

THE TROOPS AND GROUND FIGHTING

TROOPS-1

Photos on the following pages have been selected {largely from what I could locate} on the basis of trying to show something about their circumstances during the ground fighting. View them with sympathy. As the pages move along, some of the pictures are not happy ones.

WWI-003



Dutch-American sergeant Louis M. van Iersel has his breast full of medals. He got the Medal of Honor because of brave conduct at Mouzon, France.

WWI-009



American intelligence troops search German Prisoners Of War in the Menil la Tour prison camp.

TROOPS-2

WWI-011



American officers toasting with captured German beer steins.

WWI-012



Soldiers of the 33rd Division in a German trench, drinking from captured beer steins.



WWI-025

American nurses arriving in England, enroute to France.



WWI-026 As mentioned in an earlier page, O. B. Thomas had a lifelong dislike for the Red Cross.

Mary Shannon Webster, American Red Cross, serving hot chocolate.

WWI-027

The hat worn by the soldier on the left clearly marks him as Australian.



Australian soldier (left) supporting a wounded American. Picture made on September 30, 1918.



American soldiers visiting a French café.

WWI-049

Pictures like this were circulated around, perhaps in an effort to show a cheerful side to the war.



WWI-059

American sergeant John Letzing, 104th Infantry, 26th Division, with German POW Robert Fröhlich.

Official US picture made on February 17, 1918.

Above: An American soldier {right} with a German prisoner of war. The date is February 17, 1918. American troops who had sailed for Europe in November and December, 1917 already were actively involved in France.

Below: Ramparts of the old Chateau in Chateau-Thierry, France. A view of the old city from these ramparts is on the next page.

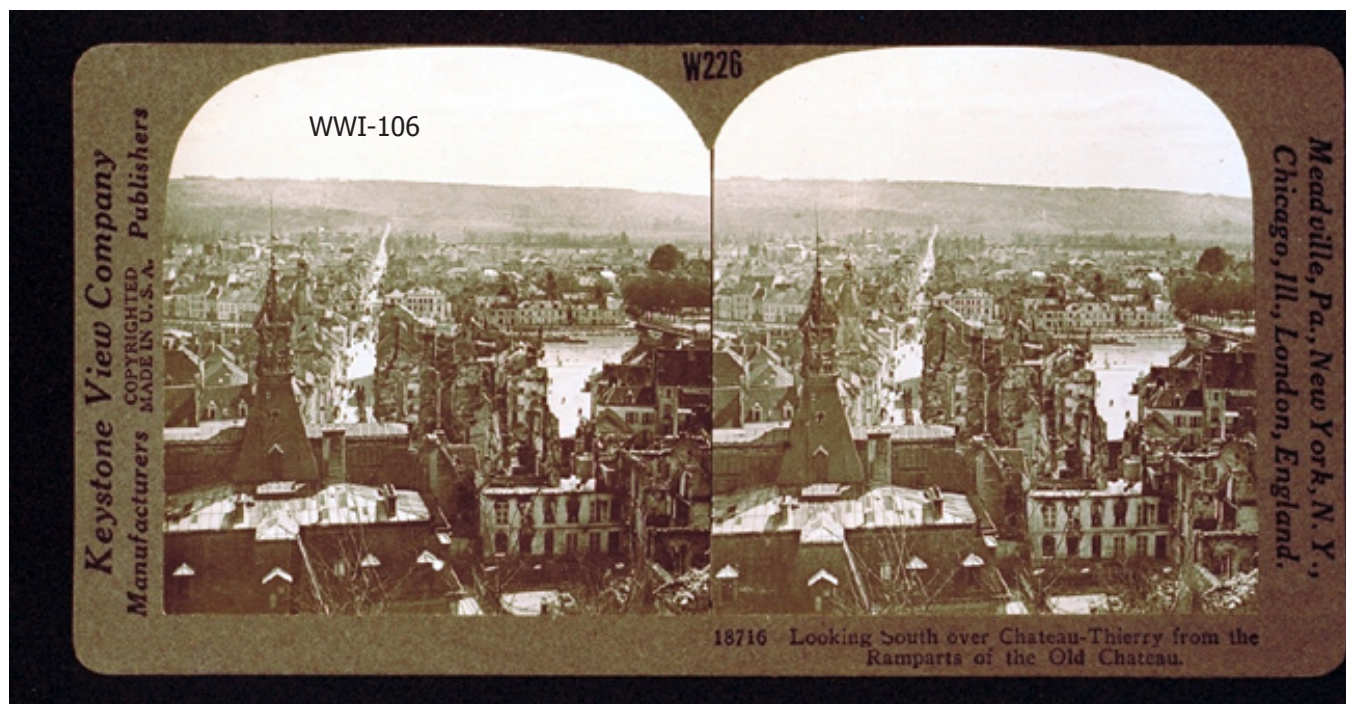


WWI-107



Above: Colorful paintings of this sort were often used to stir patriotism.

