

Name
Hour

OVER THE TOP
An Interactive Story

http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/overtop/index_e.html



Directions: Go to the website http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/games/overtop/index_e.shtml . Scroll down the page until you see the Begin your adventure link. Click that and begin your adventure. If your game ends, choose the restart from last chapter button and continue from where it takes you. Keep playing until you make it all the way through the war. Once you have survived the war answer the questions below.

Questions about the story

- 1) What reason does the main character give for having volunteered to join the army? What reasons can you provide to explain the willingness of hundreds of thousands of young men to enlist during the First World War and fight overseas? Do men and women today join armed forces for the same reasons? Would those reasons change in a time of war?

- 2) When soldiers were not fighting in battles, how did they pass the time? From the passages in the story, outline a “typical day” of a soldier in the trenches.

- 3) What are some of the main character’s concerns prior to going on sentry duty? How does he deal with his anxiety?

- 4) What is a “trench raid” and what incentives are offered to soldiers to take part in them? Why are these necessary? What is a “billet” and how do you explain its’ appeal to front-line fighters?

- 5) How are German soldiers described in the story? Are they better or worse off than the main character’s group living in the opposite trenches?

- 6) What techniques do the main characters in the story use to approach and enter the German lines during the night trench raid? What techniques do they then use to return to their own lines?
- 7) What is the purpose of a “sap”? What are the worst fears of the main character when tunneling near the enemy’s trenches? Why does Corporal Hunter suddenly order the men to leave the tunnel?
- 8) How do the Germans launch their attack against the characters group? How do they defend themselves against this attack? Which side has won the battle?
- 9) How hazardous was it to live and fight in the trenches of the First World War? After reading the story, make a list of the types of dangers that soldiers faced while fighting in the trenches.
- 10) What has the main character accomplished over two days of fighting in the trenches? What do you think will happen the next day?



Over the Top - Glossary

"All Safe": a signal, given by siren, to announce that it is now safe to remove one's gas mask after a gas attack.

Artillery: weapon used to fire very large projectiles. Howitzers, guns and mortars are types of artillery. Popularly known as cannons.

Bayonet: steel blade, shaped like a short sword that is fixed at the end of a rifle and used for hand-to-hand combat.

Billet: a place that is designated for soldiers to receive food and shelter.

Bully beef: from the French word bouilli, meaning boiled. Meat that is pickled or canned, usually corned beef.

Communication wire: type of wire used for establishing telephone connections between posts.

Company: a unit of soldiers, normally consisting of 100 men.

Cocked: to "cock" a rifle means to draw back the hammer to prepare it for firing.

Decoration: a badge of honor; a medal awarded for bravery.

Duck-boards: floor sections made of wooden slats which can be laid on wet, muddy or cold surfaces.

Dugout: shelter dug on the side of a trench, in the ground, used as living quarters, for storage of supplies or for protection.

Firesteps: narrow ledge, located inside a trench that allows soldiers to see over the parapet.

Fritz: nickname used by Allied soldiers to describe Germans.

Gas mask: cloth and/or rubber mask connected to an air filter and used to protect the face and lungs from poison gases.

HQ: short form for "Headquarters"; a place from which military commanders perform their duties.

Home leave: permission given to soldiers to go home for an extended period of time.

Jerry: nickname used by Allied soldiers to describe Germans.

Kaiser: German word meaning "emperor". During the First World War, the Kaiser of Germany was Wilhelm II.

Lice: plural form of "louse"; a small, flat, wingless insect that lives off the blood of its host.

Lip: as in "crater's lip"; the edge of a large hole.

Lollygagging: to waste time.

Mortar: a type of cannon used to fire projectiles at high angles.

No Man's Land: the narrow, muddy, treeless stretch of land, characterized by numerous shell holes that separated German and Allied trenches during the First World War. Being in No Man's Land was considered very dangerous since it offered little or no protection for soldiers.

Parapet: the inner wall of a trench made of earth and wood and topped with sandbags, to protect soldiers.

Platoon: a unit of soldiers, normally consisting of 50 men.

Poison gas: type of gas which gives off a poisonous vapor, designed to kill, injure or disable a soldier by inhalation or contact.

Puttees: cloth strip made of wool and wrapped around the leg, from ankle to knee, to prevent trousers from being torn or soiled.

Sap: a tunnel within a trench, dug to a point beneath the enemy's trenches.

Sector: a portion or division of a large military area.

Shell: an artillery projectile containing an explosive bursting charge.

Sniper: a soldier, armed with a rifle and usually well hidden, who shoots at exposed individuals of an enemy's forces.

"Stand Down": permission given to soldiers to leave their defensive positions when an attack by the enemy is deemed unlikely.

Stick grenade: German hand grenade; small, metal container, attached to a stick, which explodes after it is thrown.

Tommy: nickname used by German soldiers to describe British (and Canadian) soldiers.

Trench: a long, deep and narrow hole in the ground, with the earth thrown up in front, dug to protect soldiers from bullets and other projectiles.

Webbing: a type of military back-pack made of sturdy canvas and containing numerous pouches for carrying the ammunition, water bottle, bayonet food, clothing and personal belongings of a soldier.

Western Front: the area of military operations during the First World War which ran from Belgium, through northern France, and to the Swiss border.

Work detail: a specific task assigned to an individual or group, usually entailing physical labor.