

Trench conditions: What was trench warfare like?



Name: _____

Class: _____

Task 5

Complete the definition

Censorship is...

Censor the two letters to make sure that people back home know the soldiers are having a good time! Scribble out the negative sentences.

1. Written by Private H. F. Leppard of East Grinstead on 19th December, 1914.

Dear mother,

I trust you are keeping well. I am holding up well. On a lower point the soldiers at the front need more rest. While in the trenches the water is over our knees most of the time. The war is going to last some time yet, and might be another twelve months before it is over. The war has only just begun and it's going to be a war of exhaustion. The sooner people understand this the better it will be for the nation. I hope to see you soon, love Harold.

3. Written by Private James Mitchell o East Grinstead, on 17th October, 1914.

Dear Father, how are you and mother coping? I am holding up just fine. Me and the boys always cheer each other up. Yesterday we started away just after dawn from our camp and I think it was about an hour later that we encountered the enemy. They were on the opposite side of the valley and as we came over the brow of the hill they opened on us with rifle fire and shrapnel from about 900 yards. We lost three officers and about 100 men killed and wounded in that half hour. I do not want any more days like that one. Anyway we drove the Germans back and held them there for eight days. I cannot tell you all I should like to, as it would never reach you. I will see you again soon, I promise. Love to everyone, James.

Why do you think the government censored letter?

Write a letter home to your parents or loved one explaining the horrors of trench warfare. Make sure you include: What were conditions like in the trenches? What was the morale of your fellow soldiers? How do you feel about going 'over the top'? Describe in detail your emotions: fear, desperation, helplessness etc.
