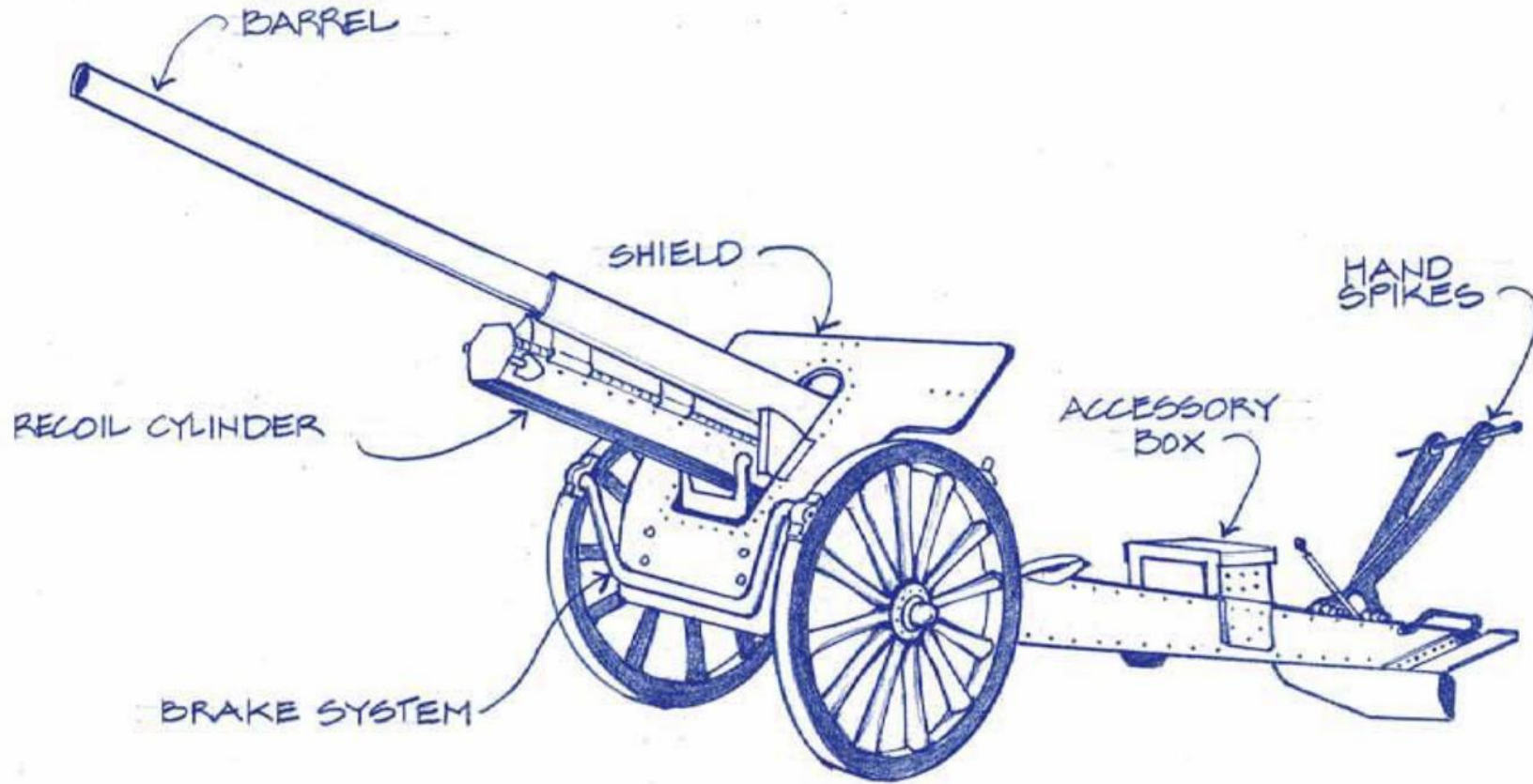


GERMAN 10-CM FIELD GUN



ARTILLERY

Isonzo was a series of battles that began in 1915 and took place along a river between Austria-Hungary and Italy. It seemed as if Italy, which had many more soldiers, would have an easy victory. However, although Austria-Hungary had fewer men, it had more heavy artillery. Also known as “big guns,” this artillery was loaded with highly explosive shells containing dozens of small lead balls. With each battle, the Italians suffered more casualties from the artillery bombardment. After these early setbacks, the Italian commander realized that big guns were important both before and during successful army advances.

Estimated Casualty Statistics for the Battle of Isonzo

Allied Powers: 1,022,000

Central Powers: 451,000

Excerpt #8

Last night Fritz [the Germans] put on a whale of a bombardment [attack], and I don't see how any of us escaped to tell the story. In the thick of it our communications were knocked out and I was detailed to repair the telephone line . . . Well, I thought of all the mean things I'd done in my life, breathed a little prayer, climbed out of my foxhole, and darted out . . . Flashes of exploding artillery at intervals lighted up the blackness of the night. Explosions of enemy shells on every hand and the scream of big ones going overhead to back areas added to the thunderous uproar so that I could not have heard my own voice had I dared to speak . . . I was splicing [joining] the wire when—Shriek! Bang! A ton of steel came over me.

- Corporal Elmer Sherwood, diary entry, October 30, 1918