New Weapons and Trench Warfare Notes

World War I – Modern Warfare
• World War I was the first “modern war”
• New Weapons:
  – Grenades,
  – Airplanes
  – Machine guns
  – Barbed wire
  – Submarines
  – Poison gas

Poison Gas
• Germany introduced poisonous gas
• Soldiers were issued gas masks for survival
• Being gassed could leave you blind or dead

Trench Warfare
• One of the most and distinctly unique ideas for WWI was the use of fighting in trenches
• Trench Warfare – type of fighting during World War I in which both sides dug trenches protected by mines and barbed wire
• Most trenches were 4-6 feet deep and 4-8 feet wide
• The SHOVEL was the most important tool you received as a soldier
  o Many times trenches collapsed or were destroyed by grenades and had to be dug again.
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• Trenches were sometimes very close. Even close enough to hear the enemy through the trench walls.

“Over the Top”
• When your commanding officer said “over the top” the soldier had to come out of the trench and travel across “no man’s land”
• A soldier had about a 30 second life expectancy in “No Man’s Land”
• It was hard to make it through barbwire with bullets flying
Fighting in trenches led to disease, trench foot, and miserable conditions for the soldiers.

British Trench, France, July 1916 (During the Battle of the Somme)

Cross Section of a Front Line Trench