



## RESOURCE 3: ROUTINES

Life in the frontline trench was highly dangerous, but the army worked a system of rotating groups of soldiers so that each man only spent a few days per month there.

### From soldiers' own words:

Even when they were up at the front, soldiers were rotated so that they did not spend all their time in the front line trench. Some soldiers describe how the system worked and how they spent their time:

2nd Lieutenant J. MacLeod, Queens Own Cameron Highlanders, from a letter:

*"Our life is not too strenuous: we have a twelve-day tour of duty – two days in the trenches and two out, two in, two out etc., then six days rest in reserve. In the trenches we work at night and rest by day."*

Corporal C.R. Russell, County of London Battalion, recalled:

*"When you were up the line the whole battalion would come up and there'd be the support trench and perhaps A company would occupy that and B company would occupy the front line and C and D would be in the support trench. And after about three or four days you'd swap over.*

*And all along the winding trench you used to have three men in a little bay. One was on guard, one was cleaning up the trench and the other one was having a sleep and you'd swap round, so you got an hour's sleep out of three."*

Here are some examples of how the rotation system worked over the month of January in each of the years of the war:

Regiment and year	No of days in trenches	No of days in trenches without a break	Days in the firing line
Black Watch, 1915	9	4	4
South Staffordshire Regiment, 1916	8	5	2
Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 1917	4	4	2
South Wales Borderers, 1918	6	4	2