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## EXTRACTS FROM GERMAN DOCUMENTS DEALING WITH "LESSONS DRAWN FROM THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME."

### 1. German Opinion of British Troops.

Previous to the attack the enemy's infantry patrols showed increased activity. The foremost trenches were probably lightly held during the intense artillery fire. The troops for the assault were apparently assembled in the trenches in rear.

The attack on the 1st July was well prepared, and the infantry was splendidly equipped with all kinds of weapons for the close combat. It was provided with a large number of Lewis guns, which were brought into action very quickly and skilfully in newly-captured positions. It is very desirable that our infantry should be equipped with a large number of light machine guns of this description in order to increase the intensity of its fire.

The individual English soldier is well trained and shows personal bravery. Some of the officers, however, are not sufficiently thoroughly trained. They are lacking in ability to exploit a success and to follow it up quickly.

The English infantry has undoubtedly learnt much since the autumn offensive. It shows great dash in the attack, a factor to which immense confidence in its overwhelming artillery probably greatly contributes. The Englishman also has his physique and training in his favour. Commanders, however, in difficult situations showed that they were not yet equal to their tasks. The men lost their heads and surrendered if they thought they were cut off.

Telephone connections were established very rapidly.

The enemy's trench mortars were skilfully served and produced effective results.

The enemy's artillery registered skilfully and inconspicuously. The guns proved accurate; the effect of the shells was good, but the percentage of blinds was high.

### 2. Description of German Position.

**The 1st Line Position** will be held if the enemy attacks. It consists of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Trenches, and should have, if possible, two rows of wire in front of each. There should be at least two communication trenches in each company sector from the 3rd to the 1st Trench, but the points at which they enter and leave the 2nd Trench should not be opposite one another. The number of dug-outs should be increased until there are sufficient to accommodate the infantry garrison necessary for the repulse of a prepared attack.

**The Intermediate and 2nd Line Positions** consist of at least two trenches, each provided with two rows of wire on pickets, and the same number of communication trenches as in the 1st Line Position. Each of the present regimental sectors must be provided with sufficient accommodation for at least one battalion.

**Trenches.**—Narrow trenches with steep sides again proved very disadvantageous and caused considerably more casualties (men being buried) than shallower trenches with a wide sole. One regiment is of opinion that the garrison is better protected if the men lie down or crouch at the bottom of the trench without any further cover, than it is if the so-called "rabbit holes" are used.

A cover trench roughly parallel to the front fire trench is not sound. Such trenches are destroyed by the enemy's fire at the same time as the actual fire trenches. To obviate this, trenches sited in accordance with the ground, and consequently with a certain irregularity of trace, are recommended.

**Obstacles.** There should be two or three rows of wire, each from 3 to 5½ yards deep, with an interval of from 5½ to 11 yards between each, this interval being provided with trip wires. The outer edge of the furthest wire should be about 55 yards from the trench. It should not always run parallel with the trench, but should follow the lie of the ground.

**Dug-outs.** The thickness of earth overhead should be from 23 to 26 feet, and more in the case of command posts and the dug-outs for the medical services, telephones and kitchens. The dug-outs for the men should be sufficient for 16 men, with two entrances separated by a traverse. Several dug-outs should be connected up to form corridor dug-outs with accommodation for a platoon. The dug-out recesses should be on the same side as the entrances—not facing them. Entrances should be 4 feet by 5½ feet, and should be well stayed and braced. Inclined galleries offer more resistance than frames built in on steps one below the other.

**Machine guns.** It is advisable to employ the bulk of the machine guns not in, but behind, the 1st Trench. When fixing their siting, the possibility of delivering both frontal and flanking fire must not be forgotten. Used as an emergency garrison for the Intermediate or 2nd Line Position, they may prevent a break through if the enemy succeeds in overrunning the 1st Line Position.

Machine guns must, as a rule, be kept in the dug-outs of their crews until the enemy assaults, and must then be placed rapidly in position at suitable points on the parapet.