



## **The Life they Didn't Know**

### **Surviving on the Western Front**

Use the activities on Surviving the Western Front to think about themselves in the position of new recruits on the Western Front 1914-18

#### **PSHE**

1. c) to face new challenges positively by collecting information, looking for help, making responsible choices and taking action
2. b) why and how rules and laws are made and enforced, why different rules are needed in different situations

#### **Art**

1. b) question and make thoughtful observations about starting points and select ideas to follow up in their work

#### **History**

3. b) to ask and answer, and to select and record information to relevant to the focus of the enquiry

#### **IT**

2. a) to develop and refine ideas by bringing together, organising text, tables, images and sound as appropriate (for example desktop publishing.....)

#### **The Western Front**

Our High Spen heroes, Fred and Tom both went to war on the Western Front. This was where the British army did most of its fighting during the First World War.

The British fought alongside the French and Belgium armies against the Germans. Terrible weapons like artillery, machine guns, barbed wire and gas caused so many deaths and injuries that both sides dug into the ground like moles for protection.

By early 1915 they had built incredible lines of trenches that ran from the coast of Belgium in the north to the borders of Switzerland in the south. For the next four years millions of soldiers faced each other across No Man's Land, the narrow strip of ground that separated the two enemies.

#### **Staying Alive**

Army life on the Western Front was tough and dangerous. Conditions in the trenches were often very bad and making a mistake could be fatal! The best thing a new recruit could do was take advice from a veteran, an experienced soldier like 'Old Bill' you can see in the cartoon.



## Activity



Here is a list of Old Bill's best tips for a comfortable life in the army – and staying alive.

Don't annoy the Sergeant by playing the fool, he can make your little life a misery. Learn to march in a straight line and keep him happy.

Your rifle is your best friend. Keep it clean and keep it loaded. Learn to shoot straight and fast.

If there are tanks about, stay behind them. The drivers can't see a bloomin' thing.

Keep your head down in the trenches – if you don't want it shot off. Don't poke your head over the parapet, there's always a sniper about. Use a trench periscope if you want to gawp about.

Make yourself a nice cosy dug out (a hole or shelter in the trench wall). It won't keep the bloomin' mud out but it might keep you alive.

An artillery barrage isn't a flippin' firework party. Don't stand there starin', get in your dug-out quick. Remember it not just the German whizz-bangs (shells), you've got to worry about. Look out for our own fallin' short too.

If you can't find your gas mask wee on a big hankey and wrap that round your mouth and nose. What's your problem with that mate? It's your wee!

If you are on a night-time raid and Jerry sends up a flare – FREEZE LIKE A RABBIT. Don't move a muscle and hope no-body sees you.

Now design a six page '[Survival Guide for New Soldiers](#),' including a cover and index page

Begin by looking at the First War image gallery and choose one or two photographs to illustrate each of Old Bills 'tips'. Two tips and two or three photos on each page would be good.

Next cut and paste the tips and the photos so they are next to each other. Play with the layout until you are happy with the order, font size and layout.

Put your tips and images in the order you think most important. Be ready to explain your choice.

Remember these handy keyboard short cuts to save you time

Ctrl X = cut

Ctrl C = copy

Ctrl V = paste



Finally design the cover, scanning your own drawings or using one of the photographs. And don't forget the index. It should have about 15 entries.