Below is a stereopticon view of old Chateau Thierry. The view faces west, with Paris somewhere off in the distance. The Marne River flows across the center of this view. The picture is from the ramparts of the old Chateau, shown on the preceding page. Chateau-Thierry is an old historical town, but since the end of the Second World War it has grown into a modern city.





Fatigued to the bone: US soldiers from the 121st Machine Gun Battalion, 32nd Division, resting in a shell hole.

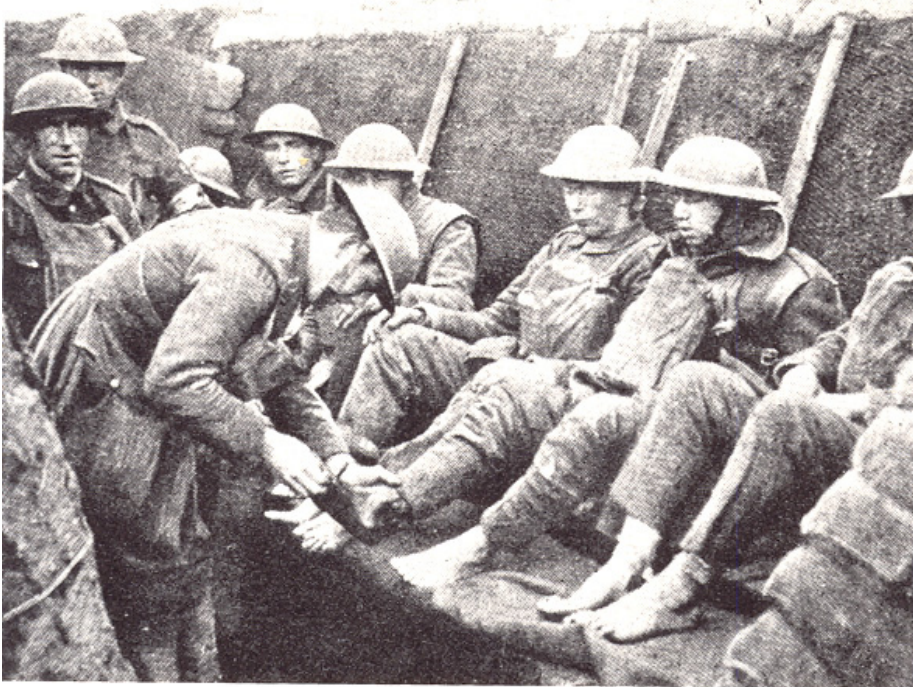
During 1915-1917 the war bogged down into static "trench warfare." Trenches often were close enough together so that the German and the Allied soldiers could shout at each other. Quite often there were forays from one line of trenches to another, grenade and mortar attack, gas attacks, bayonet attacks, etc., but generally with little or no actual movement of forces ... only loss of life. Periodically there would be a major pitched battle ... again with major casualties but little or no actual movement of forces. The group of photos that start here show some of the misery of life in those trenches.



WWI-007



WWI-098



Life in the trenches led to countless health problems. Latrines were located in small notches just off the main trenches. The wet conditions led to widespread problems with "trench foot," similar to a very aggressive form of athlete's foot.

If left unattended, it could be crippling. Even with care, it reduced the mobility and the effectiveness of the troops on both sides.

When troops were stuck in a trench location for very long, they would often try to improve on the quality of living conditions. This picture shows how the walls of the trench had been somewhat stabilized with wood and ropes.

WWI-043



WWI-005

A graphic illustration of the misery and unhealth conditions arising in wet weather from flooding in the trenches.

Troops had to live, sleep, eat, use latrines, and often get medical treatment in such locations.

If the level of military activity would allow it, there were efforts to rotate troops to the "rear" on some kind of reasonable schedule.



More views of trench conditions. A soldier can be seen part way up the embankment in the right side of this picture. That gives some idea of the trench depth at times. At other locations it might be only a few feet deep.

Snipers would peer over the tops of the trenches and try to pick off soldiers on the other side.

The area between trenches of the opposing sides was called "no man's land" and often was barricaded with barbed wire.

Earlier in this memoir there are comments about how O. B. Thomas and others would sometimes scout that no man's land.



For most of World War I, Allied and German Forces were stalled in trench warfare along the Western Front.

WWI-015

TROOPS-9



The C Battery of the US 109th Field Artillery, 28th Division, firing from the ruins of Varennes, in the Argonne.

WWI-017



Destruction of the US 89th Division ammunition dump at Lucey, France.

WWI-010



A bridgehead at Chateau Thierry. On the picture troops of the US 7th Machine Gun Battalion, 3rd Division.

TROOPS-10



WWI-013

Gun team of the A Company, US 105th Machine Gun Battalion, 27th Division, firing at St. Souplet, France. Picture made on October 19, 1918.

WWI-014



Sergeant Charles Quick, Corporal Mark Young and Private Albert Lull, 126th Infantry, manning a 37 mm gun at Diefmatten in the Alsace. Picture made on July 25, 1918.



WWI-030

Wounded men of the US 312th Infantry, 78 Division, being carried to an aid station. Picture made in the Negremont Wood, near Grandpré, on October 21, 1918.