

World War I

Life on the Battlefield

The Nature of Warfare

The War on Land

▶ Schlieffen Plan

- Germany's plan to quickly invade France, via Belgium, and capture Paris
- Then turn attention to Russia
- By August 1914, Germans 35km from Paris, but pushed into N. France by French and British
- Stalemate – both sides dig defensive trenches
 - ▶ Eventually stretch from English Channel to Switzerland

The War on Land

▶ Trench Warfare

- Before WWI, cavalry would charge each other on open fields with rifles and bayonets
- In WWI, new weapons (i.e. machine guns, artillery, landmines) made open charges suicidal
- Commanders stuck in old-fashioned mindset
 - ▶ Led soldiers to slaughter
 - ▶ War of attrition – repeatedly attack until one side unable to continue (exhaustion, not enough soldiers)

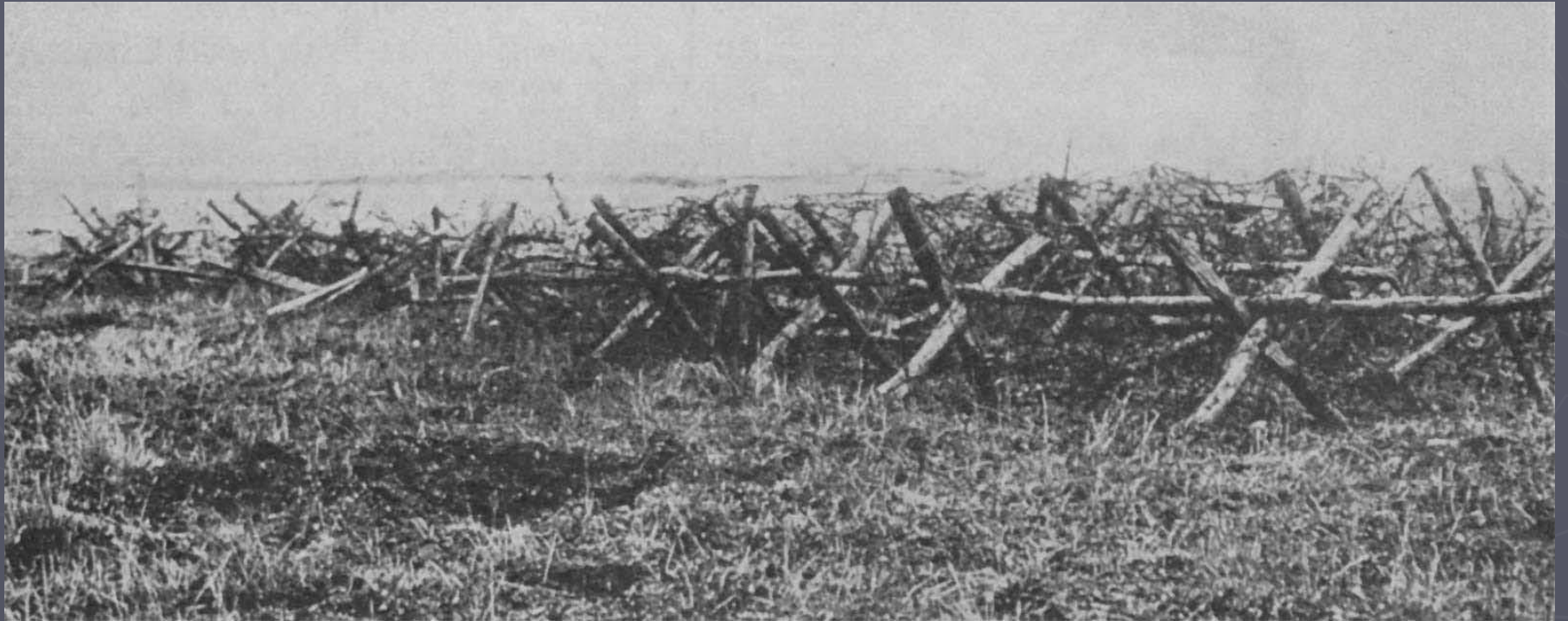
The War on Land



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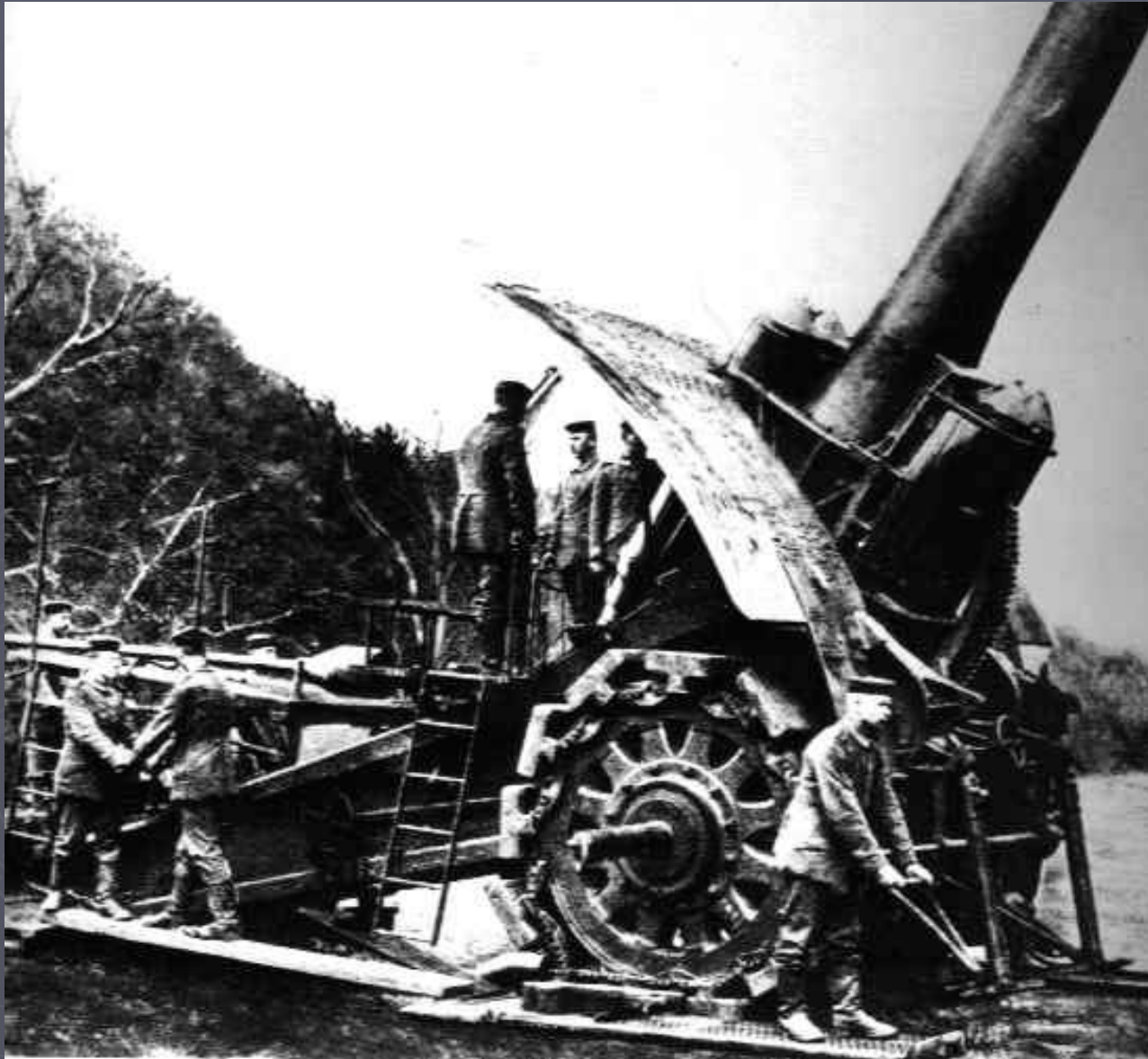
▶ Technology

- Machine guns
- Artillery (ex. Big Bertha)
 - ▶ Batteries fired shells filled with explosives and shrapnel
- Tanks
 - ▶ Developed by 1916 to crush barbed wire and protect soldiers while crossing no man's land
 - ▶ Often stuck in mud, but improved
- Poison Gas
 - ▶ First used by Germans at Ypres in 1915
 - ▶ Chlorine, phosgene, or mustard gas

