

© Discipline in the ranks

The maintenance of discipline in the army has always been considered a very serious affair. Whilst it is clear from statistics that there was much ill-discipline in the army throughout the war, most of it was of a non-serious nature. The instances of failure to obey orders are relatively few, and the number of men convicted and suffering from serious punishment was miniscule as a proportion of the whole.

Small scale misdemeanours

These crimes included everything from matters of individual presentation such as being unshaven, untidy or losing kit; not saluting or addressing superiors correctly; dirty or incorrect equipment; being late on parade or after curfew, etc. They would be noted and dealt with by the NCOs and officers of a man's own unit. NCOs often gave men extra fatigues or exercise as punishment for small matters. Being confined to barracks or losing pay was an annoyance for men who were always ready for rest and amusement.

Squadron, Troop, Battery and Company Conduct Sheet.						Army Form B. 121.			
W. P. Griffith & Sons Ltd., 100, Old Bailey, E.C. 4. Forms B. 121.						Number of Sheet <i>1st</i>			
1701 W. 4577/114 200 1/11 14 56 <i>14th Hussar</i> Regiment of <i>Foot</i>						Signature of O. C. Company			
Regimental Number and Name		Enlistment		Trade	Good Conduct Badges, Service Pay or Pendency Pay				
No. <i>11377</i>	<i>Lewis, W.</i>	Age on <i>20</i> years <i>15</i> months <i>15</i> days	Place and Date of Enlistment <i>Pirbright 21 Aug 15</i>	Religion <i>1 of 8</i>					
Joined <i>21 Aug 15</i>	Date <i>21 Aug 15</i>	Period of <i>9</i> years	Place of Birth <i>1st 1st</i>						
Joined <i>21 Aug 15</i>	Date <i>21 Aug 15</i>	Period of <i>9</i> years	Place of Birth <i>1st 1st</i>						
Joined <i>21 Aug 15</i>	Date <i>21 Aug 15</i>	Period of <i>9</i> years	Place of Birth <i>1st 1st</i>						
Place	Date of Offence	Rank	Cases of Disobedience	OFFENCE	Names of Witnesses	Punishment awarded	Date of award of order of discharge with trial	By whom awarded	REMARKS
<i>Pirbright</i>	<i>16/4/15</i>	<i>8th</i>		<i>Overstaying his pass from M.N. 12pm till 7.30 P.M. 20.4.15 (79 1/2 hrs)</i>	<i>Lt. Adams</i>	<i>5 days C.B.</i>	<i>21/4/15</i>	<i>Capt. Brighton</i>	<i>Forfeited 4 days' pay</i>
<i>Pirbright</i>	<i>15/5/15</i>	<i>8th</i>		<i>Absent from tattoo until 10.30am 16/5/15.</i>	<i>Sgt. Adams</i> <i>Sgt. Rogers</i>	<i>3 days C.B.</i>	<i>17/5/15</i>	<i>Capt. Brighton</i>	<i>Forfeited 2 days' pay</i>

The Conduct Sheet of **59: William Lewis**. Whilst in training at Pirbright near Guildford William committed two breaches of conduct:

16 April 1915 - overstaying his pass from midnight until 7.30pm on 20 April (79½ hours) - 5 days confined to barracks and forfeited 4 days' pay.

15 May 1915 - absent from tattoo until 10.30am 16 May - 3 days confined to barracks and forfeited two days' pay.

For moderately serious crimes, a man could elect to be tried by a district Court-Martial, or be 'convicted' and sentenced by his Commanding Officer. The CO could sanction maximum punishments as follows: detention up to 28 days; field punishment up to 28 days; forfeit of all pay up to 28 days; for drunkenness, a fine up to 10 shillings. The CO could inflict minor punishments, with the offender having no right to a court-martial: confinement to camp for up to 14 days; extra guard duty; reprimand, severe reprimand or admonition.

Serious matters

These were tried by a Court-Martial. Some of these offences were ones that would have been tried by a civilian court if the man had not been on active service e.g. murder or rape. Other offences were purely military in nature, such as desertion. Some examples of offences tried by a Court-Martial, and the maximum sentence that could be imposed, are:

Shamefully casting away arms in the presence of the enemy	Death
Misbehaving before the enemy in such a manner as to show cowardice	Death
Committing an offence against the person of a resident in the country in which he was serving	Death
When acting as a sentinel on active service sleeping at his post	Death
Causing a mutiny in the forces, or endeavouring to persuade persons in HM forces to join in a mutiny	Death
Striking his superior officer	Death
Disobeying a lawful command given by his superior officer	Penal servitude
Deserting HM service, or attempting to desert	Death
Behaving in a scandalous manner unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman	Cashiering
Wilfully maiming himself with intent to render himself unfit for service	Imprisonment
Drunkenness	Cashiering or imprisonment

‘Cashiering’ resulted in the man being dismissed from the armed forces in disgrace.

In total, 5,952 officers and 298,310 other ranks were tried at a Court-Martial, around 3% of the total of men who joined the army. Of those tried, 89% were convicted, 8% were acquitted and the remainder were either convicted without the conviction being confirmed or with it being subsequently quashed. Of those convicted, 30% were for absence without leave, 15% were for drunkenness, 14% for desertion (although only 3% were actually in the field at the time), 11% for insubordination, 11% for loss of army property, and the remaining 19% for various other crimes.

The main punishments applied were:

Three months detention in a military compound	24%
Six months detention in a military compound	10%
Field Punishment Number 1	22%
Field Punishment Number 2	8%
Fines	12%
Reduction in rank	10%

3080 men (1.1% of those convicted) were sentenced to death; of these, 89% were reprieved and the sentence converted to a different one and 346 men were executed. Their crimes included desertion - 266; murder - 37; cowardice in the face of the enemy - 18; quitting their post - 7; striking or showing violence to their superiors - 6; disobedience - 5; mutiny - 3; sleeping at post - 2; casting away arms - 2. Of the 346 who were executed, 91 were already under a suspended sentence from an earlier conviction, 40 of which were suspended death sentences.

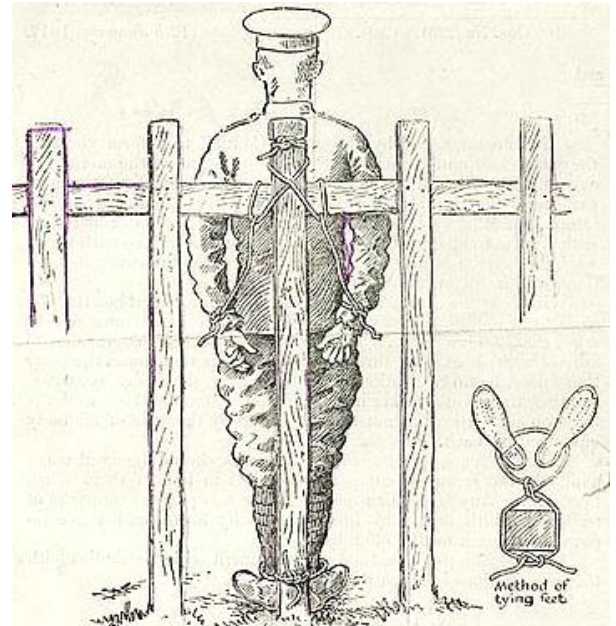
Field punishments

Field Punishment (FP) was introduced in 1881 following the abolition of flogging, and was a common punishment during WW I. A commanding officer could award FP for up to 28 days, whilst a court martial could award it for up to 90 days, either as FP Number 1 or FP Number 2.

Field Punishment Number 1 consisted of the convicted man being shackled in irons and secured to a fixed object, often a gun wheel, fence, post or similar. He could only be fixed in this way for up to 2 hours in 24, and not for more than 3 days in 4, or for more than 21 days in his sentence. This punishment was often known as 'crucifixion' and due to its humiliating nature was viewed by many Tommies as unfair.

Field Punishment Number 2 was similar except the man was shackled but not fixed to anything so he was still able to march with his unit; this was considered to be a relatively tolerable punishment.

Both forms of punishment were carried out by the office of the Provost-Marshall, unless the unit was officially on the move when it would be carried out regimentally. In both forms of Field Punishment the soldier was also subjected to hard labour and loss of pay.



Contemporary illustration of Field Punishment Number One.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_punishment

Of the men considered in this work the only record of Field Punishment was that awarded to **20: John Robert Davies** who, for misconduct, received 10 days Field Punishment Number 2 by his Commanding Officer.

The role of the Military Police

Military Police matters came under the office of the Adjutant-General (AG). On his behalf, the Provost-Marshall (PM) supervised military police duties of the army in the field. At each level of the army hierarchy, the AG and the PM were represented. Each infantry Division, for example, had an Assistant Provost-Marshall, who received orders from the Divisional Assistant Adjutant-General, and who was responsible for organising the police under his command. The military police ('redcaps' from the red cover around their service cap) were responsible for arresting all persons found without passes, plundering, making unlawful requisitions, or committing offences of any kind. They were also responsible for collecting stragglers, and for guarding against spies. In case of emergency they could call upon any troops in the vicinity to supply guards, sentries or patrols. In the Indian Army, the Provost-Marshall could order corporal punishment without trial, of up to 30 lashes.

[Much of this section has been taken, with some minor amendment and addition, from The Long, Long Trail: <http://www.1914-1918.net/crime.htm>]

Ⓟ Some key dates and significant events

1914

1 August	Germany declared war on Russia
3 August	Germany declared war on France
4 August	Britain declared war on Germany
7 - 23 August	Battle of the Frontiers, five battles, mainly involving French and German Forces; Allied forces were forced to withdraw to the Marne. The French were hoping to score a quick victory by invading Alsace and Lorraine but were met by effective German counter-attacks using heavy artillery and machine-guns. The French suffered heavy casualties including 27,000 soldiers killed in a single day, the worst one-day death toll in the history of the French Army. The French then fall back toward Paris having suffered 300,000 total casualties
17 August	Russia invaded Germany, attacking into East Prussia, and forcing the outnumbered Germans to fall back. This established the Eastern Front where Russia opposed Germany and Austria-Hungary
25 - 26 August	At The Battle of Le Cateau rearguard actions by British forces (7,812 British casualties) delayed the advance of German troops on Paris
26 August	Russian army defeated at Tannenburg and Masurian Lakes
6 - 12 September	At The First Battle of the Marne the French army and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) resisted advancing German troops invading Belgium and northeastern France and were within 30 miles of Paris. This battle prompted trench warfare. The French incurred 250,000 losses, the Germans suffered similar. The British recorded 12,733 casualties
12 - 28 September	At The First Battle of the Aisne a frontal attack was made by the Allies against the German First and Second armies' superior defensive positions across the river at the Aisne. Approximately 3,000 British soldiers died
25 September - 22 November	The 'Race to the Sea', with both sides attempting to move towards the English Channel whilst outmanoeuvring and outflanking each other. The First Battle of Albert and The Battle of Arras began. The Western Front line began to stabilise as fighting moved towards Flanders
19 October - 22 November	The First Battle of Ypres - the last major conflict in the "Race to the Sea" (in western Belgium) and the battle which consolidated the location of the Western Front. British casualties were reported at 58,155, French around 50,000, German 130,000
29 October	Turkey entered the war on the side of the Germans
20 December - 17 March 1915	The First Battle of Champagne was the first significant attack by the Allies against the Germans after trench warfare was adopted by both sides. French casualties were some 90,000; the German Third Army lost an equivalent number

1915

13 January	The British War Council resolved that the Admiralty should prepare for a naval expedition in February against the Dardanelles
19 January	The first Zeppelin raid on Britain took place when two airships dropped bombs on Great Yarmouth, Sheringham and King's Lynn. Four people were killed and 16 injured ⁷⁶
29 January	The Walney Island battery near Barrow-in-Furness was shelled by a German submarine, the first operation of German submarines in the Irish Sea
31 January	Poison gas was used for the first time in the war as Germans on the Eastern Front attacked Russian positions west of Warsaw. Although the Germans fired 18,000 gas shells, they had little effect on the Russians as extremely low temperatures prevented the gas from vaporising
3 February	Turkish troops launched an unsuccessful attack against the British-controlled Suez Canal in Egypt
4 February	Germany declared the waters surrounding British Isles to be a war zone in which ships could be sunk without warning
16 February	On the Western Front, the French launched a second offensive against the German defence positions in Champagne. Bugged down by winter weather and a lack of heavy artillery, and having suffered 240,000 casualties, the French withdrew
18 February	The first German U-Boat campaign of the war began with unrestricted attacks against merchant and passenger ships in the waters around the British Isles
19 February	Britain bombarded Turkish forts in the Dardanelles
1 March	The British blockade of German East Africa began
10 - 13 March	The Battle of Neuve Chapelle began. Douglas Haig's First Army led the attack on Neuve Chapelle in the Artois region of France. Although the German lines were broken through the success could not be exploited. Allied casualties were 11,200 (7,000 British, 4,200 Indian). German losses were similar, with 1,200 German troops captured
11 March	Britain began a blockade of German ports; ships from neutral countries would be escorted to Allied ports and detained
11 April	British troops in Mesopotamia countered a large attack by the Turks against Basra. British troops then moved up the Tigris Valley toward Baghdad
22 April - May 25	The Second Battle of Ypres This conflict saw the first large-scale use of chemical weapons with around 10,000 troops being affected by chlorine and, later, mustard gas. Half died within 10 minutes. Losses were

⁷⁶ The airships had planned to bomb Humberside but were diverted by strong winds. Through the war airships made about 51 bombing raids on England during the war, killing 557 and injuring a further 1,358. More than 5,000 bombs were dropped on towns across Britain, causing £1.5 million in damage. Of the 84 airships used, 30 were either shot down or lost in accidents. The early raids by airships prompted the forming of the RAF.

