

# Lesson 2

## Europe Plunges into War



# The Great War

## 1914-1918

- The Great War was the largest conflict in history up to that time.
  - the French mobilized 8.5 million men
  - the British mobilized 9 million men
  - the Russians mobilized 12 million men
  - the Germans mobilized 11 million men
- One out of every four men who fought in the Great War died.

# Nations Take Sides

- After Austria declared war on Serbia, alliances began to take effect:
- **Russia mobilized**, or prepared its military forces for war in defense of Serbia. Germany saw Russia's mobilization as an act of war. As a result, Germany declared war on Russia on
- August 1, 1914
- **France** supported Russia even though **Germany** demanded France stay out of the conflict, but decided two days later to declare war on France.
- Italy chose **Neutrality**, a policy of supporting neither side in a war.
- **Britain** declared war on Germany, after Germany invaded **Belgium**, a neutral nation.
- In the late summer of 1914, millions of soldiers marched happily off to battle, convinced the war would be short.

# A Bloody Stalemate

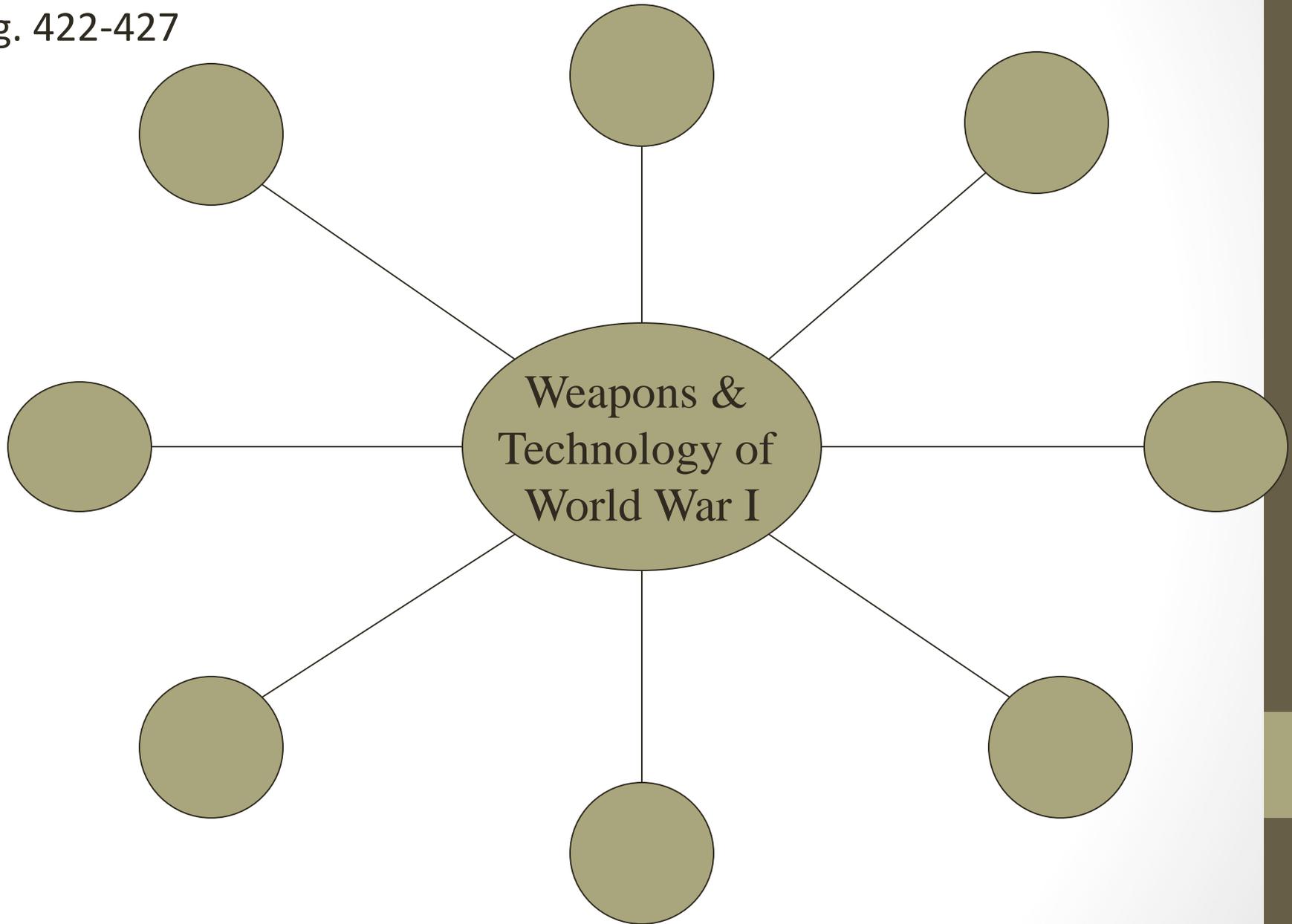
- Britain's foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey stated,  
*“The lamps are going out all over Europe.  
We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.”*
- The war turned into a long and bloody **stalemate**, or deadlock.
- This deadlock region in northern France became known as the **Western Front**.

# The Western Front



# #2 Technological Innovations

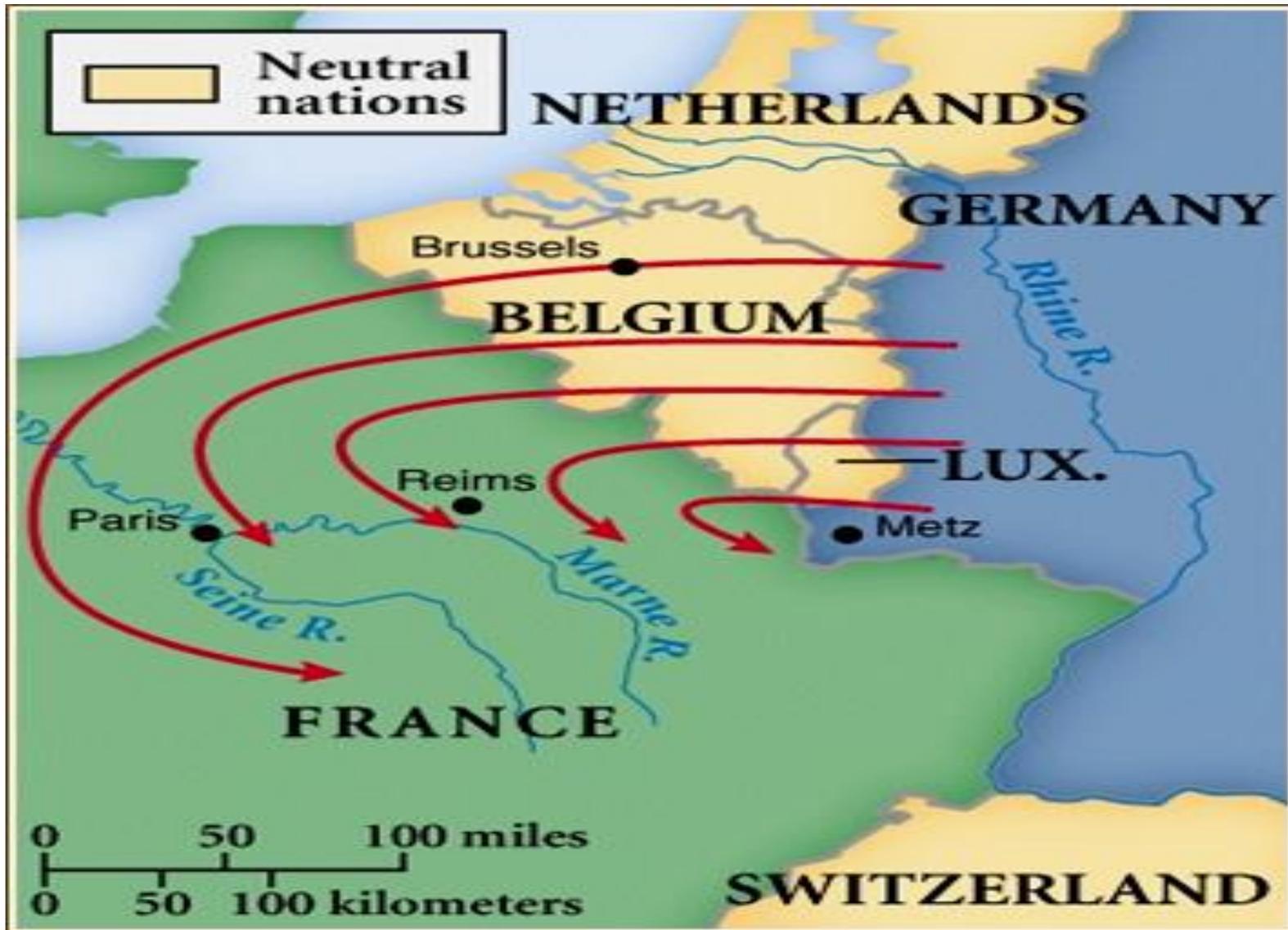
Pg. 422-427



# The Conflict Grinds Along

- A cornerstone of Germany's military policy was a plan developed years earlier by **General Alfred von Schlieffen**.
- Germany's location presented a two-front war with France to the west and Russia to the east.
- The **Schlieffen Plan** was designed to avoid this problem. It argued that Germany should move against France first because Russia's huge military would be slow to mobilize.
- Germany had to defeat France quickly and then turn around and fight Russia.
- The plan required that Germany march through neutral Belgium and then swing south behind French lines, encircle, and crush them.
- Outraged by the German invasion of Belgium, Britain declared war on Germany on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

# Map of the German Schlieffen Plan



# Stalemate on the Western Front

- The German **Shlieffen Plan** failed for several reasons.
  - Russia was able to mobilize more quickly than expected.
  - British and French troops pushed back the German drive along the Marne River.
- Both sides began to dig deep **trenches** to protect their armies from enemy fire.
- Trench warfare began and caused a **stalemate**, a deadlock in which neither side is able to defeat the other.
- Battle lines in France would remain almost unchanged for four years.

# Witness History Video

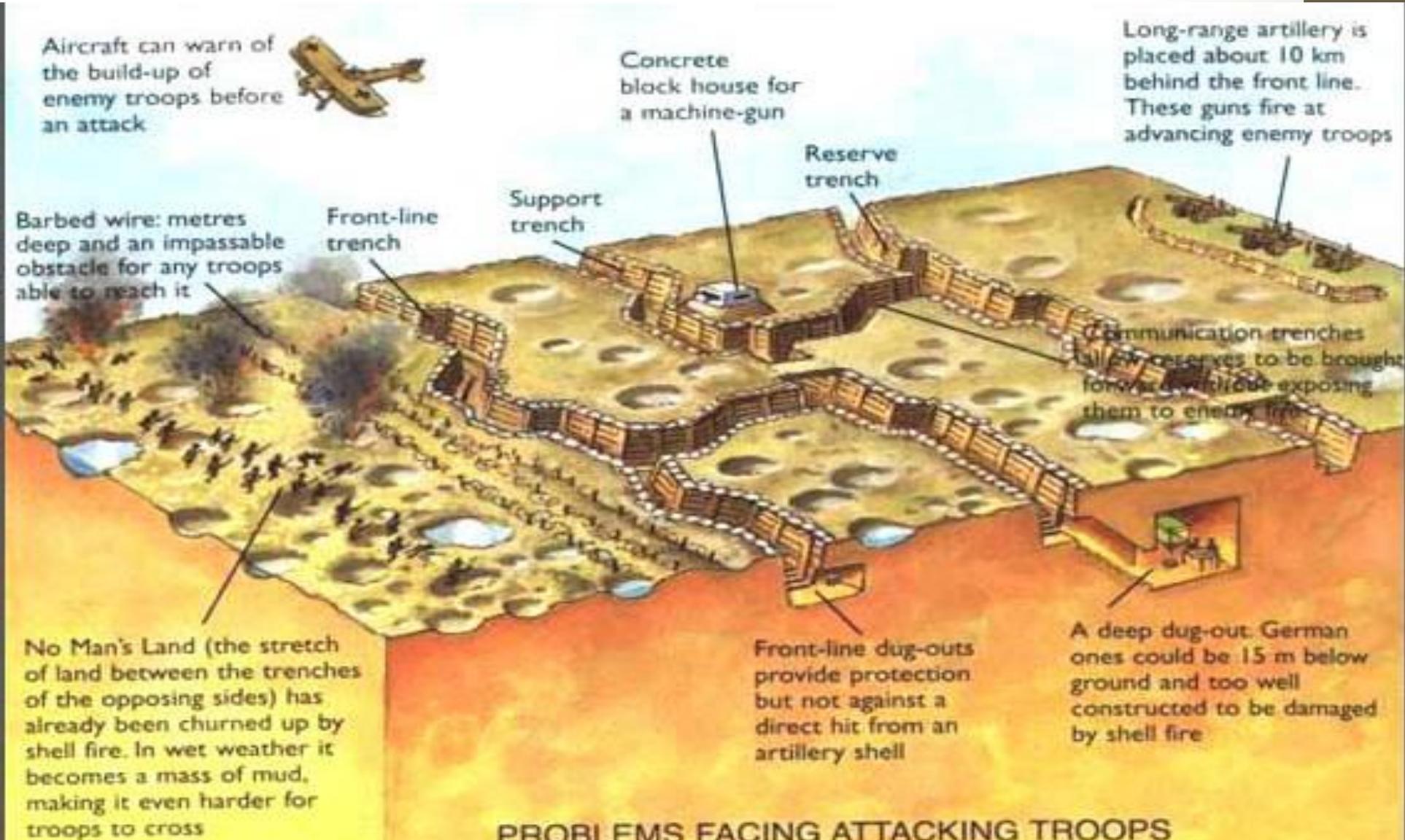
- World War I – A New Kind of War



# War in the Trenches



# Trench Warfare Graph



PROBLEMS FACING ATTACKING TROOPS

# William Pressey on Poison Gas

- William Pressey:  
“I suppose I resembled a kind of fish with my mouth open gasping for air. It seemed as if my lungs were gradually shutting up and my heart pounded away in my ears like the beat of a drum...To get air into my lungs was real agony.”



# The Battle on the Eastern Front

- Battles on the Eastern front were not mired in trench warfare.
- Casualties rose even higher on the Eastern Front
- Russia was the least industrialized nation, many soldiers fought without rifles, as there was a constant shortage of guns and ammunition.
- New Combatants join the war:
- In 1915, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and defeated Serbia.
- Romania joined the Allies hoping to win land in Austria.
- Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary and Germany.
- Read the *The Frozen Front* –pg. 426

# #3a

- **Document-Based Investigation**
- Read the following documents on Pg. 424
- **Views of War**
- **Fritz Kreisler**
- **Wilfred Owen**
- **Analyze Historical Sources**
  1. Judging from these sources, what was life in the trenches like for the average soldier?
  2. Explain how you think such experiences affected the average soldier's view of war.
- Use evidence from documents to answer each question.

# #3b

- Lesson 2 Assessment: Pg. 420-426
3. What were **three** characteristics of trench warfare?
  4. How was war on the Western and Eastern Fronts the same? How was it different?
  5. Why did the Schlieffen Plan ultimately collapse? Cite at least two specific details from the text.