

The Machine Gun

In 1884, Hiram Maxim invented the world's first automatic portable machine-gun. The machine-gun would fire until the entire belt of bullets was used up.

- The British called their machine gun the Maxim.
- The German Army used the Maschinengewehr.
- The Russian used the Pulemyot.
- The American Army tended to use the Browning Machine-Gun.
- The French Army preferred the Hotchkiss.

Machine-guns were positioned all along the Western Front. The machine guns in use in 1914 required a crew of three to six men and were positioned on a flat trajectory tripod before firing. For added protection, German machine-guns were often housed inside concrete blockhouses.

Both sides also used smaller machine-gun posts. Germans built them in large numbers all along the lines at Ypres and Messines. Machine gunners were deeply hated by the infantry and they were more likely to be killed when captured than other soldiers.



WWI New Technologies Analysis

After learning about WWI, this activity allows you to explore the new technologies and devices which came out from this world war. Here is what your group will do:

1. Have someone in your group read the description and brief background about your particular device. Other students in the group should follow along taking note and pulling out the important information. Jot down a brief (3 or 4 sentence) paragraph summary.

2. Look at the image at the bottom of the page. Think about these questions when viewing it.
 - a. What ways do you think the device was used and how do you think it was utilized when fighting? Why?

 - b. By looking at your weapon do you think it was light weight and easy to maneuver to the battle grounds? How do you think it was operated?

3. Figure out a solution to the following dilemma: *If you were a soldier on either front (you pick a side) and you wanted to protect yourself from enemy fire from these weapons, what methods or ways would you use to counteract them and protect yourself?* (Example: If your enemy fought on a horse and you were a foot soldier, whose men continued to die by the horsemen, maybe your army would begin to wear protective armor or start riding on a horse.)