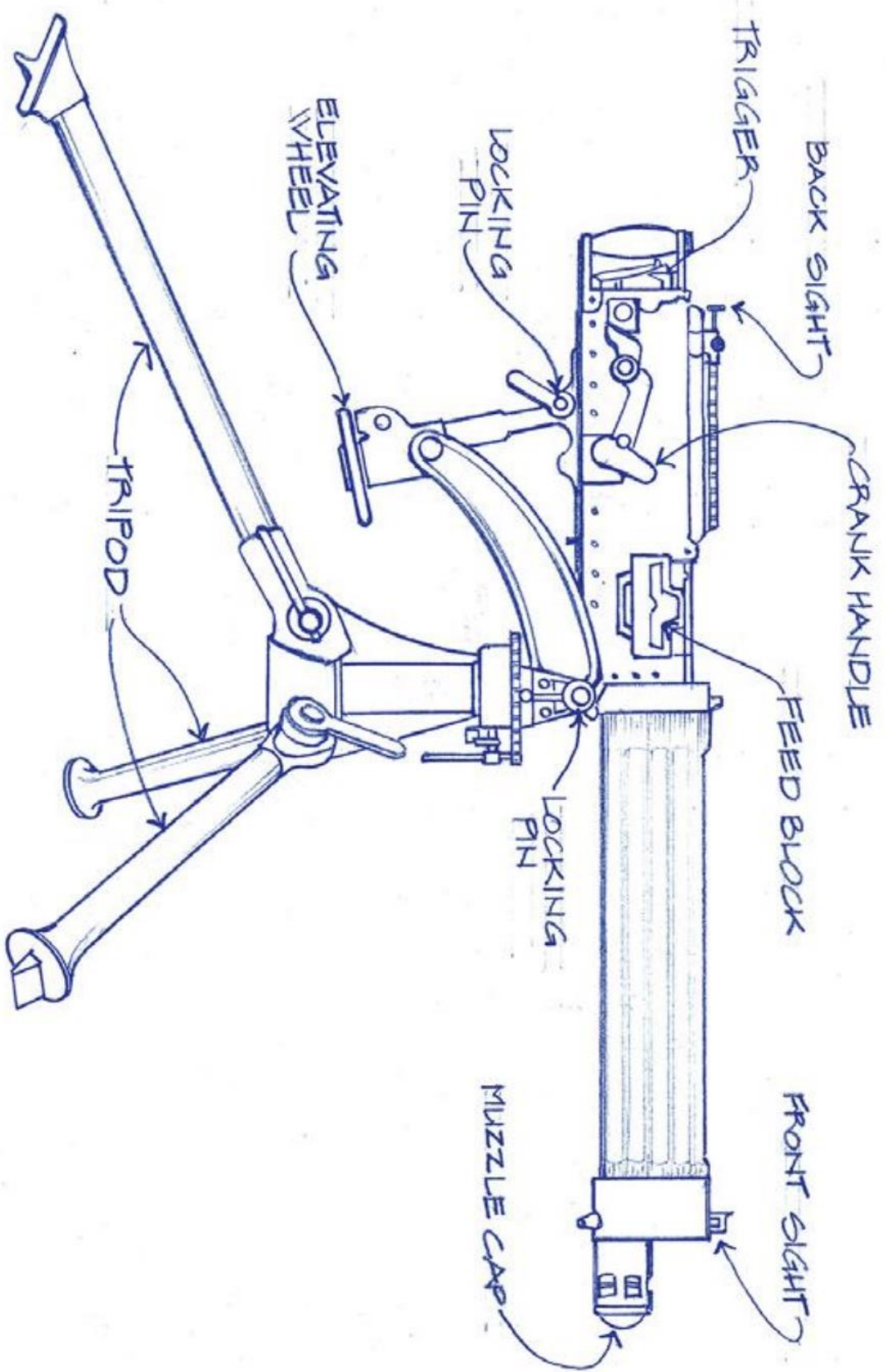


BRITISH VICKERS



MACHINE GUN

The Battle of the Somme in 1916 was a disastrous attempt by the British to attack the Germans in their trenches. The British created a plan that relied on bombardment by large, heavy artillery to weaken German defenses before the army advanced. Unfortunately, this plan did not go as hoped. The advancing British army was an easy target for the German machine guns, which could fire 400 to 600 rounds per minute, spraying the approaching enemy with a massive amount of bullets. In the first day alone, the British lost an estimated 58,000 soldiers.

Estimated Casualty Statistics for the Battle of the Somme
Allied Powers: 693,000
Central Powers: 420,000

Excerpt #6

Our gun's crew was busy mounting the . . . gun on the parapet [walls] and bringing up extra ammunition from the dugout . . . I trained my . . . gun on their [the enemy] trench and its bullets were raking the parapet [scraping the wall]. Then over they [the Germans] came, bayonets glistening . . . they looked like some horrible nightmare. All along our trench . . . guns spoke . . . They went down in heaps, but new ones took the place of the fallen. Nothing could stop that mad rush.

- Arthur Guy Empey, *Over the Top*, 1917