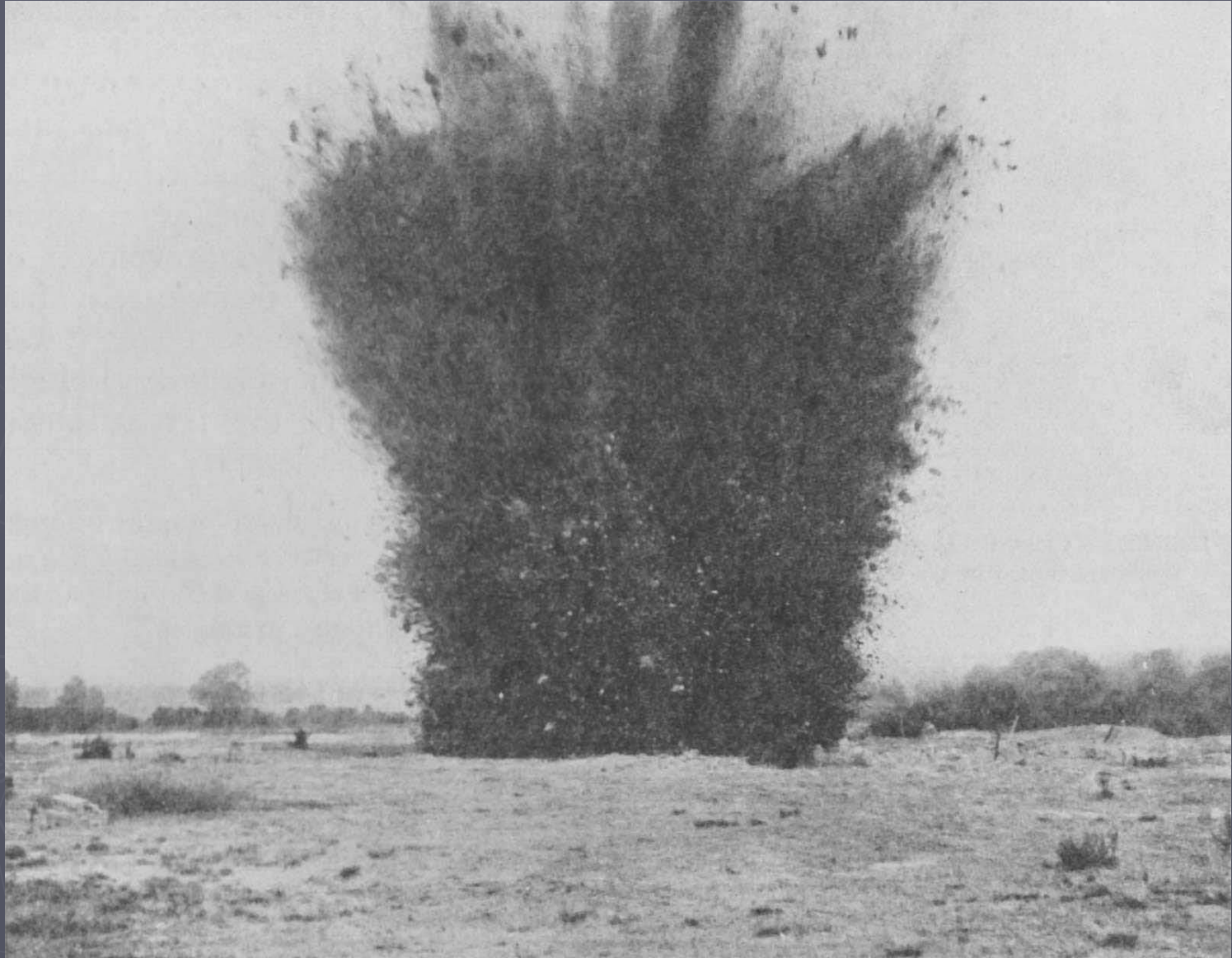
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The War on Land



Life in the Trenches

- ▶ Cold and damp, often flooded and muddy
 - Trench foot
- ▶ Overrun by rats and lice
- ▶ Injuries often get infected
 - If injured in no man's land, usually left to die, too dangerous to be taken back
- ▶ Constant threat of snipers and artillery shells

