**Spartacus Educational Classroom Activity**

# Football on the Western Front (Questions & Answers)

<http://spartacus-educational.com/EXAManswerFWW3.htm>

Question 1: Read sources 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8. Explain what happened on Christmas Day 1914.

Answer 1: These sources record that a football match between Britain and Germany took place on 25th December 1914. They also celebrated Christmas together by sharing drinks and given presents of cigars, chocolate and tobacco. They even placed Christmas trees and candles in the trench.

Question 2: Study sources 1, 5 and 9. Compare the usefulness of these sources to the historian writing about the Christmas truce.

Answer 2: Source 1 is very useful and was produced by [Bruce Bairnsfather](http://spartacus-educational.com/Jbairnsfather.htm), someone who witnessed the Christmas Day celebrations that took place on the [Western Front](http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWwestern.htm) on 25th December, 1914. Source 9 is an artist impression and was produced many years after the event. It is probably based on contemporary sources but is not as useful as source 1. The same is true of source 5 that is taken from a BBC film made a few years ago.

Question 3: [Sir John French](http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWfrench.htm), the Commander of the [British Expeditionary Force](http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWbef.htm), reported that when he heard about the Christmas truce, "I issued immediate orders to prevent any recurrence of such conduct, and called the local commanders to strict account, which resulted in a great deal of trouble." Why did he do this? Can you find another source in this unit that suggests the German Army acted in a similar way?

Answer 3: British senior officers were appalled when they discovered what happened on 25th December, 1914. They feared that this would make it more difficult to persuade British soldiers to fire on the German Army. German officers had similar concerns. Lieutenant Gustav Riebensahm (source 10) who comments that "the whole thing has become slowly ridiculous and must be stopped. I will tell the men that from this evening it's all over."

Question 4: Read source 12 and then explain source 11.

Answer 4: Source 12 explains that soldiers on the Western Front had to learn how to quickly put on their gas masks if a gas attack took place. The wearing of gas-masks while playing football became part of the training of the Royal Engineers. "When the whistle went for the kick-off, each player had to take out his gas mask and fit it properly. He wasn't allowed to touch the ball until his mask was properly secured."