	estimated at 69,000 Allied troops (59,000 British, 10,000 French), against 35,000 German losses
25 April	Allied troops landed in Gallipoli in an attempt to unblock the Dardanelles Straits near Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) to reopen access to Russia through the Black Sea. The landing came after a failed attempt by British and French warships to force their way through the narrow Straits. The 70,000 landing troops included 15,000 Australians and New Zealanders. The peninsula was heavily defended by Turkish troops, supplied and trained by Germans
2 May	On the Eastern Front, a combined Austro-German offensive began against the Russian 3 rd Army at Tarnow and Gorlice in Galicia. The Russian defences, short of artillery shells and rifles, were weakened and the Russians began a disorganised retreat
7 May	The RMS <i>Lusitania</i> was sunk by a German U-boat off the coast of Ireland
9 May	Following six days of artillery bombardment by over a thousand French guns, the French 10 th Army attacked German defence lines in the Artois, advancing toward Vimy Ridge. The French failed to capitalise on the narrow breach created in the German lines. On the following day the Germans counter-attacked and pushed back the French
9 May	British and Indian troops launched a second major offensive against the Germans around Neuve Chapelle in the Artois. However, artillery support was lacking and German machine guns cut down the Allied forces - there were 11,000 casualties. The attack was called off the following day
15 May	British and Indian troops launched another large attack against German forces at Festubert north of Neuve Chapelle. Although preceded by a 60-hour artillery bombardment the Allied troops could advance for only 1,000 yards whilst sustaining 16,000 casualties
23 May	Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary and launched offensives along the 400-mile border between Austria and Italy
16 June	The French 10 th Army launched a second attempt to seize Vimy Ridge from the Germans in the Artois. They encountered intensive artillery bombardment from the German 6 th Army. Initially successful, they withdrew with 100,000 casualties; the Germans lost around 60,000
9 July	In Africa, the German colony of Southwest Africa (present day Namibia) was taken by the Allies following 11 months of fighting between the Germans and South African and Rhodesian troops loyal to the British
5 August	Austro-German forces captured Warsaw from the Russians. Russian forces were driven back at several locations on the Eastern Front, allowing the Germans to focus more effort on the Western Front
6 August	Around 20,000 additional British troops landed Gallipoli but poor communications and the weather limited their effectiveness

- 25 - 26 September On the Western Front, the British used poison gas (chlorine) for the first time as they launched an attack (The Battle of Loos) against the German 6th Army in the Artois. As the German forces fell back British troops advanced and took Loos but didn't capitalise on the broad breach in the German lines. German troops regrouped and, on 26 September, German machine guns caused chaos amongst the British forces. Around 50,000 British troops died in the offensive. Army Commander John French was sacked and replaced by Douglas Haig
- 26 September French forces attempted, for the third time, to capture the Vimy Ridge in Artois. This time they were successful
- 26 - 28 September In the Middle East, British forces defeated the Turks at The Battle of Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia. British forces moved to capture Baghdad; this failed and the troops returned to Kut-al-Amara
- 5 December Turkish troops lay siege to Kut-al-Amara and surrounded the British garrison there, cutting them off completely
- 19 December After months of stalemate, and the loss of around 250,000 men, Allied troops began an evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The British Navy successfully evacuated 83,000 survivors by sea as the Turks watched without firing a shot

1916

- 7 January The evacuation of Helles on the Gallipoli Peninsula began; this was completed the following day
- 21 January The first British Attack on Hanna in Mesopotamia began but a first attempt to relieve Kut failed
- 16 February The War Office took over the anti-aircraft defence of London from the Admiralty, and became responsible for anti-aircraft defence generally throughout the UK
- 27 January The Military service Bill was introduced in Britain providing, after 2 March, for the conscription of single men aged 18–41. The Bill excluded men working in agriculture, mining or on the railways
- 21 February The Battle of Verdun began the largest and longest single battle in WW1 which did not end until 18 December. The German 5th Army attacked the French 2nd Army north of Verdun after a nine-hour artillery bombardment. The Germans made rapid gains along the east bank of the Meuse but, after several days, the French brought in massive reinforcements and strengthened their defences. An early spring thaw turned the battlefield into a sea of mud, hampering all movement
- 6 March German forces renewed the Verdun offensive, this time attacking along the west bank of the Meuse and targeting two French-held strategic hills northwest of the town. French forces continued to hold most of the upland

18 March	On the Eastern Front, the Russians staged an offensive to divert German resources from Verdun. Although Russians greatly outnumbered the Germans in the northern sector of the Eastern Front, their poorly coordinated offensive around Vilna was swiftly defeated by the Germans with 70,000 Russian casualties
31 March	During a German airship raid on the East Coast of England Airship L.-15 was brought down by gunfire near the mouth of the Thames
9 April	The Germans attacked again at Verdun, along a 20-mile front on both the east and west banks of the Meuse. Once again the attack only yielded small gains
17 April	A British attack on Kondoa Irangi in German East Africa began
20 April	Russian troops from the Far East arrived at Marseilles. The disguised German transport ship <i>Aud</i> (really the SS <i>Libau</i>) was scuttled near Cork after being trapped by a blockade of British ship whilst trying to land arms, in preparation for the Easter Rising, on the Irish coast
29 April	In the Middle East, the five-month siege at the British garrison at Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia ended as 13,000 British and Indian soldiers, on the verge of starvation, surrendered to the Turks. This, the largest-ever surrender by the British Army, came after four failed attempts by British relief troops to break through to the garrison
3 May	At Verdun, German forces began another attack on the west bank of the Meuse. This time they gain the advantage and within three days they captured the two heavily-defended French-held hills above the town
31 May	The main German and British naval fleets clashed in The Battle of Jutland in the North Sea. Recognising that they were outgunned by a larger British fleet, the German Navy disengaged by abruptly turning away and, in the night, withdraw entirely and were not pursued by the British Navy. Although the Germans sank 14 of the 151 British ships while losing 11 of 99 ships, Britain retained its dominance of the North Sea and the naval blockade of Germany remained intact
1 June	At Verdun the German forces continued their offensive success along the Meuse and attacked the French on the east bank, targeting Fort Vaux and the fortification at Thiaumont. By 9 June both objectives were taken and the French suffered heavy casualties
4 June	Four Russian armies on the Eastern Front, under General Alexei Brusilov, began a general offensive in the southwest along a 300-mile front. A broad, sweeping, offensive over hundreds of miles stretched the defending Austro-Hungarian forces. To assist, the Germans removed four divisions from Verdun; by the close of summer the Germans sent a further 20 divisions
22 June	The Germans resumed their offensive near Verdun, targeting Fort Souville overlooking the city and the Meuse bridges. Using poisonous phosgene gas at the start of the attack, they took the village of Fleury

	two miles north of Verdun, but their advance southward was then halted by a strong French counter-attack. In the conflict to capture Verdun around 500,000 men had already died
24 June	The Allies began a week-long artillery bombardment of German defensive positions on the Somme River in northern France, in preparation for a major British-led offensive. Over 1.5 million shells were fired along a 15-mile front against the intricate German trench system and to remove the rows of barbed wire protecting the trenches. British Commander Douglas Haig believed that this would allow an unhindered infantry advance and a rapid breakthrough of the German Front on the first day of battle
1 July	The opening day of The Battle of the Somme. Against Haig's beliefs, the British Army suffered the worst single-day death toll in its history with 18,800 soldiers killed. The 13 attacking divisions encountered German defences that were still actively functioning despite the previous seven-day bombardment. The British, attacking in waves in daylight, were systematically cut down by accurate German machine gun fire. Although the British and French troops made marginal gains against the Germans the conflict rapidly became a stalemate as both sides entrenched. This situation would continue for nearly five months, until 18 November
13 July	The British launched a night attack against German positions along a 3.5-mile portion of the Somme Front. After advancing nearly 1,000 yards, the advance was halted as the Germans regroup their defences. Two days later, the British once again penetrated the German line and advanced to High Wood but were then pushed back
28 August	Italy declared war on Germany
15 September	Tanks first appeared on the battlefield as British troops renewed the Somme offensive and attacked German positions along a five-mile front, advancing 2,000 yards
20 September	On the Eastern Front, the Brusilov Offensive halted after the Russians had pushed the Austro-Hungarian and German forces westwards for 60 miles along the 300-mile front, taking 350,000 prisoners. Having brought in many new divisions from the Western Front as reinforcement, the Russian advance was halted as their supplies ran low. Forced to withdraw from the territories they had gained previously, and having lost nearly a million men, social unrest began in Russia
25 September	British and French troops renewed their attacks in The Somme, capturing several villages north of the Somme River, including Thiepval, where the British again successfully used tanks again. Following these successes, however, heavy rain turned the battlefield to mud, preventing further offensive
24 October	At Verdun, the French forces began an offensive designed to end the

- German threat there by targeting Fort Douaumont and other German-occupied sites on the east bank of the Meuse. Fort Douaumont was taken, followed by Fort Vaux further east, nine days later
- 18 November The Battle of the Somme ended as the British and French decided to cease the offensive. The Germans had been pushed back a few miles along the entire 15-mile front, but the major breakthrough the Allies had planned never occurred. Both sides each suffered over 600,000 casualties during the five-month battle. Among the injured German soldiers was Corporal Adolf Hitler, wounded by shrapnel
- 6 December Bucharest, the Romanian capital, fell to the Austro-Germans effectively ending Romanian resistance to the Austro-German invasion. The whole of Romania, including the Ploesti oil fields, was now in German hands
- 7 December David Lloyd George replaced fellow-Liberal Herbert Henry Asquith as the British Prime Minister
- 15 December The final offensive in The Battle of Verdun began with French troops pushing the Germans out of Louvemont and Bezonvaux on the east bank of the Meuse. With losses elsewhere, the German withdrawal ended the immediate threat to Verdun and both sides now focused their efforts on battles elsewhere along the Western Front. Overall, the French and Germans suffered nearly a million casualties combined during the ten month battle in which the Germans failed to capture the city of Verdun

1917

- 19 January The German Government sent instructions to the German Minister in Mexico to negotiate an alliance with Mexico and Japan against the United States
- 25 January Southwold and Wangford on the Suffolk coast were shelled by German destroyers
- 1 February Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare around the British Isles resumed for the purpose of knocking Britain out of the war by cutting off all imports and starving the country into submission
- 3 February The United States, still neutral, severed diplomatic links with Germany after a U-Boat sank the American ship *SS Housatonic*, sailing from Galveston to Liverpool with a cargo of grain and flour, 20 miles south of Bishop Rock near the Isles of Scilly
Seven more American ships were sunk in February and March; the Germans sank 500 ships in just sixty days
- 25 February In Mesopotamia, in the Middle East, newly reinforced British troops retook Kut-al-Amara from outnumbered Turkish forces and the British then continued their advance and captured Baghdad, Ramadi and Tikrit. In France German forces withdrew from front line positions on the Ancre as part of the withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line
- 8 March The Russian Revolution started with a mass protest by Russian civilians

	in Petrograd (now St Petersburg) against Czar Nicholas II and the war. Within days, Russian soldiers mutinied and joined the growing revolution
15 March	Along the central portion of the Western Front in France German troops began a strategic withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line (known also as the Siegfried Line)
6 April	The United States declared war on Germany
9 April	The British Third Army, supported by Canadian and Australian troops, made rapid advances north of the Hindenburg Line at Arras and Vimy on the Western Front culminating in a 3½ mile gain and the capture of Vimy Ridge by Canadian troops. Again, the Allies did not capitalise on these early gains allowing the Germans to regroup. The British suffered 150,000 casualties during the offensive, the Germans losing 100,000
7 June	The opening day of The Battle of Messines (7–14 June) in West Flanders, an offensive conducted by the British Second Army, under the command of General Sir Herbert Plumer. The battle began with the detonation of 19 mines beneath the German front position on the Messines Ridge; this was followed by a creeping barrage 700 yards deep which protected the British troops as they secured the ridge with support from tanks, cavalry patrols and aircraft. British attacks from 8 to 14 June advanced the front line beyond the former German Seenen (Oosttaverne) line. The Battle of Messines was a prelude to the much larger Third Battle of Ypres which opened on 31 July
13 June	London came under intense attack from German planes dropping bombs; 158 persons were killed and 425 were wounded
25 June	The first American troops were landed in France
31 July	The opening day of The Third Battle of Ypres (also known as Passchendaele), another attempt to break through the German lines. The Germans were strongly entrenched and defended with well-positioned artillery. The British Fifth Army succeeded in securing forward trench positions but further progress was halted by heavy artillery barrages from the German Fourth Army and constant wet weather.
1 September	On the Eastern Front, the final Russian battle in the war commenced as German troops attacked toward Riga (now the capital of Latvia). The German 8 th Army used storm troop tactics as battalions armed with light machine-guns, grenades and flame throwers focused on quickly infiltrating the rear areas of the conflict in an attempt to disrupt communications and destroy the Russian artillery. The Russian 12 th Army abandoned Riga and began a rapid retreat along the Dvina River, pursued by the Germans
20 September	A revised British strategy began at Ypres designed to wear down the Germans. This featured a series of intensive, narrowly focused artillery and troop attacks with limited objectives, to be launched every six days.

