2.8 Trench Foot, Trench Fever and Frostbite: Illness on the Western Front: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Give one immediate symptom soldiers suffered when taken ill with trench fever.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Name one prevention measure introduced to reduce trench foot among British soldiers.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

3 Name the wooden strips placed in trenches to help men keep their feet out of standing water.

(Total for Question 3 is 1 mark)

4 Give one treatment or first-aid response used when a soldier showed early signs of trench foot.

(Total for Question 4 is 1 mark)

5 State two ways delousing reduced the spread of trench fever.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

6 State two ways that standing water and mud in the trenches contributed to frostbite and trench foot.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

7 Give the term for the severe tissue death that could result from untreated trench foot or frostbite.

(Total for Question 7 is 1 mark)

8 State two ways that tight boots increased the risk of trench foot.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Describe two features of the conditions that made illness common in front-line trenches.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

10 How useful are Sources A and B for an enquiry into the causes and prevention of trench foot and trench fever in the British sector of the Western Front, 1914-18?

Source A: From a letter written by Private T. Mason, 9th Battalion, describing life in a frontline trench near Ypres, November 1916. 'Our boots are wet day after day. We march out on duckboards when we can, but at times the boards sink and we stand in water. I have seen men with swollen, black toes and the doctor told them to rub oil into their feet. The men who never change their socks seem worst, and the lice are everywhere, making us itch and feel ill.'

Source B: From a memo written by a regimental medical officer to his commanding officer, January 1917, reporting patterns of illness. 'Trench foot cases are rising where troops remain in the line for long periods. Causes identified include constant damp, ill-fitting boots and failure to change socks. Trench fever, spread by lice, is also common. I recommend compulsory daily foot inspections, extra issue of dry socks and a rotation scheme to move men out of the front line more frequently.'

Use details of the sources and your knowledge to reach a supported judgement about their utility. 8 marks

(Total for Question 10 is 8 marks)

11 How could you follow up Source B to find out more about whether shortages of dry socks made trench foot worse? Give four linked elements: the detail you would follow up from Source B, the question you would ask, the type of source you could use, and how that source would help answer the question.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 2.8 Trench Foot, Trench Fever and Frostbite: Illness on the Western Front: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

high fever or severe headache or muscle pain **B1**

Answer: High fever (other acceptable answers: severe headache or muscle pain).

Question 2

daily foot inspections (accept any other genuine prevention measure, e.g. dry socks, spare boots, whale oil, duckboards or rotating men out of the line) **B1**

Answer: Daily foot inspections (or dry socks, spare boots, whale oil, duckboards, or rotating men out of the line)

Question 3

duckboards **B1**

Answer: Duckboards

Question 4

rubbing whale oil or similar grease into the feet (accept removing the man from the wet line to rest, drying the feet or changing into dry socks) **B1**

Answer: Rubbing whale oil or similar grease into the feet (or rest away from the wet line, drying the feet, or dry socks)

Question 5

it killed or removed lice from soldiers' uniforms or bodies **B1**

it reduced the chance of infected lice spreading the disease between men in crowded trenches **B1**

Answer: Delousing killed or removed lice from uniforms and bodies, reducing the chance that infected lice would spread trench fever between soldiers.

Question 6

water and mud kept feet constantly wet, reducing circulation and causing tissue damage **B1**

cold water reduced body heat at the extremities, increasing risk of frostbite and freezing of tissue **B1**

Answer: Standing water and mud kept feet wet, reducing circulation and damaging tissue; cold water lowered heat at the extremities, increasing the risk of frostbite.

Question 7

gangrene **B1**

Answer: Gangrene

Question 8

tight boots restricted circulation to the toes and feet **B1**

restricted circulation made it harder for wet, cold feet to recover, increasing tissue damage risk **B1**

Answer: Tight boots restricted circulation to the feet, and this reduced blood flow meant wet, cold feet could not recover, raising the risk of trench foot and tissue damage.

Question 9

feature 1 identified, e.g. units were often not rotated out of the front line often enough **B1**

supporting detail for feature 1, e.g. men could be left in the same wet boots and socks for days with little chance to dry off or change into fresh kit **B1**

feature 2 identified, e.g. trenches were crowded and dirty **B1**

supporting detail for feature 2, e.g. lice spread easily in unwashed clothing, increasing the risk of trench fever **B1**

Answer: Units were often not rotated out of the front line often enough, so men could be left in the same wet boots and socks for days with little chance to dry off, and trenches were crowded and dirty, so lice spread easily in unwashed clothing.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Question 10

Level 1 Simple assertions about utility, using surface detail from one source or general knowledge with little reference to provenance or context. **1-2**

Level 2 Analysis of usefulness based on content and some consideration of provenance and context, with support from both sources and own knowledge. **3-5**

Level 3 A well-supported judgement that evaluates the usefulness of both sources, using precise references to content, clear consideration of provenance and purpose, and relevant contextual knowledge to explain strengths and limitations. **6-8**

Indicative content:

- Content strengths: both sources give direct detail linking constant damp, wet boots and unchanged socks to trench foot, and identify lice as the cause of trench fever. Source A provides eyewitness description of conditions and symptoms. Source B gives an official, medically informed summary and recommendations, naming specific causes such as ill-fitting boots.
- Provenance and limitations: Source A is a private soldier's letter, valuable for showing lived experience and symptoms seen, but it may be limited by the writer's personal view and possible exaggeration; its purpose was to describe life to a friend or family member, not to record systematic medical evidence. Source B is a medical officer's memo, intended to advise commanders, and so is likely to be accurate about causes and prevention, but it may emphasise measures the officer believes will be accepted and may underplay wider logistical problems such as supply shortages.
- Contextual knowledge: knowledge that duckboards, extra socks, whale oil and rotation were introduced supports both sources and explains why the medical officer recommends inspections and rotation. Knowledge that lice spread in close, dirty conditions supports the identification of lice as the vector for trench fever. Understanding supply and command constraints explains why recommendations were not always fully implemented.
- Judgement: Both sources are useful. Source A is particularly useful for illustrating the everyday experience and symptoms, while Source B is more useful for authoritative identification of causes and practical preventative recommendations. However, neither source on its own gives a full picture of how widely recommendations were implemented or their effectiveness, so they are best used together and alongside other records such as medical statistics and supply logs.

Question 11

identifies a specific detail from Source B to follow up, e.g. some men had no dry socks left after two wet nights **B1**

gives a linked question, e.g. did companies with fewer dry socks have more trench foot cases? **B1**

suggests an appropriate source type, e.g. quartermaster supply records compared with regimental medical records or field ambulance admission records **B1**

explains how that source would help, e.g. comparing sock supplies with recorded cases would show whether shortages coincided with more trench foot **B1**

Answer: Follow up the detail that some men had no dry socks left after two wet nights. Ask whether companies with fewer dry socks had more trench foot cases. Use quartermaster supply records alongside medical or field ambulance records. Comparing sock issue with case numbers would show whether shortages coincided with more trench foot.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk