



Source 2

Extract from General Haig's war diaries, June 1915

(Catalogue ref: WO 256/4)

How to use this source:

Study this source carefully. It contains information that could be useful in your presentation on life in the trenches. As you study the source, ask yourself:

- What is General Haig's main concern in this diary extract?
- Why is he so worried?
- What actions does he want taken?
- Haig has a reputation for not caring for his men. Is that view supported by this extract?
- Which aspects of trench warfare does this source provide information on?
- How could this source be used in your final presentation?



Source 2

Tuesday 8th June 1915.

Glass still falling; day very warm and sunny.

Satisfactory advances have been begun by the French Sixth Army (Dubois) N.E. of Compiègne, and by the Second Army (Castelnau) east of Amiens. The Tenth Army on my right are also getting on steadily though slowly.

After lunch I had a meeting with the three corps commanders. The following also present: General Hobbs, Surgeon-General Macpherson and Butler, on the question of trench sanitation, in consequence of a report which had reached me. One para. stated "there were two bodies buried in front parapet, one of which had "only two inches of earth on it. There were many bodies within a "few yds. of the parapet. The stench was sickening. Hundreds of "half empty jam tins were littered about, and naturally crowded "with flies. The latrine arrangements were not adequate."

We agreed that incinerators should be erected for burning all refuse. When impossible to burn the corpses, ample quick lime to be sent up to the trenches to cover them with. Sacks must be provided for the removal of tins, waste paper, etc. Buckets to be provided for the latrines, and to be renewed where possibly nightly. The several wooden tramways which have been constructed enable this to be done without much difficulty in most sections.

Since I saw the Surgeon-General this morning, he had been into the trenches at Givenchy, and now reported that the condition of affairs was not so bad as some had represented, still it was very urgent that every possible precaution should be taken to prevent insanitary conditions. Corps commanders are fully alive to the importance of this, and are personally to go into the matter.