	The first such attack, along the Menin Road toward Gheluvelt, gave a gain of about 1,000 yards with 22,000 British and Australian casualties. Subsequent attacks yielded similar results
12 October	The Ypres offensive concluded around the village of Passchendaele as thousands of Australian and New Zealand troops died whilst attempting to press forward across a mud-filled battlefield, advancing just 100 yards. Steady October rains created a quagmire in which wounded soldiers drowned in mud-filled shell craters
24 October	The Battle of Caporetto in northern Italy. A rout of the Italian Army began as 35 German and Austrian divisions crossed the Isonzo River into Italy at Caporetto and then rapidly pushed 41 Italian divisions 60 miles southward. Overwhelmed and demoralised, and with only limited support, 300,000 Italians surrendered as the Austro-Germans advanced, and a further 400,000 troops deserted. The Austro-Germans halted at the Piave River north of Venice, as their supply lines had become overstretched
26 October	At Ypres, a second, failed, attempt (now involving Canadian troops) was made to capture the village of Passchendaele. Four days later, the Allies attacked again and moved closer as the Germans slowly began to withdraw
31 October	In the Middle East British troops began an attack against the Turkish defensive lines between Gaza and Beersheba in southern Palestine. Following the initial attack on Beersheba Turkish troops were withdrawn from Gaza which allowed British troops to attack the town. The Turks then retreated northward toward Jerusalem with the Allies in pursuit. Assisting the Allies was a group of Arab fighters led by T. E. Lawrence ('Lawrence of Arabia'), an Arab speaking English archaeologist who encouraged Arab opposition to the Turks and disrupted their railroad and communication systems
6 November	The village of Passchendaele was captured by Canadian troops. Allied offensives ceased and The Third Battle of Ypres ended. No significant gains in territory had been made although, on all sides, there had been 500,000 casualties
6 - 7 November	In Russia, Bolsheviks led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky overthrew the Provisional Government in the October Revolution (24 - 25 October according to the Russian calendar). They established a Soviet Government based on Marxism which prohibited private enterprise and private land ownership. Lenin announced that Soviet Russia would end immediately its involvement in the war and he renounced all existing treaties with the Allies
11 November	The German High Command, led by Erich Ludendorff, gathered at Mons in Belgium to determine a strategy for 1918. Ludendorff recorded that he was willing to accept a million German casualties to achieve victory in

early 1918, before American forces arrived in Europe in significant numbers

- 20 November The first-ever mass attack by tanks took place as the British Third Army pushed 381 tanks, accompanied by six infantry divisions and heavy artillery, in an attack of German trenches near Cambrai in northern France, an important rail centre. The attack targeted a 6-mile-wide sector of the front line. By the end of the first day this appeared to be a success with five miles gained and two German divisions wrecked. However, as with past offensives, the opportunity to exploit first-day gains was missed; heavy German reinforcements and an effective counter-attack resulted in the Germans retaking most of the ground lost previously
- 7 December Following the withdrawal of Russia from the war, Romania arranged an armistice with the Central Powers
- 9 December Jerusalem was captured by the British, ending four centuries of control by the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire
- 15 December Soviet Russia signed an armistice with Germany. With Russia's departure from the Eastern Front, forty-four German divisions became available to be redeployed to the Western Front in time for their Spring Offensive

1918

- 3 March The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between Russia and Germany. By the treaty Russia ceded its Baltic states to Germany, the province of Kars Oblast in the South Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire and recognised the independence of Ukraine. The treaty was effectively terminated in November 1918 when Germany surrendered to the Allies
- 21 March Germany's Spring Offensive, the strategy for victory in early 1918, began with The Saint Michael Offensive after a five-hour 6,000-gun artillery bombardment; 65 divisions from the German 2nd, 17th and 18th Armies attacked the British Third and Fifth Armies along a 60-mile front in the Somme. The Fifth Army was rapidly overrun and the Germans recaptured the territory they lost in 1916 during The Battle of the Somme. However, over the following two weeks the British Third Army held their positions and prevented the Germans from taking Arras and Amiens, key objectives of the offensive
- 1 April The Royal Air Force was formed
- 9 - 29 April The second major Spring Offensive, The Georgette Offensive, began as 46 divisions from the German 6th Army attacked the British Second Army around Ypres. The Germans pushed the British back three miles to the outskirts of Ypres, recapturing the Passchendaele Ridge. However, the arrival of British, French and Australian reinforcements from the south halted the German momentum and General Ludendorff's goal of first separating the British and French armies via Michael and then destroying the British via Michael and Georgette was not achieved.

Additionally, the Germans suffered 330,000 casualties in the two offensives

21 April

Germany's Red Baron, the fighter pilot Manfred von Richthofen, was shot down and killed by the British (by a single bullet, probably fired from the ground) near Vaux-sur-Somme. The German Ace was credited with shooting down 80 Allied aircraft and was buried with a full military funeral in the cemetery at the village of Bertangles, near Amiens, on 22 April. Allied squadrons stationed nearby presented memorial wreaths, one of which was inscribed with the words *To Our Gallant and Worthy Foe*. Subsequently, Richthofen's body was reinterred on three occasions and is now buried at Wiesbaden in Germany

27 May - 3 June

The Blücher-Yorck Offensive, the third conflict of the Spring Offensive, opened with the intention of restricting the movement of Allied troops in central France and preventing further reinforcements from reaching the British positions in the north of the country. After a highly effective artillery German barrage east of the Aisne River, German storm troops overrode the French 6th Army and General Ludendorff, in a change of strategy, decided to move towards Paris. Within two days, the Germans crossed the Aisne River and rapidly advanced westward, coming within 50 miles of Paris. This rapid advance weakened the German forces and Allied reinforcements, including Americans, poured in to the region

28 - 29 May

Troops of the US 1st Infantry Division, in America's first significant action in the war, captured the village of Cantigny from the Germans. There were now around 650, 000 American soldiers in France, commanded by General John Pershing

6 June

The Battle of Belleau Wood involved the US 2nd Infantry Division begins.

9 June

The Germans launched the fourth assault of the Spring Offensive with the 18th Army attacking in a southwest direction toward Paris. French and American troops successfully counter-attacked and the new offensive ceased after just four days

15 June

Austrian troops began an offensive by crossing the Piave River in Italy and establishing a new 12-mile front. Failing to hold this position the Austrians withdraw after suffering 150, 000 casualties

Mid-1918

The 1918 flu pandemic (commonly termed *Spanish Flu* although it was unlikely to have originated there) had started in early 1918 and became one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history affecting around 500 million around the world. Over 50 million, of a world population of about 1.9 billion (around 2.7%) probably died of the illness which, disproportionately and predominately affected healthy young adults. Soldiers on all sides were affected severely – the special circumstances of battlefield conditions (malnourishment, overcrowded medical camps and hospitals, poor hygiene) promoted the bacterial superinfection. At times troop losses from the disease exceeded combat casualties,

especially weakening the hard-pressed German Army. Wartime censors on all sides minimised early reports of illness and mortality and the pandemic did not diminish until the end of 1920

- 15 - 17 July The Marne-Reims Offensive, the last major German strategy of the war, began with a two-pronged attack around Reims (The Second Battle of the Marne) by 52 divisions. German divisions of the 1st and 3rd Armies attacked the French 4th Army to the east of Reims, while a further 17 divisions of the 7th Army assisted by the new 9th Army attacked the French 6th Army in the west. The Allies, expecting an attack in this area, had reinforced their troops; 85, 000 US forces were brought in to help the French. The German attack failed and ceased at 11.00am on the first day.
To the west of Reims the German advance was blocked by the US 3rd Infantry Division and was followed by a successful French and American counter-attack
- 17 July Russian Bolsheviks murdered former Czar Nicholas and his entire family. The civil war in Russia, together with disease and starvation, lasted for three years and resulted in a death toll estimated at 15 million
- 18 July A combined French and American attack along the Marne was the first in a series of coordinated Allied counter-offensives on the Western Front. Three French armies accompanied by five American divisions crossed the Marne River and the German 7th and 9th Armies begin to withdrawal from the area
- 8 August The Battle of Amiens (also known as The Third Battle of Picardy), the opening phase of the Allied offensive later known as The Hundred Days Offensive began as the British Fourth Army, using 456 tanks, attacked German positions east of the town. The British forces advanced rapidly for about seven miles, taking over 13, 000 prisoners before nine German divisions were moved in to halt the advance
- 15 August British Field Marshal Douglas Haig refused demands from Supreme Allied Commander Marshal Ferdinand Foch to continue the Amiens offensive as that attack was faltering as the troops outran their supplies and artillery, and further German reserves were being moved to the sector
- 20 August The French 10th Army took 8,000 prisoners at Noyon and captured the Aisne Heights
- 21 August - 3 September The Second Battle of Bapaume to the north of the Somme commenced and developed into an advance which pushed the German 2nd Army back over a 55 kilometre front, from south of Douai to La Fère, south of Saint-Quentin, Aisne. Albert was captured on 22 August. On 26 August, the British First Army widened the attack by another twelve kilometres, sometimes called The Second Battle of Arras. Bapaume fell on 29 August. The Australian Corps crossed the Somme River on the

	night of 31 August, and broke the German lines at The Battle of Mont St. Quentin and The Battle of Péronne. The British Fourth Army's commander, General Henry Rawlinson, described the Australian advances of 31 August - 4 September as the greatest military achievement of the war
12 September	The first stand-alone attack by Americans occurred as the US 1 st Army attacked the southernmost portion of the Western Front in France at St. Mihiel. The offensive was supported by an unprecedented 1,476 Allied aircraft used as part of a coordinated air-ground attack. Within 36 hours, the Americans took 15, 000 prisoners and captured over 400 pieces of artillery as the Germans withdrew
15 September	The Allies pushed the Bulgarians out of Serbia as French, Serbian and Italian troops made rapid gains, advancing nearly 20 miles northward from Greece in three days
19 September	In the Middle East, the Allies launched a cavalry attack to push the Turks out of Palestine. Australian and Indian cavalry divisions pushed through the Turkish defences around Megiddo on the first day and continued northward. As the Turkish armies collapsed, they withdraw northward toward Damascus with the Allies in pursuit
26 September	The US 1 st Army and French 4 th Army began a joint offensive to clear the strongly defended corridor between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest. Heavy rain turned the area to a morass, the troops advancing slowly over the crater-filled terrain with 75,000 American casualties suffered over six weeks of fighting
27 September	The British First and Third Armies, aided by Australians and the US 2 nd Corps, broke through a 20-mile portion of the Hindenburg Line between Cambrai and St. Quentin
28 September	Belgian and British troops pushed back the Germans in The Fourth Battle of Ypres. Unlike the previous drawn-out battles, this one lasted for just two days as the Belgians took Dixmude and the British secured Messines Confronted by the unstoppable strength of the Allies and faced with the prospect of an outright military defeat on the Western Front, General Ludendorff suffered a nervous collapse at his headquarters and informed his superior, Paul von Hindenburg, that the war must be ended. The next day, Ludendorff, accompanied by Hindenburg, met with the Kaiser and urged him to end the war. The Kaiser agreed with the need for an armistice
29 September	Bulgaria signed an armistice with the Allies, becoming the first of the Central Powers to abandon the war
1 October	In the Middle East, Damascus was captured by Australian troops and Arab fighters
2 October	A military representative sent by Ludendorff to Berlin informed the

4 October	<p>legislature that the war was lost and that armistice discussions should begin immediately. The German politicians were shocked by the news, having largely been kept in the dark by the General Staff and the Kaiser</p> <p>US President Woodrow Wilson received a request from the German government, sent via the Swiss, asking for armistice discussions. The Germans bypassed the French and British in the hope of negotiating with Wilson who they perceived as being more lenient. Wilson, however, responded with a list of demands as a prelude to discussions including German withdrawal from all occupied territories and a total halt of U-Boat attacks</p>
5 October	Allied forces broke through the last remnants of the Hindenburg Line
6 October	A provisional government proclaimed the state of Yugoslavia, signalling the beginning of the breakup of the six hundred-year-old Hapsburg (Austro-Hungarian) Empire in central Europe
7 October	Poland, formerly part of the Russian Empire, proclaimed itself as an independent state
8 October	The British Third and Fourth Armies took 8,000 German prisoners whilst advancing toward Cambrai and Le Cateau
13 October	The Germans staged a general retreat along a 60-mile portion of the Western Front in France stretching from St. Quentin southward to the Argonne Forest, as French and American armies steadily advanced
14 October	The Germans abandoned their positions along the Belgian coast and northernmost France as the British and Belgians steadily advanced
23 October	<p>Under pressure from the French and British, US President Woodrow Wilson informed the German government that armistice negotiations could not take place with the existing military leaders still in office. Armistice negotiations were then conducted principally by civilian members of Germany's government; the German military felt that they had been betrayed by their politicians</p>
24 October	In southern Europe, the Allies crossed the Piave River to push the Austrians out of Italy. Seven Italian armies, incorporating British, French and American divisions, attacked the four remaining Austro-Hungarian armies from the Trentino westward to the Gulf of Venice. In its final battle of the war, the Austro-Hungarian Army lost 30, 000 soldiers and over 400, 000 were taken prisoner
29 October	The Czechs declared their independence from Austria and, two days later, Slovakia declared independence from Hungary
30 October	Turkey signed an armistice with the Allies, becoming the second of the Central Powers to abandon the war
1 November	The Allied armies resumed their eastward march as the US 1 st Army and the newly-formed US 2 nd Army attacked remaining German positions along the Meuse River near southern Belgium. Belgian and British forces moved toward Ghent and Mons in Belgium

3 November	Mutiny in the German Navy occurred at the ports of Kiel and Wilhelmshaven where sailors refused orders to put to sea to engage in a final battle with the British Navy. Civil unrest began in German cities including Munich, Stuttgart and Berlin
3 November	The only remaining ally of Germany, Austria-Hungary, signed an armistice with Italy, leaving Germany alone in the war
5 November	The Germans were informed that armistice discussions could be secured through France's Marshal Foch, the Allied Supreme Commander
8 November	At Compiègne, France, six representatives of the German government, with Matthias Erzberger as spokesman, were presented with armistice terms by Marshal Ferdinand Foch. The terms included the German evacuation of all occupied territory, an Allied occupation of Germany west of the Rhine River, surrender of weaponry including all submarines and battleships, and indefinite continuation of the naval blockade
9 November	The Kaiser's Imperial government collapsed as a German republic was proclaimed with Friedrich Ebert heading the new provisional government. Kaiser Wilhelm then took refuge in Holland amid concerns for his safety after his generals warned that they may not be able to adequately protect him from the volatile situation in German.
11 November	At 5:10 am, in a railway car at Compiègne, France, the Germans signed the Armistice which became effective at 11 am. Fighting continued all along the Western Front until precisely 11 am, with 2,000 casualties experienced that day by all sides
12 November	A final action occurred as German troops in Africa encountered British troops in Northern Rhodesia, where news of the Armistice had not reached the Germans

1919

6 January	An attempt was made in Berlin to overthrow Germany's provisional government as several buildings were seized by members of the communist Spartacus League led by Karl Liebknecht. The uprising was resisted by bands of Freikorps composed of ex-soldiers led by former German Army officers and Liebknecht was killed
18 January	The Paris Peace Conference opened with delegates from 32 nations including President Woodrow Wilson
28 April	The League of Nations was founded as a means of peaceably resolving future conflicts although Germany was initially excluded
21 June	The Germans scuttled 52 of their warships at the Royal Navy's base at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands. The German High Seas Fleet was interned there under the terms of the Armistice whilst negotiations took place over the fate of the ships. Fearing that all of the ships would be seized and divided amongst the allied powers, the German commander, Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, decided to sink the ships; a further 22 ships which had begun to sink were beached and salvaged

28 June	The Treaty of Versailles was signed in France. Germans reacted with mass demonstrations against the perceived harshness
31 July	The Weimar Republic began in Germany from a new constitution which provided for a liberal democracy. The government consisted of two houses of Parliament (Reichstag) and an elected president
September	Corporal Adolf Hitler was ordered by the German Army to investigate a small political group in Munich. the German Workers' Party. Hitler joined the group and begins to build it up, later changing its name to the National Socialist German Workers' (Nazi) Party. The anti-democratic group vehemently opposed the Treaty of Versailles and claimed the German Army was not defeated on the battlefield but was betrayed by a "stab in the back" wrought by disloyal politicians on the home front

Sources

The majority of this section has been taken, with amendment, from the WW1 timelines in *The History Place* (eg www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/firstworldwar/index-1916.html).

