

Glossary of Terms

Advance

Moving forward.

Ammunition

The group name for all bullets or shells fired by guns and artillery.

Armistice

An agreement by both sides to stop fighting. An armistice might last a couple of days or much longer.

Artillery

Larger guns that fire bigger ammunition and are often moved around on wheels rather than by hand.

Assassination

Deliberately killing someone important.

Blockade

Creating a barrier to stop something from getting through. The Royal Navy set up a blockade of Germany during the First World War to prevent war supplies and food from reaching the German people.

Bombardment

Firing lots of artillery pieces together at the same time to cause maximum damage. In the First World War bombardments were often carried out before big attacks by soldiers.

Casualties

When used on this site, the term "casualty" means anyone killed, wounded or captured during a battle.

Conscientious Objector

People who refuse to fight in wars because they believe war is wrong.

Conscription

Forced service in the military.

Deadlock

Where neither side is winning or losing. Also called standstill. This was the situation on the Western Front for most of the war.

Defensive

Actions taken to defend yourself.

Offensive

Actions taken to attack the enemy or make progress.

Reinforcements

New soldiers brought to a battle to help the soldiers already fighting or to replace tired soldiers.

Retreat

Also called a withdrawal. Moving away from a battle to a safer place where you can defend yourself. Sometimes you have no choice but to retreat if things are going badly, other times you might choose to retreat because you want a stronger position.

Strategy

The overall plan for the war, a particular theatre of the war or a battle.

Tactics

The actions taken to achieve the strategy.

Theatre of War

An area of the world where the war is taking place. The First World War is split up into several theatres of war such as the Western Front, the Middle East and the Sea War. What happens in one theatre often affects other theatres.

Trench

Dug by soldiers to provide them with shelter and a defensive position. Not a new idea in the First World War but came to symbolise the style of fighting on the Western Front.

U-Boat

A submarine. Taken from the German word for submarine Unterseeboot (undersea boat).

Ultimatum

A demand for something to be done by a specific time. Usually with the threat of serious consequences if the thing is not done.

Zeppelin

A type of German airship. A big balloon powered by an engine and armed with bombs.

