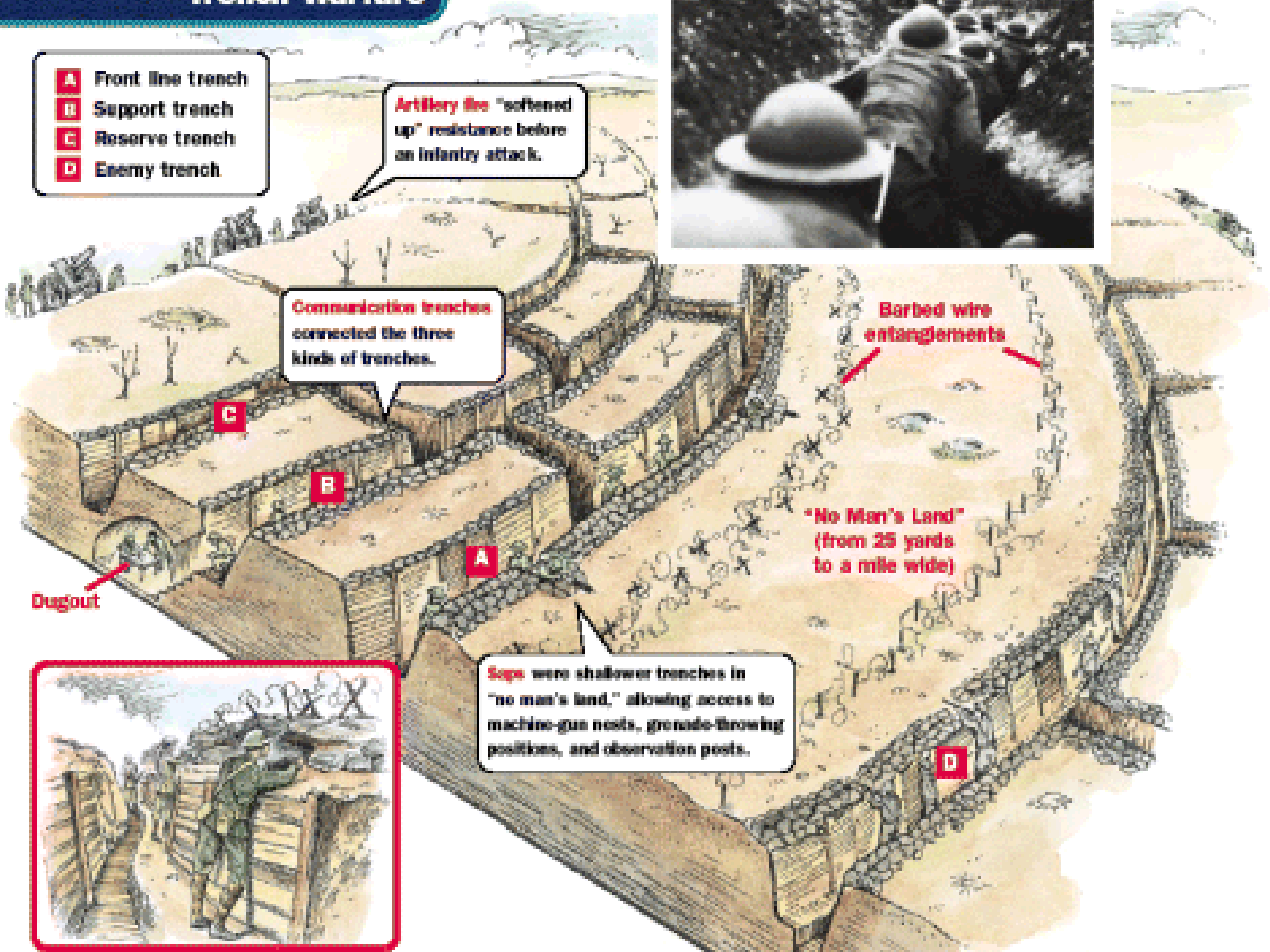
Communication trenches connected the three kinds of trenches.

Barbed wire entanglements

"No Man's Land"
(from 25 yards to a mile wide)

Saps were shallower trenches in "no man's land," allowing access to machine-gun nests, grenade-throwing positions, and observation posts.