Additional information has been culled from:

World War I Timeline from 1914 to 1918 at <https://www.thoughtco.com/g00/wwi-timeline-1779202?i10c.referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.uk%2F>

The History Learning Site at <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-one/timeline-of-world-war-one/>

The Great War 1914 – 1918 : WW1 Timeline - a detailed timeline of the Great War at www.greatwar.co.uk/timeline/ww1-timeline.htm

Timeline of World War I at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_World_War_I

Timeline of WW1 at <http://www.datesandevents.org/events-timelines/17-timeline-of-ww1.htm>

Interactive WW1 Timeline at <https://www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline>

Historic UK at <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/World-War-1-Timeline>

© The progress of the war and the changing face of Europe

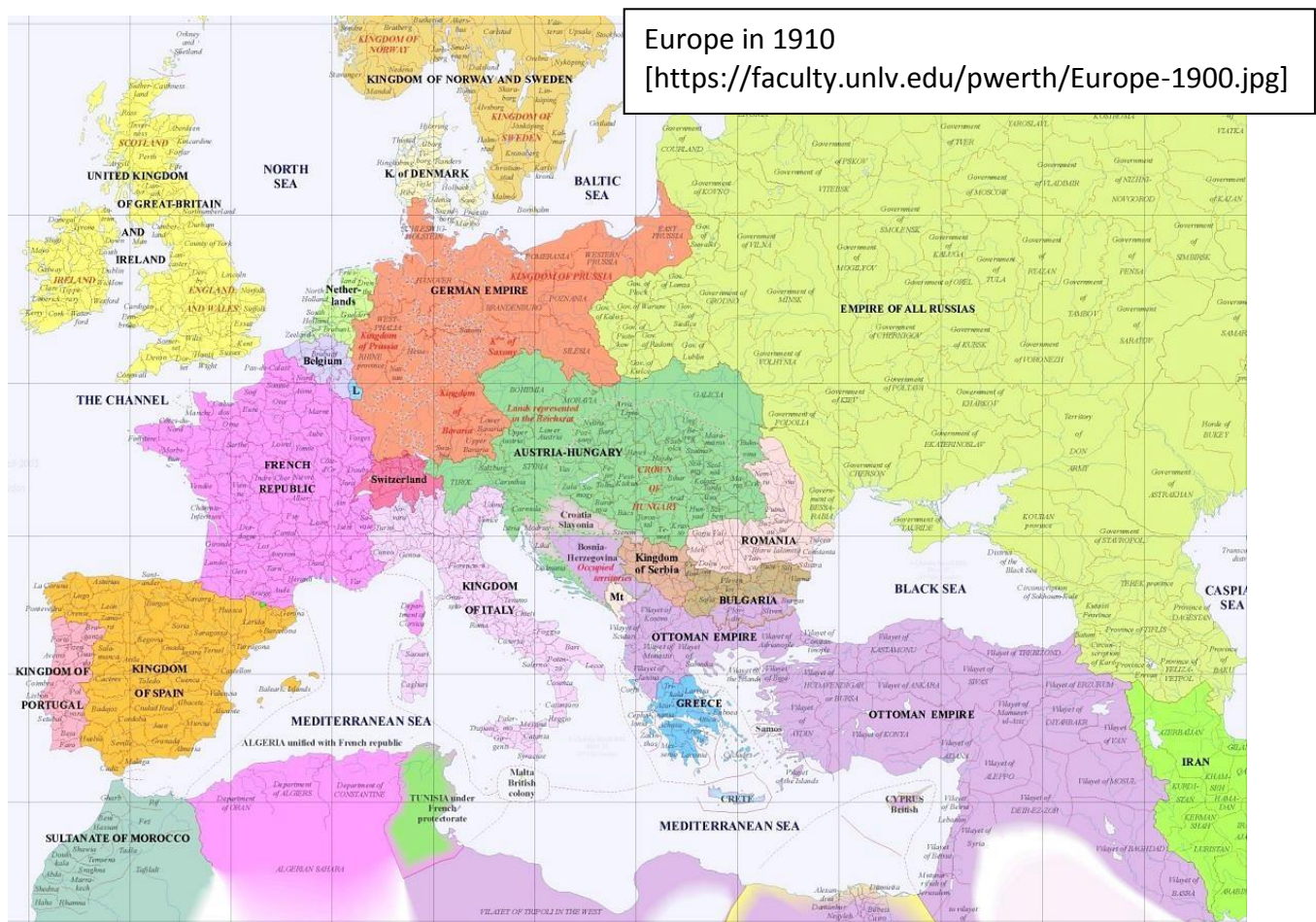
This brief account charts the progress of WW1 in Europe with particular emphasis on the events of 1917 and 1918 which helped to break the stalemate and ensured victory for the Allies.

By 1900 Europe was, as now, a collection of countries although some present-day countries did not then exist and some other boundaries were different.

The following map of 1910 shows

- the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway as a union of the separate kingdoms of Sweden and Norway under a common monarch and common foreign policy that lasted from 1814 until its dissolution in 1905 when Sweden accepted Norway's leaving the union.

- Southern Ireland (Éire, or the Republic of Ireland) as still part of a United Kingdom. The state was created as the Irish Free State in 1922 as a result of the Anglo-Irish Treaty; 26 of the 32 counties formed this new country. Until 1932 it had the status of dominion when a new constitution was adopted, in which the state was named "Ireland" and became a republic, with an elected non-executive president as head of state. It was officially declared a republic in 1949, following the Republic of Ireland Act 1948.
- the German Empire (Deutsches Reich) as the historical German nation state that existed from the unification of Germany in 1871 to the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1918. In 1900 the German Empire held the territories which would later be
 - much of western Poland.
 - the southern part of Lithuania.
 - The southern part of Denmark (southern Jutland peninsula).
- the Austro - Hungarian Empire, a constitutional union which had existed from 1867 and which consisted of present-day Austria, Hungary, parts of northern Italy, Slovenia, part of northern Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, western Romania, part of western Ukraine and part of western Belorussia,
- the Ottoman Empire which had existed since the end of the thirteenth century. This then included much of northern Greece, Albania, Macedonia, Turkey and parts of Syria and Iraq.
- European Russia enclosing present-day eastern Poland, Finland, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and much of Ukraine and Belorussia and part of Moldavia.



From 1879 an alliance had existed between Germany (blue) and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (red). This Dual Alliance was a defensive agreement, ratified on 7 October 1879, as part of Bismarck's system of alliances to prevent or limit war. The two powers promised each other support in case of attack by Russia and each state promised benevolent neutrality to the other if one of them was attacked by another European power - the greatest threat was considered to be from France.

With the onset of WW1 the countries of Europe associated into three groups:

- o The Central Powers (Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire) which became the Quadruple Alliance when they were joined after war began by Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.
- o The Triple Entente, a pact between Russia, Great Britain, and France. During the war this became the Allied Powers.

- o The Neutral Powers. During the course of the war these fell into three groups:
 - Perfectly neutral** - countries which, in theory, did not support in any way either of the opposing sides. Switzerland had declared its permanent neutrality in 1815 and wasn't invaded during the war; its location and neutrality made it the perfect place for both sides to obtain loans and host diplomatic meetings. Other countries considered to be perfectly neutral were the Netherlands, Denmark, Monaco, and Sweden.

Neutral, but invaded – Belgium and Luxembourg were neutral at the start of the War. However, the French resistance along the German border, and the strategic position of Luxembourg between Belgium, France and Germany, provided a route for German forces to enter France.

The German invasion of Luxembourg in August 1914 allowed Germany to use the railway lines. However, despite the German occupation, Luxembourg was allowed to maintain much of its independence and political mechanisms during the war.

On 2 August 1914 the German government demanded that German armies be given free passage through Belgian territory, although this was refused by the Belgian government on 3 August. On 4 August German troops invaded Belgium crossing the frontier at dawn. Liège was attacked on 4 August and fell on 7 August. Germany governed the occupied areas of Belgium (over 95% of the country) whilst a small area around Ypres remained under Belgian control.



Imperfectly neutral – in Europe Liechtenstein, technically neutral, had strong economic ties to the Austro-Hungarian Empire resulting in an economic embargo being placed on the principality by the Allied Powers. The economic depression that followed forced Liechtenstein to form a customs and monetary union with Switzerland.



http://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/europe_1914.htm

The German invasion of Belgium, an intention to circumvent the strongly-defended French/German border, followed the Schlieffen Plan which had been drawn up in 1905. *The Schlieffen Plan was created by General Count Alfred von Schlieffen in December 1905. The Schlieffen Plan was the operational plan for a designated attack on France once Russia, in response to international tension, had started to mobilise her forces near the German border. The execution of the Schlieffen Plan led to Britain declaring war on Germany on August 4th, 1914.* In 1905, Schlieffen was chief of the German General Staff. Europe had effectively divided into two camps by this year – Germany, Austria and Italy (the Triple Alliance) on one side and Britain, France and Russia (the Triple Entente) on the other. Schlieffen believed that the most decisive area for any future war in Europe would be in the western sector. Here, Schlieffen identified France as Germany's most dangerous opponent. Russia was not as advanced as France in many areas and Schlieffen believed that Russia would take six

weeks to mobilise her forces and that any possible fighting on the Russian-German border could be coped with by the Germans for a few weeks while the bulk of her forces concentrated on defeating France.

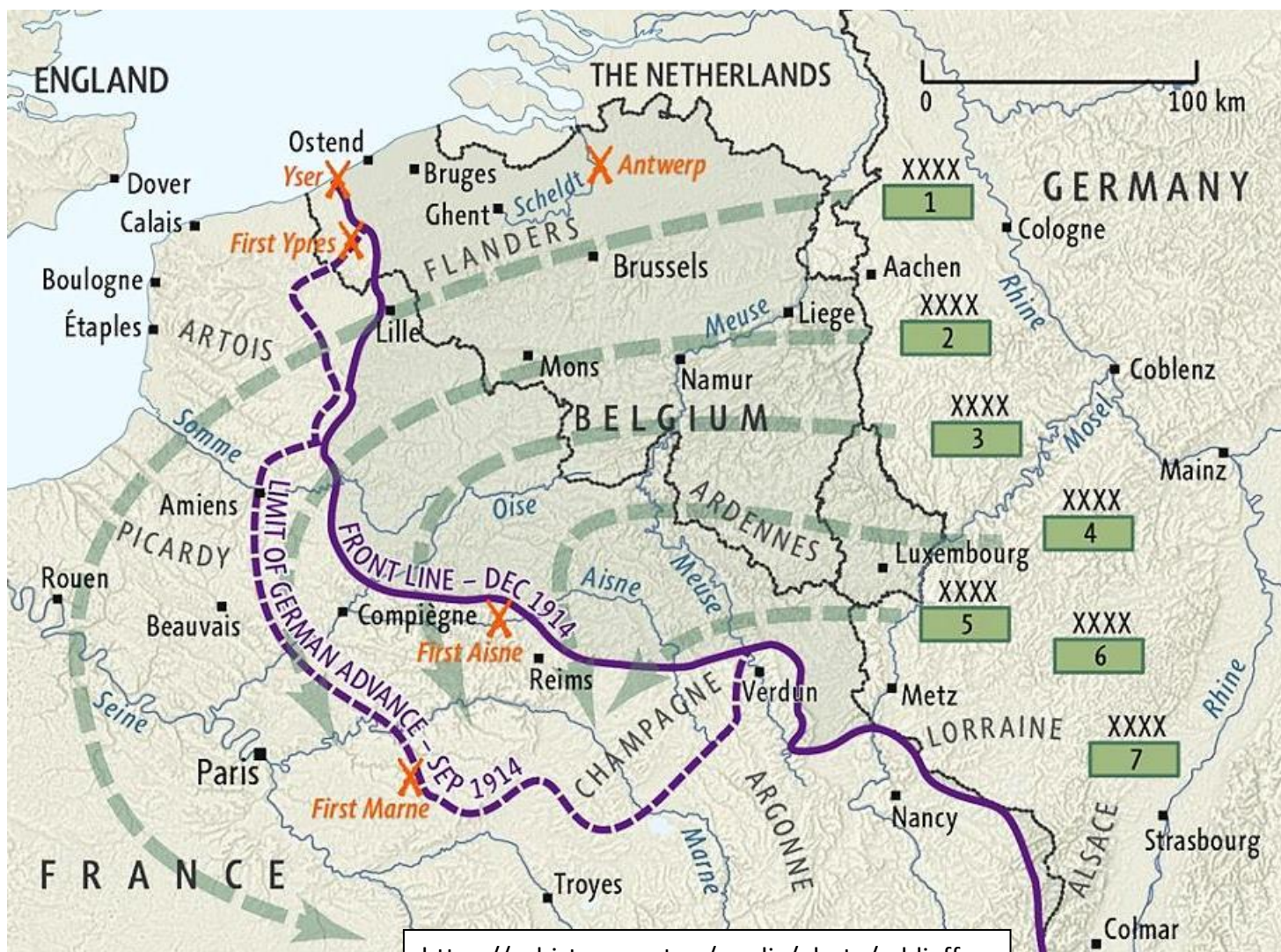
Schlieffen concluded that a massive and successful surprise attack against France would be enough to put off Britain becoming involved in a continental war. This would allow Germany time (the six weeks that Schlieffen had built into his plan) to transfer soldiers who had been fighting in the successful French campaign to Russia to take on the Russians.