Life in the Trenches



Life in the Trenches



Life in the Trenches



Life in the Trenches



Life in the Trenches



Life in the Trenches



The War in the Air

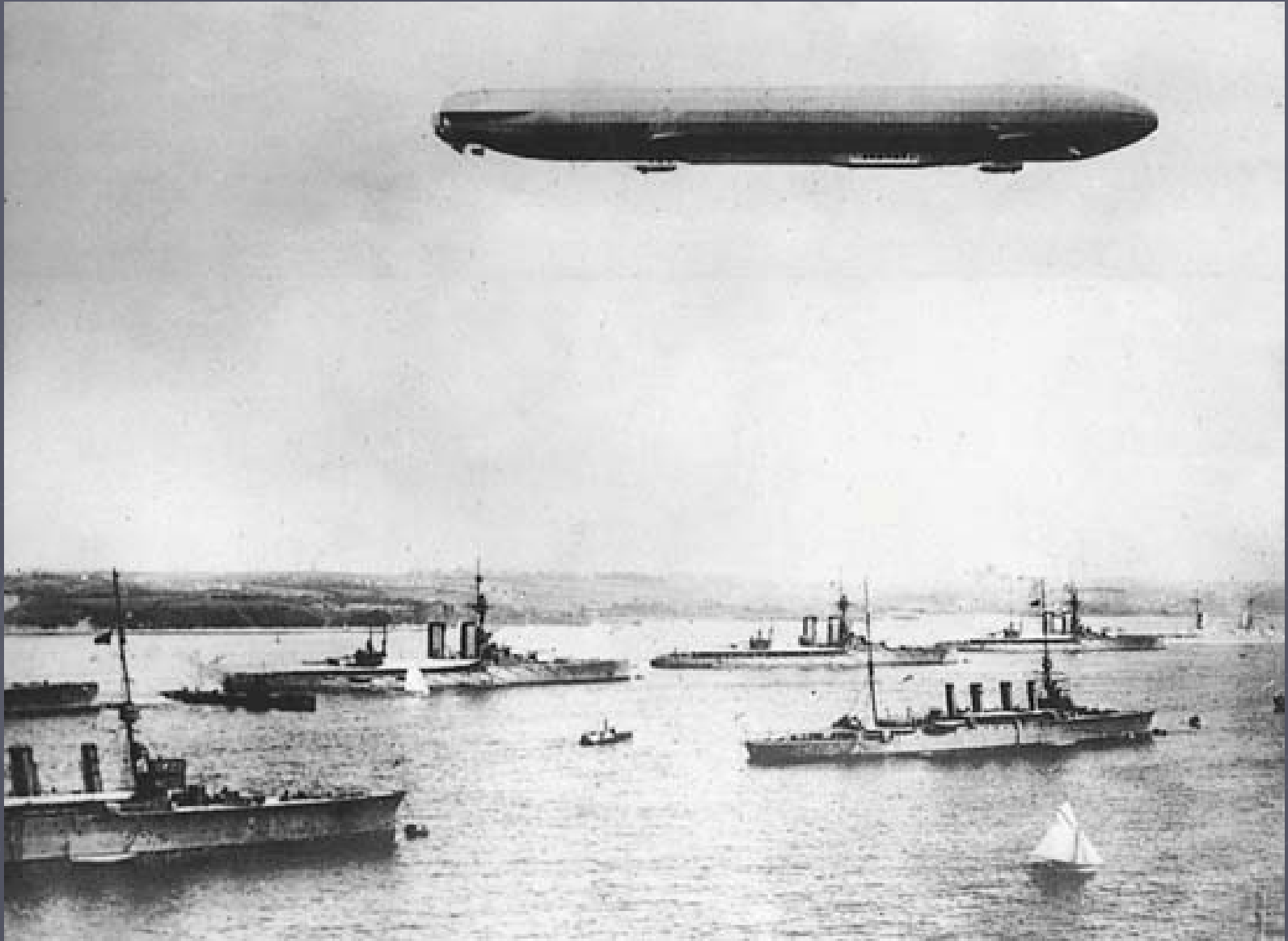
- ▶ At beginning, mostly aerial reconnaissance
- ▶ Soon, fighter aircraft with machine guns
 - "dogfights": air battles between planes
 - Fighter pilots: glamorous, better living conditions
 - 1917, average life expectancy of a fighter pilot was three weeks (no parachutes)
 - No Canadian air force; joined Royal Flying Corps (RFC), part of Royal Air Force (RAF)
 - Several Canadian "aces" – Billy Bishop; Roy Brown (shot down Red Baron)

