

Worksheet 4: Flamethrowers

Group work

1. Inform the pupils about the basics of the use of flamethrowers in the First World War. Part the class into two groups, which read the texts of Louis Barthas and Bernhard Reddemann respectively. Give the work instruction to describe the position of the protagonists concerning the use of flamethrowers and their specific war experiences. Both groups are supposed to elect speakers who take the position of Barthas and Reddemann in a disputation. Moderate a discussion in the class regarding the respective argumentation.

Interpretation of a source

2. Distribute the photographs depicting the use of flamethrowers from source 3. Ask them to describe the pictures precisely. Try to interpret these pictures with the whole class with a special focus on the relationship between the pictures, the original captions and the intended picture's message.

Data Base Research

3. Show the scene with flamethrowers from the movie „Der Infanterie-Nahkampf“ (the melee fighting of the infantry). Inform them that the movie originated from the internet source www.filmportal.de and present it briefly. The students are supposed to browse this side in groups of two and find three documentary movies from the time of the First World War. Collect the results and discuss with the class the possibilities of cinematic representation and the special case of war reporting.

Propaedeutic exercise: Conspectus

4. Read together with the class the description of the „fire tube“ in Thucydides: „The History of the Peloponnesian War“. Ask the pupils to rephrase the content in their own words and to draw a sketch depicting the functionality of the “fire tube”. Compare the results. Talk with the class about the meaning of such a weapon in antique warfare. Compare these with the situation in modern times by showing the pupils pictures and descriptions of Kleif and Grof.

Research

5. The pupils are supposed to find out, why flamethrowers are of no concern in postmodern warfare. To answer this question the pupils should use the current historiography of military and technology and write an annotated bibliography. The individual results should be collected in a general list.

Essay

6. Read the chapter from „All quiet on the Western Front“ that describes a flamethrower attack. Inform the pupils about the contemporary reception of this book. Afterwards the pupils are supposed to write an essay of two to three pages concerning the reasons of the ambivalent reception of the book and the movie in between wars.