Schlieffen also planned for the attack on France to go through Belgium and Luxemburg. Belgium had had her neutrality guaranteed by Britain in 1839 – so his strategy for success depended on Britain not supporting Belgium. The Schlieffen Plan was revised as tension in Europe increased. However, the basic mechanics of it remained the same:

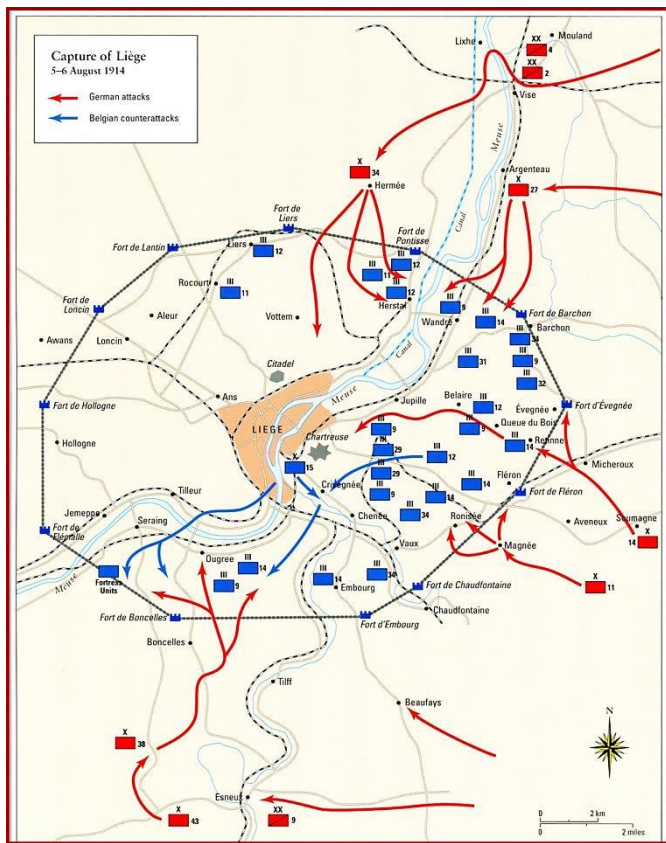
- a devastating attack on France via Belgium as soon as Russia had announced her intention to mobilise.
- a holding operation on the Russian/German border to be carried out if necessary and if required.
- Germany had 6 weeks to defeat France.
- Germany would then use her modernised rail system to move troops from the French operation to the Russian front. Russia would then be attacked and defeated.

[The History Learning Site –

<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-one/causes-of-world-war-one/the-schlieffen-plan/>]



<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/schlieffen-plan-and-german-invasion-1914>



The Schlieffen Plan required a rapid capture of Paris, hoping to knock France out of the war before Russia could fully mobilise its large but inferior military forces. The first battle of the war was a German attack on the Belgian city of Liège - The Battle of Liège, 5 - 16 August 1914. The Belgian army in 1914 was badly organised with one (later two) cavalry divisions and six army divisions together with many fortress troops in several old fortresses. Armament and equipment were also very outdated yet the fortresses of Liège held out until 16 August and those of Namur until 25 August.

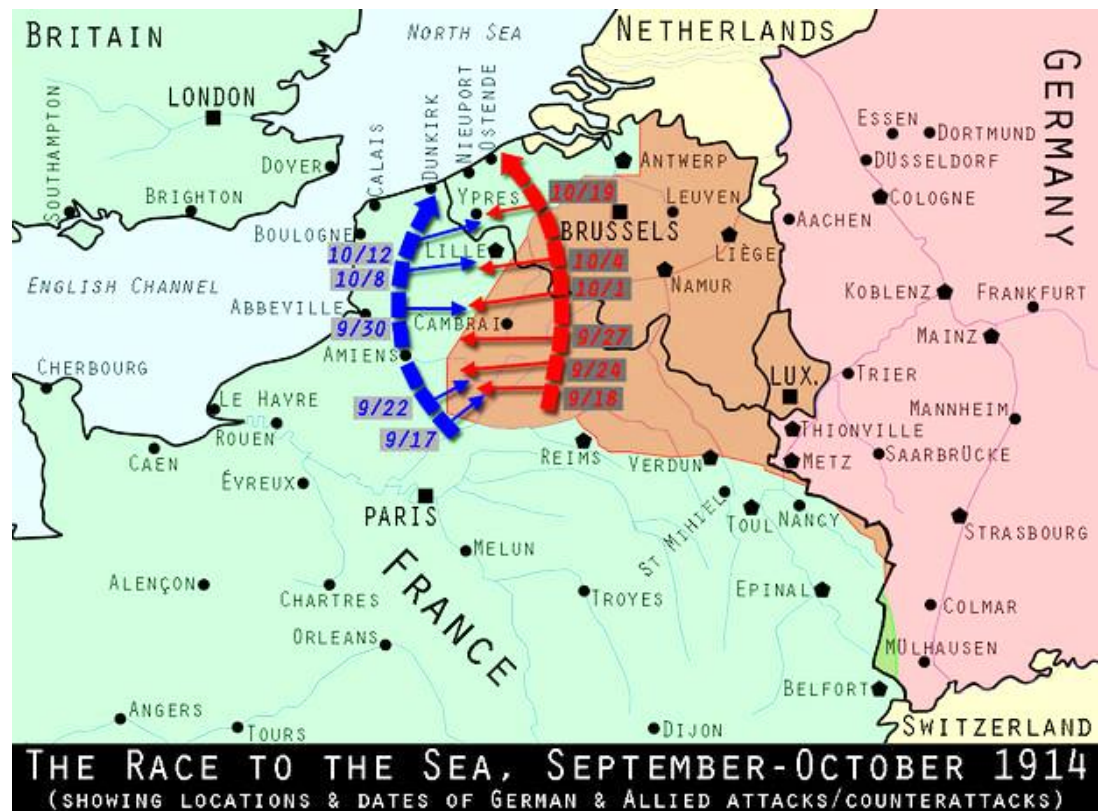
<http://wargamingsociety.com/maps/ww1/maps.htm>



The attack on Belgium brought the British Empire into the war, with British politicians citing their country's obligation to uphold Belgian neutrality. From the outset things did not go Germany's way. Whilst Liège (and other Belgian towns and fortifications near the Meuse River) soon fell, the Belgians' determination to resist in the face of impossible odds delayed Germany's operations against France substantially, giving France and Britain critical time to prepare the defence of Paris.

By September 1914 German forces were advancing on Paris but their forces, halted by a combined Franco-British army on the outskirts of the city near the Marne River, were forced to fall back. This was The First Battle of the Marne (7 - 12 September 1914).

The battle was followed by the so-called "Race to the Sea" (September and October 1914) when German and Allied forces tried and failed to outflank each other until the front lines reached all the way to the North Sea and produced a position of stalemate.

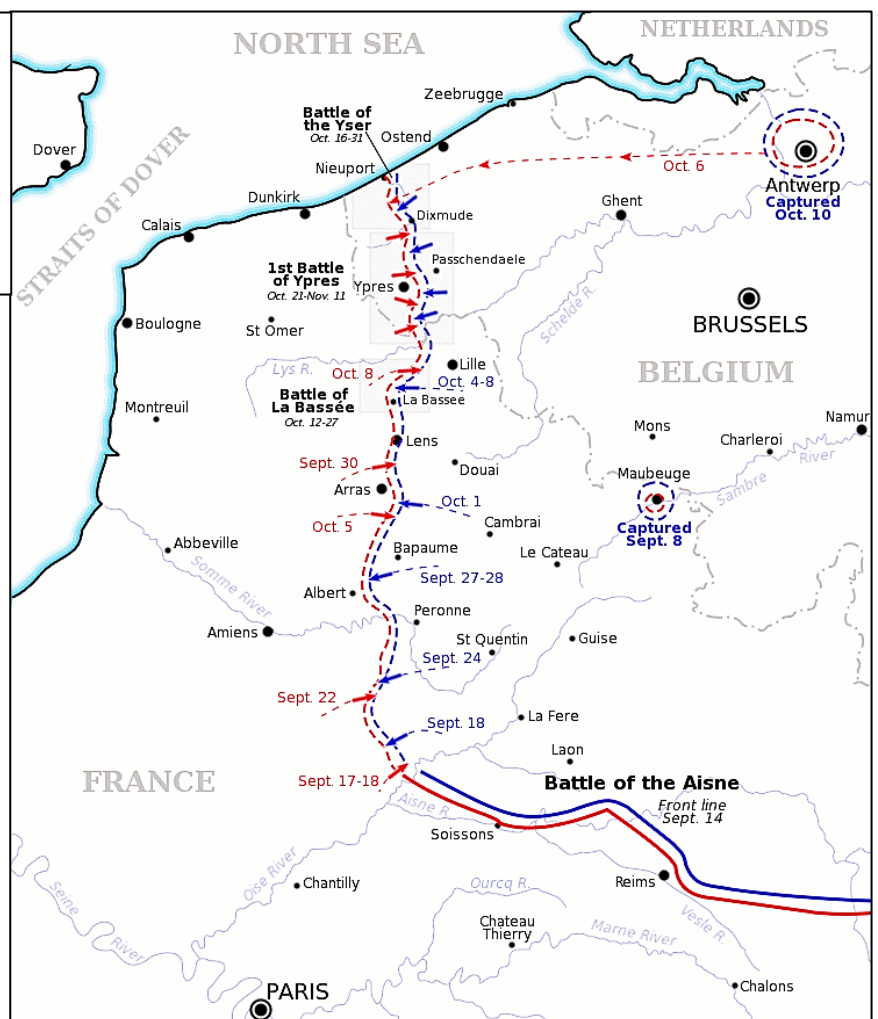


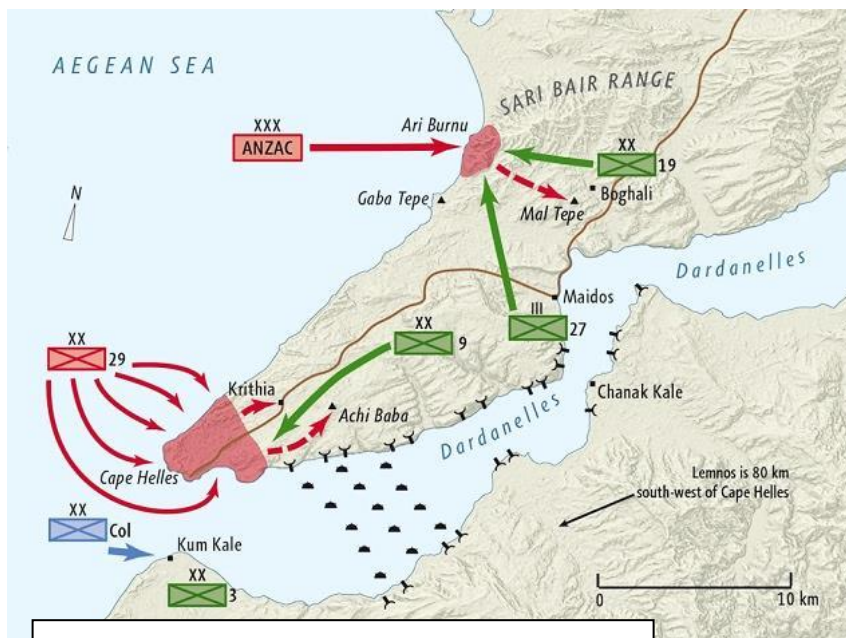
<http://mentalfloss.com/article/59092/wwi-centennial-race-sea-begins>

The different operations which formed parts of the Race to the Sea.

<http://www.remembrancetrails-northernfrance.com/history/battles/the-race-to-the-sea-september-and-october-1914.html>

On 19 February 1915 the first attack on the Dardanelles began when a strong Anglo-French task force began a long-range bombardment of the Ottoman coastal artillery batteries. A period of bad weather slowed the initial phase but by 25 February the outer forts had been destroyed and the entrance cleared of mines. Taking the Gallipoli peninsula was considered to be a necessary step in allowing the Allied naval forces access through the Dardanelles Strait, to the Sea of Marmara and allowing a sea attack on the Ottoman Empire's capital of Istanbul. This would have allowed a direct line of communication between the Western and eastern Fronts to be established.



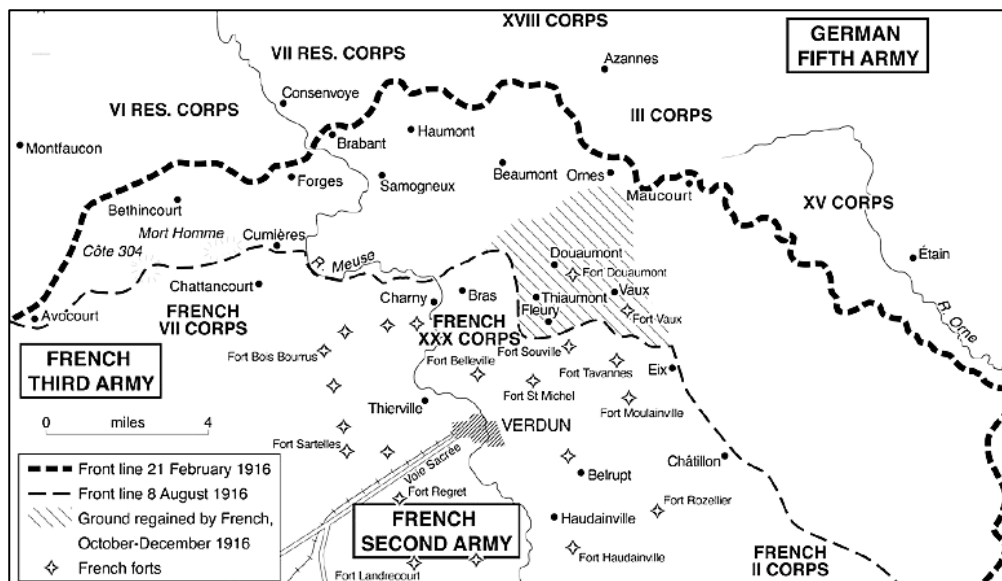


On 18 March 1915, the main attack was launched by the Allied fleet, comprising 18 battleships with a supporting array of cruisers and destroyers, against the narrowest point of the Dardanelles, where the straits are 1 mile wide. Although there was some success, considerable losses of ships took place and troops were assembled to eliminate the Ottoman mobile artillery, which was preventing the Allied minesweepers from clearing the way for the larger vessels.

