

## 5: Trench warfare

A soldier's basic training did nothing to prepare him for what he found on the front line. The deadly fire of the machine guns forced entire armies to live almost underground for months on end. As well as the mud, the cold and the wet, they lived with the knowledge that they could lose their lives at any moment. Look at these pages and see how the Great War soldiers fought, lived and died.

### MISSION OBJECTIVES

- To be able to identify the main features of trench warfare.
- To be able to describe the typical experience of a soldier in the trenches.

- 1: **Duckboards:** These were placed on the ground to stop troops sinking in the mud.
- 2: **Fire step:** Soldiers stood on these to look and fire 'over the top'.
- 3: **Dugouts:** Rooms dug out of the back wall of trenches. Orders received by telephone.
- 4: **Periscope:** Enabled troops to see 'over the top' without risk of being shot.
- 5: **Barbed wire:** Slowed down attacking troops. Millions of miles of barbed wire was used.
- 6: **Machine gun:** Rapid-firing gun that mowed down attacking troops.
- 7: **Concrete bunker:** Reinforced subterranean bunker.
- 8: **Artillery:** Huge guns that fired enormous explosive or poisonous shells for miles.
- 9: **Machine gun nest:** Protected the machine-gunner from enemy fire.
- 10: **Sandbags:** Reinforced the walls, muffled explosions and soaked up moisture.
- 11: **Aeroplanes:** Helped spot targets for artillery, dropped bombs on the enemy and shot down enemy planes.
- 12: **Communication trench:** Linked the front line trench to the reserve trenches.
- 13: **Reserve trenches:** Soldiers went there to rest or to wait to go to the front line.
- 14: **Gas bell:** Would be rung to tell troops to put on gas masks.