The War in the Air

▶ Technology

- German dirigibles (aka blimps, Zeppelins)
 - ▶ Reconnaissance and bombing missions
 - ▶ Britain used small ones to protect ships from submarines
- Fighter Planes

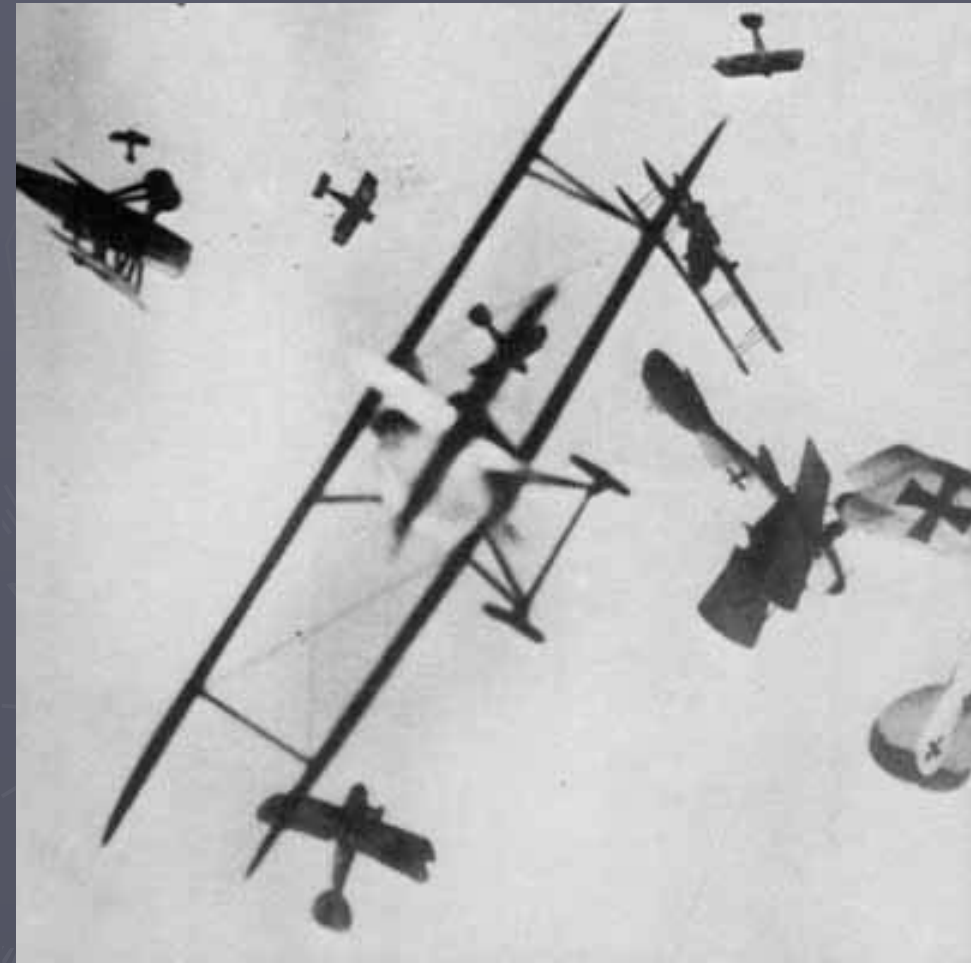
The War in the Air



The War in the Air



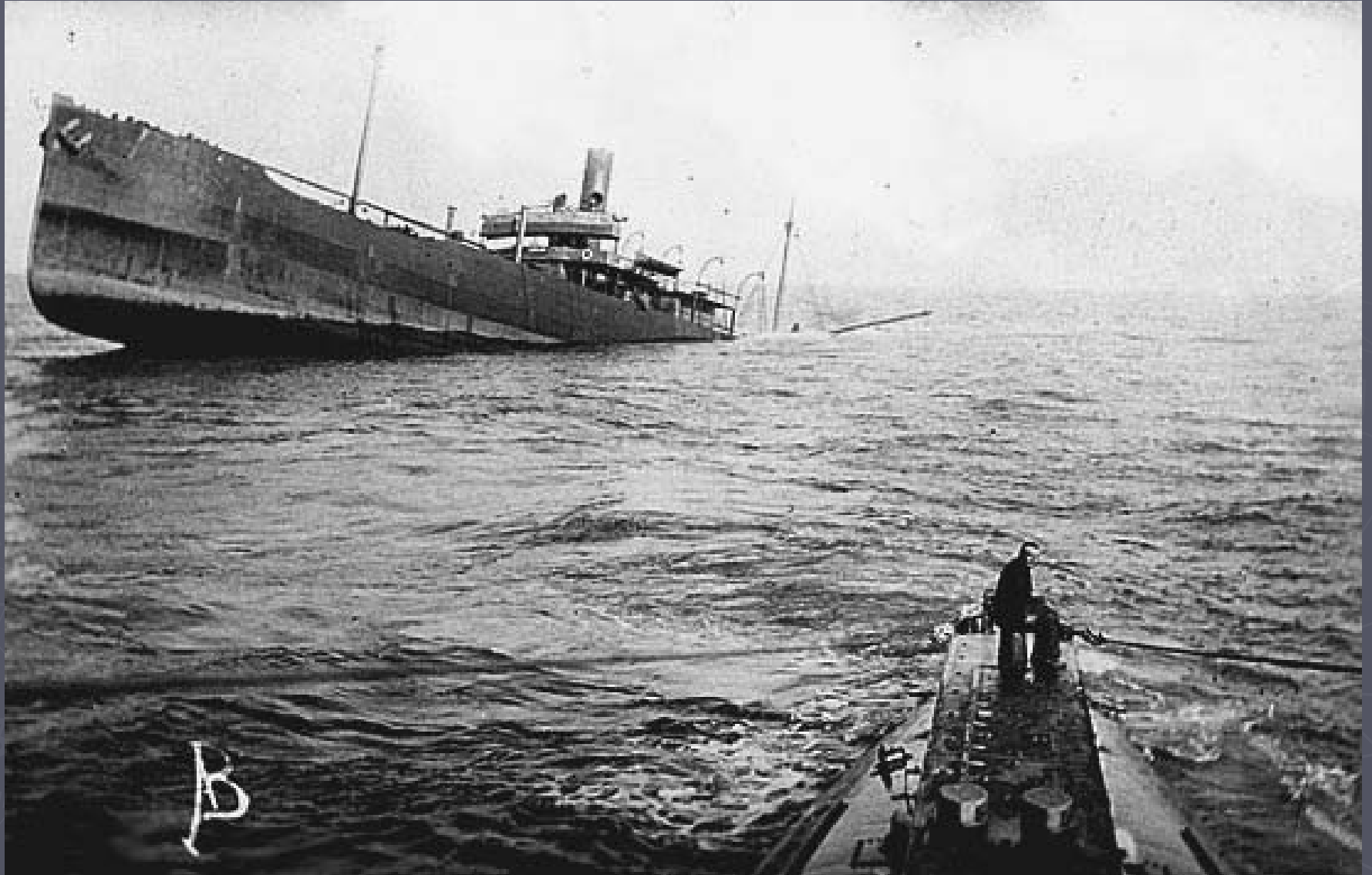
The War in the Air



The War at Sea

- ▶ Britain and Germany had the strongest navies
- ▶ German U-boats (aka submarines), armed with torpedoes, hunted British warships and merchant ships
 - Britain had no defense at first, then developed convoy system (travelling in groups) and sonar
- ▶ Canada's merchant marine – transported supplies to Britain, departing from Halifax

The War at Sea



The War at Sea



The War at Sea

▶ The Sinking of the *Lusitania*

- In 1915, German U-boat sank British passenger liner *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland
 - ▶ 1200 passengers died, many Canadians and Americans
 - ▶ Germany felt justified because of ammunition onboard
 - ▶ United States outraged; Germans agree to stop targeting "neutral" ships
 - ▶ In 1917, Germans had resumed targeting American ships
 - ▶ United States declares war on Germany April 6, 1917

The War at Sea