However, the strength and resistance

of the Turkish forces had been underestimated and, by January 1916, all Allied forces were withdrawn from the region ⁷⁷.

The Battle of Verdun, fought from 21 February to 18 December 1916 between the German and French armies, was the largest, longest and bloodiest battle of WW1 on the Western Front. The battle took place on the hills north of Verdun-sur-Meuse in north-eastern



France. The German 5th Army attacked the defences of the Fortified Region of Verdun in an attempt to capture the Meuse Heights, providing them with an excellent defensive position.

By the end of the campaign around 300,000 men had died (including around 143,000 German soldiers) and the front line had moved only about 5 miles.

<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/the-great-war/great-war-on-land/battlefields/1193-the-battle-of-verdun-1916.html>

By August 1916, two years

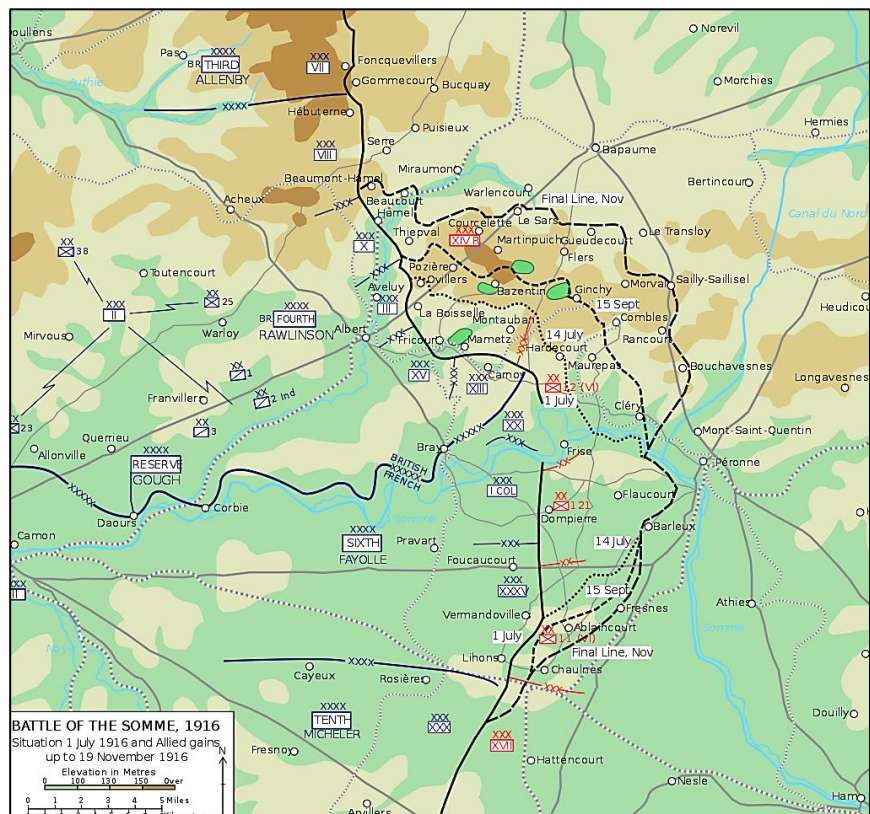
after the war commenced, Russia had lost significant territory in what is now Poland, Ukraine, and the Baltics, and Serbia had been overrun. Fighting in the West and in Italy had achieved little beyond the Germans' achievements before The First Battle of the Marne in September 1914.

⁷⁷ Around 480 000 Allied troops had participated in the Gallipoli campaign and the Allies lost about 48 000 men with a further 200 000 being wounded. Turkish casualties have been estimated at 250 000, of which at least 65 000 are believed to be fatalities. Following the evacuation the Allies continued to block Mediterranean access to the Dardanelles Straits until Turkey's collapse and exit from the war at the end of October 1918.

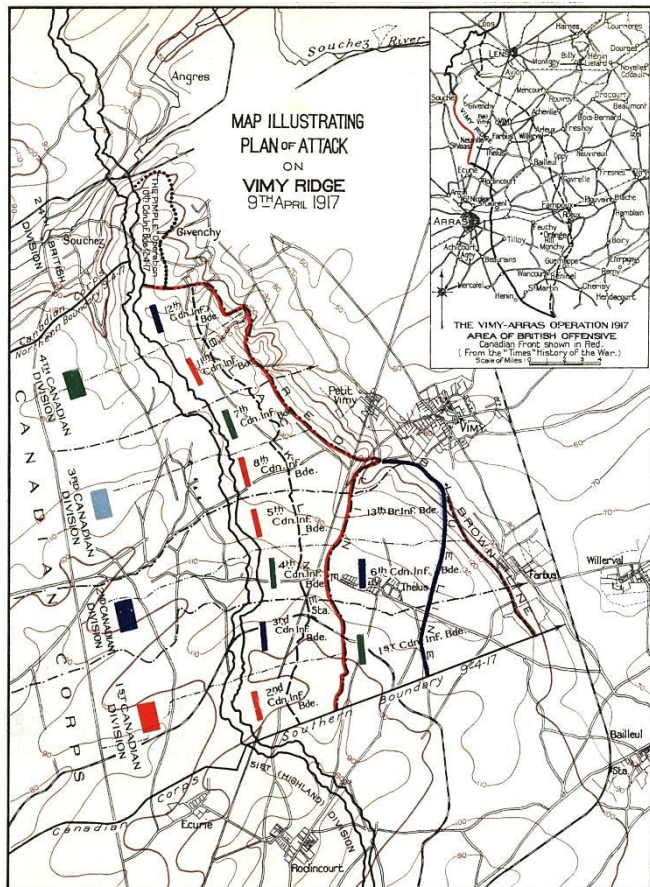


<https://cdn3.vox-cdn.com/assets/4607979/img029a.jpg>

The invasion of 1914 had left extensive areas of French and Belgian territory in German hands and the main strategy of the Allied forces was to drive the invading forces back to the border. In 1916 The Battle of The Somme (The Somme Offensive), between 1 July and 18 November, was a defining campaign intended to hasten victory for the Allies. However, it became the largest battle of WW1 on the Western Front; more than 3 million men were involved in the conflict with one million men being wounded or killed. Weather conditions during the conflict were often appalling, the physical destruction of the battlefield by heavy bombardment from both sides made life increasingly difficult and both sides were heavily entrenched so, despite the increasing loss of life, little progress was made. By the close of the campaign the Allies had advanced some seven miles on the Somme and Bapaume, a first week objective, still remained in German hands.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme



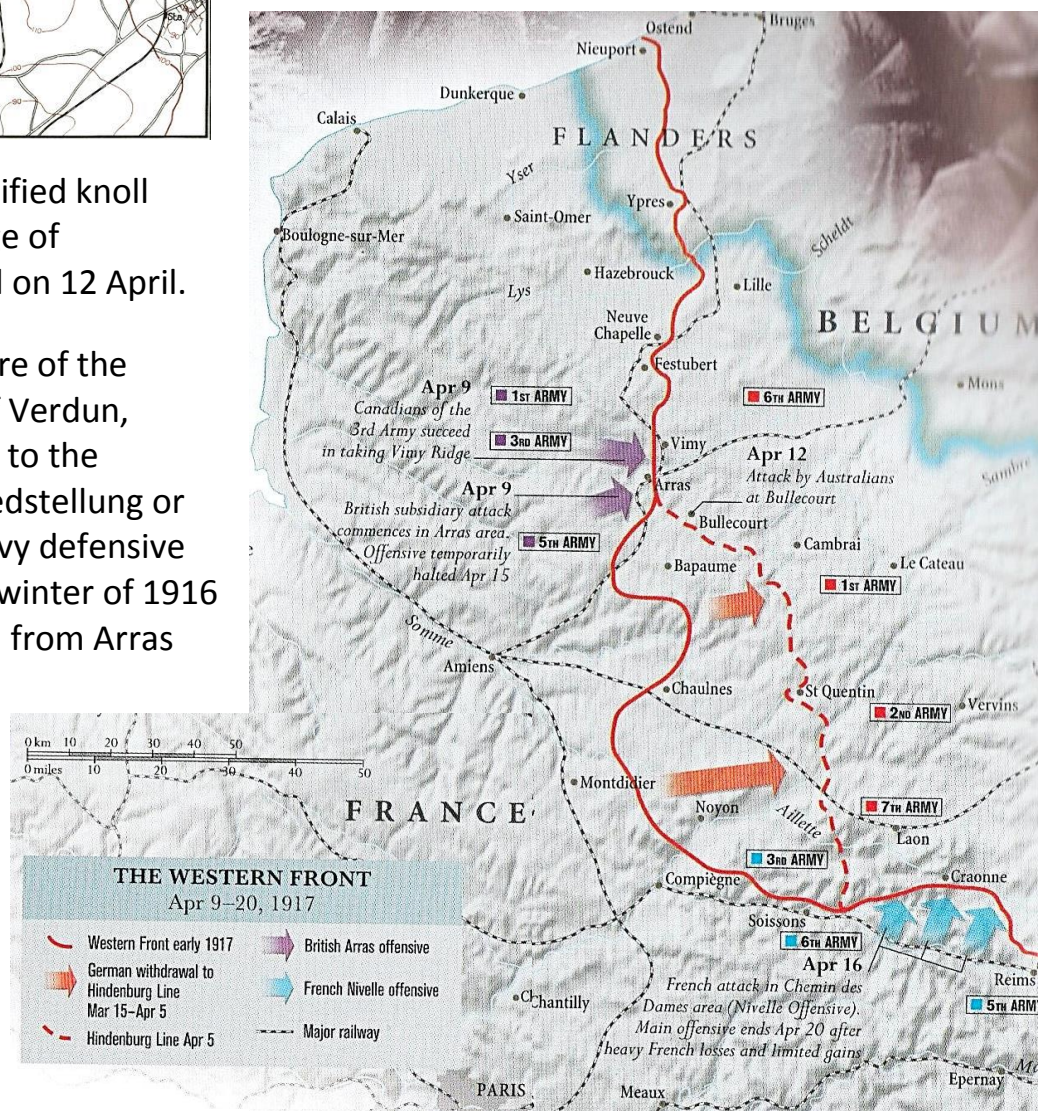
http://regimentalrookie.com/rcr_great_war/rcr_great_war_vimy_pilgrimage_maps.html

In April 1917 the capture of the German-held 8km-long Vimy Ridge by combined Canadian forces was a major strategic break-through. Part of the British-led Battle of Arras, in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France, was a diversionary attack for the French-led Nivelle Offensive. Capture of the ridge, at the northern end of The Arras Offensive was a necessary requirement to ensure that the southern flank could advance without suffering German enfilade (crossfire) attack. Supported by a creeping barrage, the Canadian Corps captured most of the ridge during the first day of the attack.

The final objective, a fortified knoll located outside the village of Givenchy-en-Gohelle, fell on 12 April.

Following the costly failure of the Germans at The Battle of Verdun, German forces withdrew to the Hindenburg Line (Siegfriedstellung or Siegfried Position), a heavy defensive position built during the winter of 1916-1917. This line extended from Arras to Laffaux, near Soissons on the Aisne - on this map it is represented by the red dashed line.

The Anglo-French offensive at The Battle of The Somme had forced a defensive battle on the Germans, leaving their western armies stretched.



From the book *World War 1*, H. P. Willmott, Dorling Kindersley Ltd (Penguin Random House), 2nd Edition, 2015

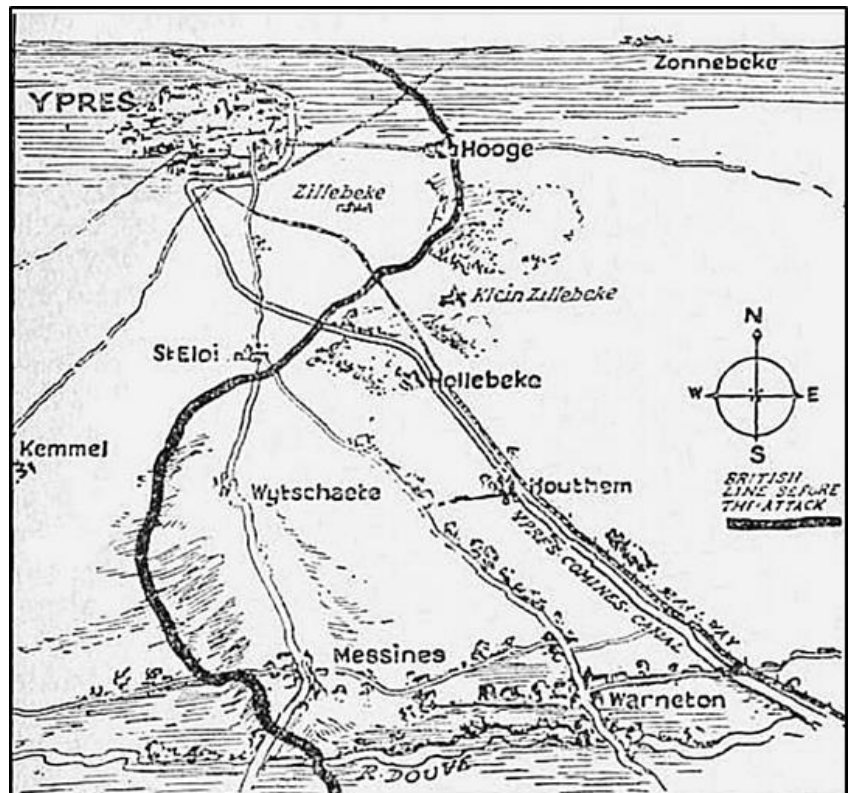
On the Eastern Front, the Brusilov Offensive⁷⁸ had inflicted huge losses on the Austro-Hungarian armies in Russia and German forces had been forced to move rapidly to this front from their positions on the Western Front. The declaration of war by Romania on 27 August 1916 had put additional strain on the German army and economy and, begun in September 1916, the Hindenburg Line was a defensive position to permit German withdrawal from the Somme if Allied hostilities escalated in 1917.

Another significant offensive in 1917 was the capture of the German defences on the Messines Ridge, a strategic upland which ran from Ploegsteert (commonly called *Plugstreet* by the Allied forces) Wood in the south, through Messines and Wytschaete to Mt. Sorrel. This, The Battle of Messines (7 – 14 June), deprived the German 4th Army of the high ground south of Ypres.

The French-led Nivelle Offensive in April and May had failed to achieve its more ambitious aims and demoralised the French forces.

The Messines Ridge commanded the British defences and areas further to the north; it was from this area that the British intended to conduct the Northern Operation, an advance to Passchendaele Ridge and the capture of the Belgian coast as far as the Dutch frontier.

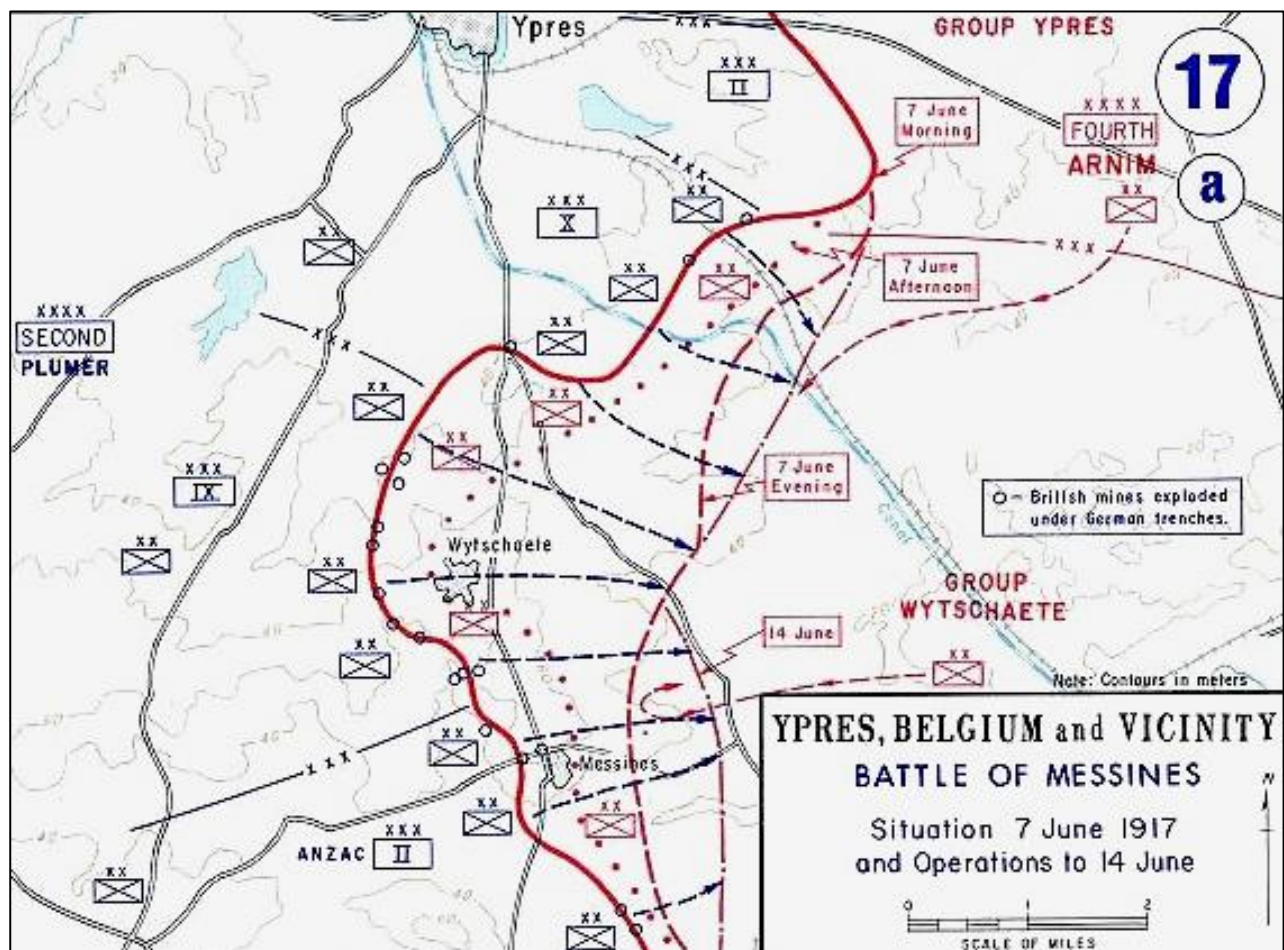
The operation commenced just after 3.0am on the morning of 7 June when the British detonated 19 large mines, containing around 440 tons of explosive, under the German defences on the ridge. It was said that the explosions could be heard as far away as London and Dublin; more than 10,000 German soldiers were killed and much of the fortification along the ridge was destroyed, as well as the town of Messines.



Sketch map showing the British line before The Battle of Messines.

[<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/35403/35403-h/35403-h.htm>]

⁷⁸ The Brusilov Offensive, in present-day western Ukraine (and known also as the 'June Advance'), from June to September 1916 was Russia's greatest victory of the war and is considered to be among the most lethal offensives in world history. The offensive involved a major Russian attack against the armies of the Central Powers on the Eastern Front. It was launched on 4 June 1916 when the Russians began a huge, short-term, and highly accurate artillery barrage against the Austro-Hungarian lines. The offensive achieved its original goal of forcing Germany to halt its attack on Verdun on the Western Front and transfer huge numbers of troops to the Eastern Front. The Austro-Hungarian army suffered the majority of the casualties and, subsequently, had to rely on the support of the German army for its military successes. Russian casualties were considerable, estimates varying from 500,000 up to a million. Austria-Hungary and Germany lost 600,000 and 350,000, respectively.



The map shows the eastward movement of the front line from 7 – 14 June 1917. In the area of Wytschaete and Messines the front line was moved by 2½ - 3 miles. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Messines_(1917)]

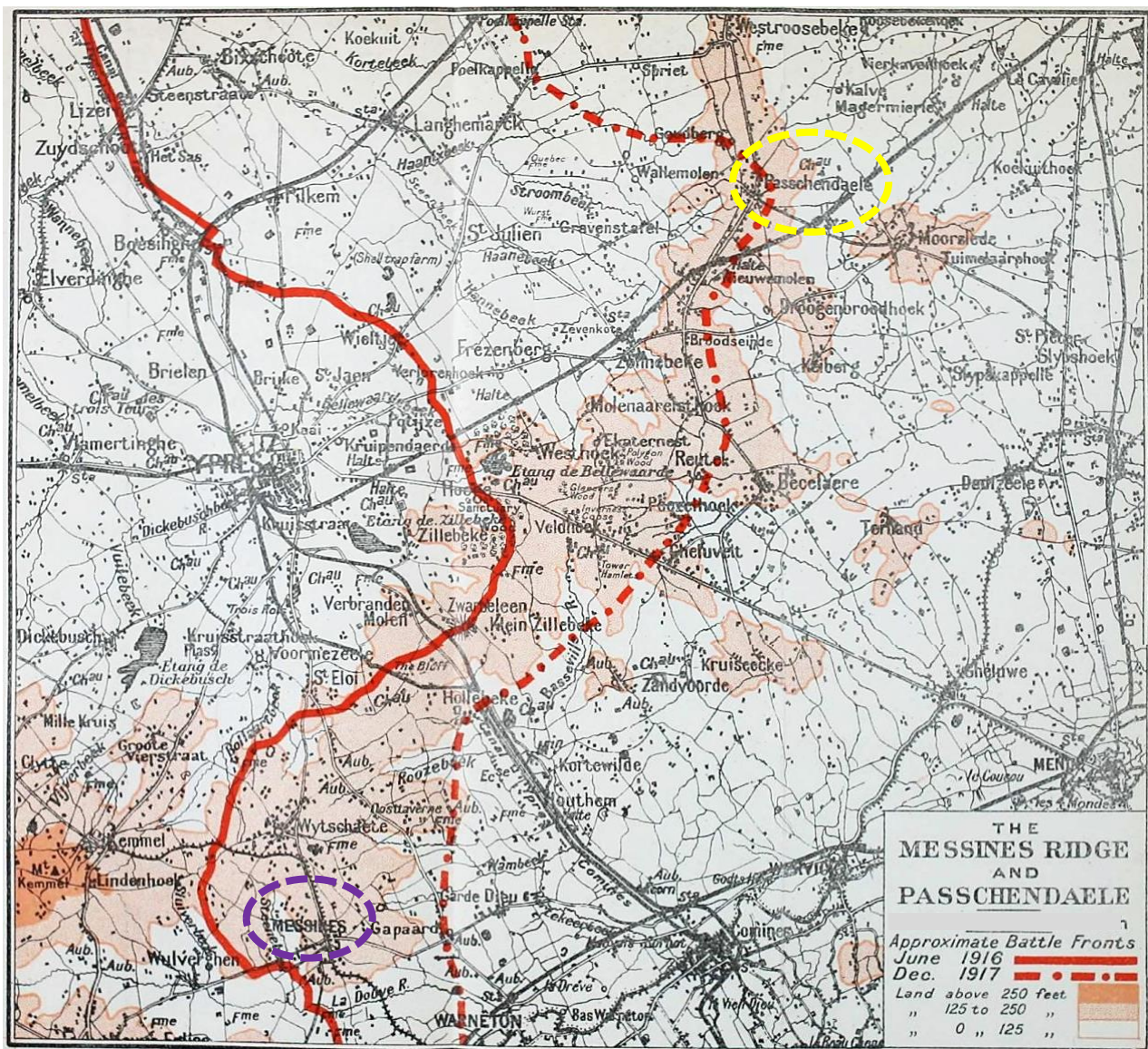
The Battle of Passchendaele (The Third Battle of Ypres) was another major campaign by the Allies against German forces on the Western Front and one which lasted for over three months (31 July - 10 November 1917). The battle was for control of the ridges south and east of the Belgian city of Ypres in West Flanders; Passchendaele lay on the last ridge east of Ypres, 5 miles from the railway junction at Roulers, a location vital to the supply system of the German 4th Army.

The campaign ended finally in November when the Canadian Corps finally captured Passchendaele, although more local actions continued through December and into early 1918. In 1918, gains at The Battle of the Lys and The Fifth Battle of Ypres allowed the Allied troops to occupy the Belgian coast and reach the Dutch frontier.

Passchendaele was fought in appalling conditions, unceasing rain and shellfire having reduced the area to a vast quagmire of mud littered with water-filled shell craters and bodies. The British-led forces lost an estimated 275,000 at Passchendaele to the German's 220,000, making it one of the war's most costly battles of attrition.

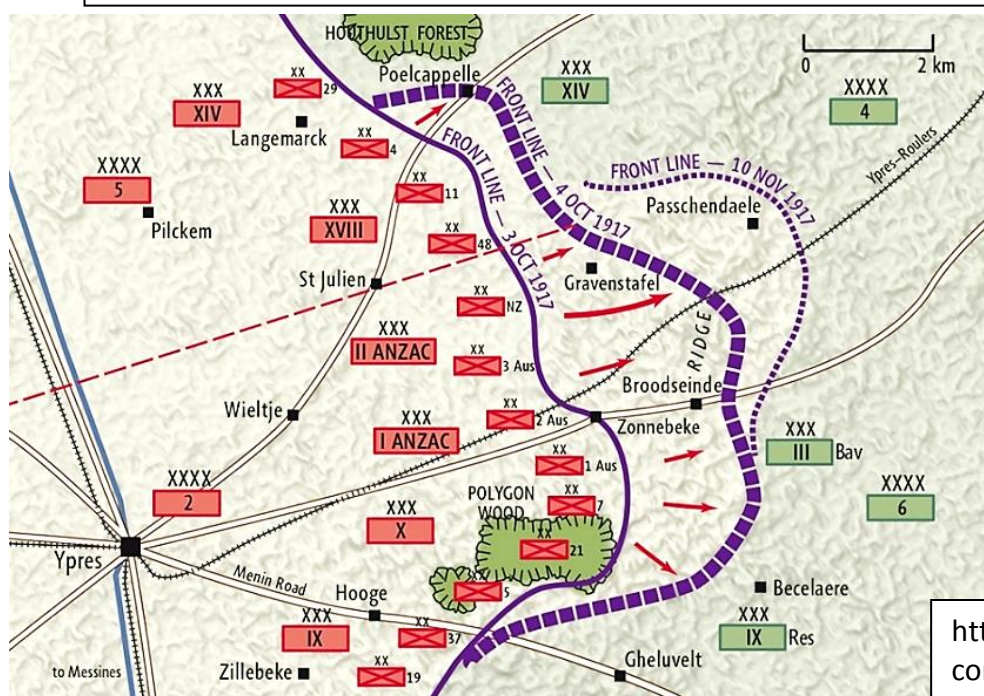
At its conclusion, the justification for the campaign was hotly disputed and, in 1918, all the ground gained by the Allies was evacuated in the face of a looming German assault ⁷⁹.