Dugout



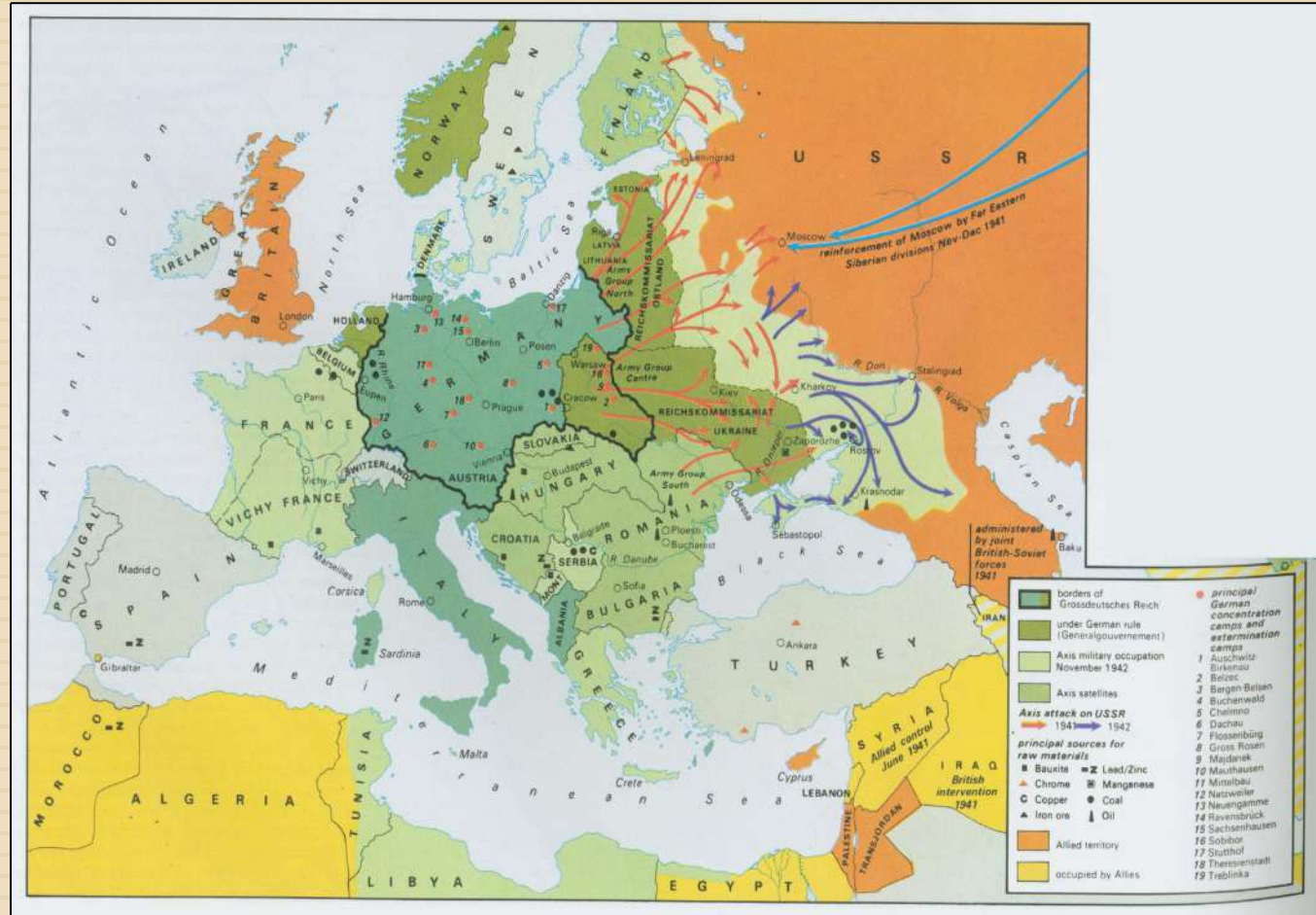


II) A Bloody Stalemate Along the Western Front

- Life in the trenches was misery. Men slept, washed, ate in mud along with rats.
 - ▣ Dealt with rats, lice, and trench foot.
- The land between the trenches became known as “no man’s land” where soldiers blew a whistle and ordered the men “over the top”, usually to their death.

II) A Bloody Stalemate Along the Western Front

- Despite major battles, new weapons (machine guns, poison gas, tanks, larger artillery) neither side advances.
- The **slaughter reached its peak in 1916** when in February the Germans launched a massive attack near **Verdun**, with both sides losing more than **300,000 men**.
- The British counter attacked in July in the Valley of the **Somme River**, and by November **each side had over a 1/2 million casualties**.



Battle on the Eastern Front

The Eastern Front was a stretch of battlefield along the German & Russian border. Here, Russians & Serbs battled Germans, Austrians & Turks

Eastern Front



□ Russia

- One asset: population
- Suffered huge battlefield losses
 - 1915: More than 2 million Russian soldiers killed, wounded, or captured
 - Army continually rebuilt its ranks from the population
- Managed to tie up hundreds of thousands of German troops on Eastern Front
 - Prevented the Germans from launching its full fighting force in the west