⁷⁹ Passchendaele became infamous not only for the scale of casualties and the mud but became synonymous with suffering and the futility of this form of warfare. Military historians have continued to debate the thinking behind the battle and have argued



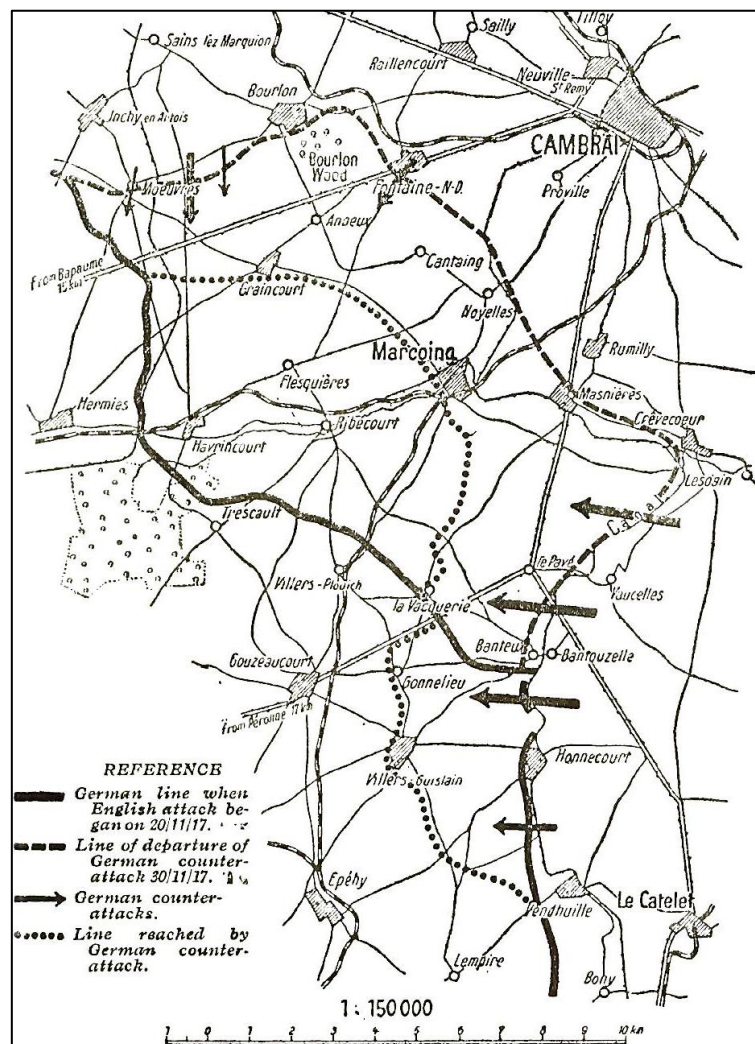
Map showing the eastward movement of the Western Front from June 1916 to December 1917 in the area to the east of Ypres. Messines, in the south, and Passchendaele, in the north, are encircled. The distance from Ypres to Passchendaele is approximately 7 miles.

[<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/35403/35403-h/images/i172-hi.jpg>]



<http://ww100.govt.nz/find-WW1-content/Passchendaele?category>

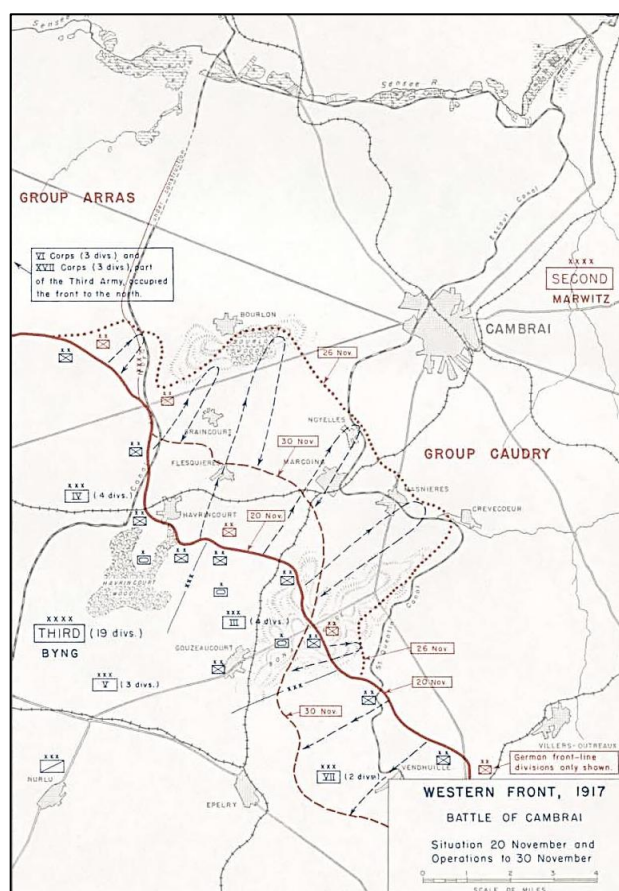
The Battle of Cambrai (20 November - 7 December 1917) was a significant British attack which was followed by the biggest German counter-stroke against the British Expeditionary Force since 1914. Cambrai was an important supply point for the German Hindenburg Line and capture of the town and the nearby Bourlon Ridge would threaten the rear of the German line to the north. The battle used innovative artillery techniques and, for the first time in the war, massed tanks.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Battle_of_Cambrai,_November-December_1917.jpg

However, despite the initial success, a German counter attack by reserve troops surprised the Allied forces and the British forces; mechanical unreliability prevented half of the Mark 1V British tanks from operating and they lost the ground gained previously and suffered heavy losses.

The first day of this conflict saw significant British gains as the troops pushed through solid German defences with few casualties. This early result, in stark contrast with the recent events at Passchendaele, was generally considered as being a spectacular achievement; the *Daily Mail* hailed it a 'Splendid Success'⁸⁰.



<http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/cambrai.htm>

⁸⁰ The attack began at 6.20 a.m. along a ten-kilometre-wide front. The Tank Corps provided 476 tanks (of which 350 were armed) to lead six infantry divisions into the field. The tanks made rapid progress and soon reached the enemy trenches promoting confusion amongst the German ranks and causing several units to retreat. The British took 8,000 prisoners on the first day of the offensive; not since 1914 had an attack advanced so quickly and by the evening of 20 November the British troops had won nine kilometres of terrain and were closing in on Cambrai.

Oft-quoted, a junior officer who returned from the conflict (Charles Carrington - not a soldier from Neston) remarked that:

Cambrai was a highly speculative gamble which I find inexplicable, so out of character is it with the rest of Haig's career, not because it was inventive but because it was haphazard, not thought through

and that it was a

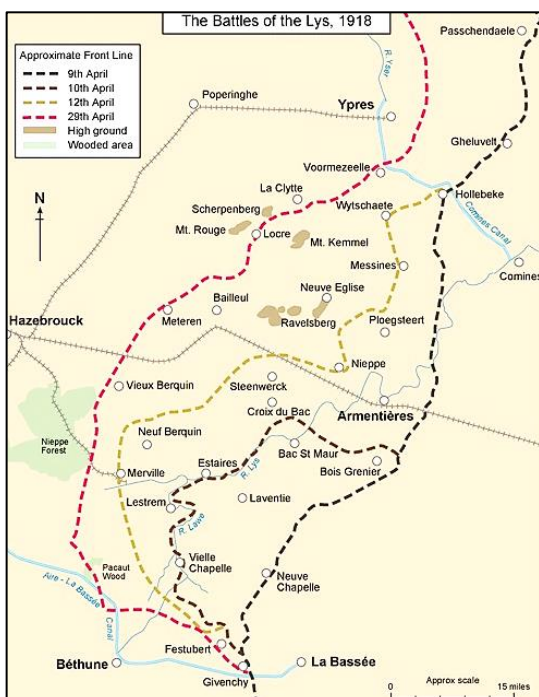
harum-scarum affair, ill-planned and feebly directed, yet in military history it stands as the most significant battle of the First World War.

Estimates of the casualties suffered at Cambrai vary significantly but appear to be similar for both sides at around 44, 000 killed, wounded, lost in action or taken prisoner.

On 3 March 1918 the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers, effectively recognising German dominance over the previously Russian territories of eastern Europe. The treaty marked Russia's final withdrawal from WW1. In the treaty, Bolshevik Russia ceded the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) to Germany, lost Belorussia (Belarus) and its province of Kars Oblast in the South Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire and recognised the independence of Ukraine.

Russia also renounced all territorial claims in Finland (which it had already acknowledged), although the territory of the Kingdom of Poland was not mentioned in the treaty.

Economically, the treaty removed territory containing over 25% of the population and industry, 90% of its coal mines and, additionally, Russia had to make payment to release Russian prisoners.

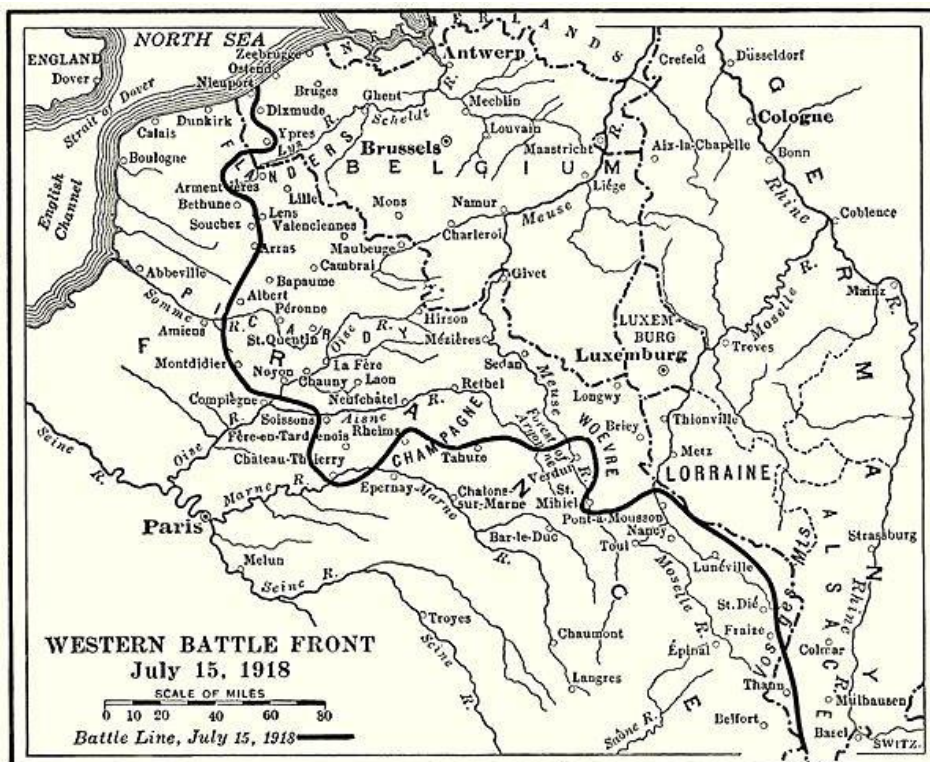


In early April (9 - 29 April) the Germans commenced the second Spring Offensive in Flanders (The Battle of the Lys) with the objective of capturing key railway and supply roads and cutting off the British Second Army at Ypres.

The previous month the Germans under Erich Ludendorff, chief of the general staff, launched their first major offensive on the Western Front in more than a year, attacking the Allies in the Somme River region and training huge guns on Paris. By 5 April the Germans had gained nearly 40 miles of territory before the Allies, reinforced by several thousand American troops, managed to halt Ludendorff's exhausted armies.

Ludendorff now switched his attention to Flanders, aiming to push the British troops back to the ports along the English Channel. On April 9, after a 4½ hour bombardment of British forces in Armentieres, 14 German divisions attacked along a 10-mile front to begin The Battle of the Lys. The German advance quickly drove the British back, creating a 3½ mile wide gap through the British line. The Germans used 2,000 tons of poison gas against the British at the Lys, blinding or incapacitating around 8,000 men.

Despite the initial success British defensive positions in Armentieres were strong and the Germans managed to advance only 7 miles by the time the operation ceased on 29 April. The third German Spring Offensive, The Third Battle of the Aisne, began on 27 May in the French sector along the Chemin des Dames Ridge. The main objective was to split French and British forces and gain a quick victory before American troops were deployed in greater



http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Third_Battle_of_the_Aisne

numbers. A small British force had been sent to the area to replace French troops, but this force was overwhelmed by a surprise German attack - the first German offensive since the Lys Offensive in Flanders the previous month.

The Germans had held the Chemin des Dames Ridge from The First Battle of the Aisne in September 1914 to 1917, when the French captured it during The Second Battle of the Aisne during the Nivelle Offensive. Recapturing this higher ground would put the German armies within striking distance of Paris thereby, it

was believed, requiring the Allies to move forces from Flanders to help defend Paris. This would permit the Germans to continue the Flanders offensive with greater ease.

Taken by surprise the Allies were unable to stop the attack and the German army advanced through a 25-mile gap in the Allied lines, reaching the Aisne in under six hours, and pushing the Allies back to the River Vesle.

By 30 May the Germans had captured just over 50,000 Allied soldiers and over 800 guns but when they were just 35 miles from Paris (3 June) the German advance halted due to a lack of supplies and a failure to replace their casualties.

On 6 June, following many successful Allied counter-attacks, the German advance halted on the Marne. During this conflict the French suffered over 98, 000 casualties, the British around 29, 000, German losses being nearly as great.

On 15 July 1918 the final phase of the German Spring Offensive, The Second Battle of the Marne began - this was to be the last major German offensive on the Western Front during the war.

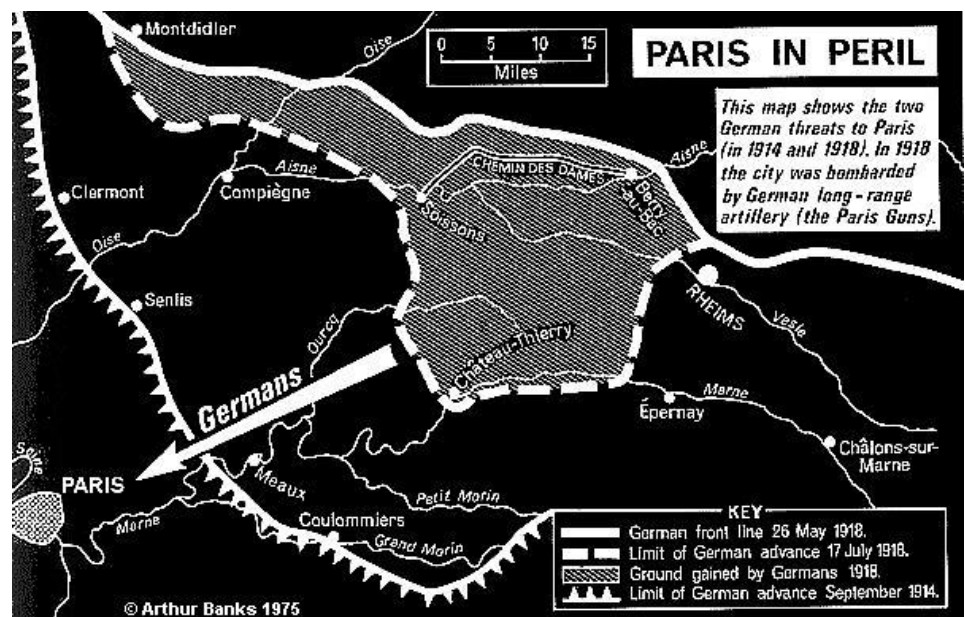
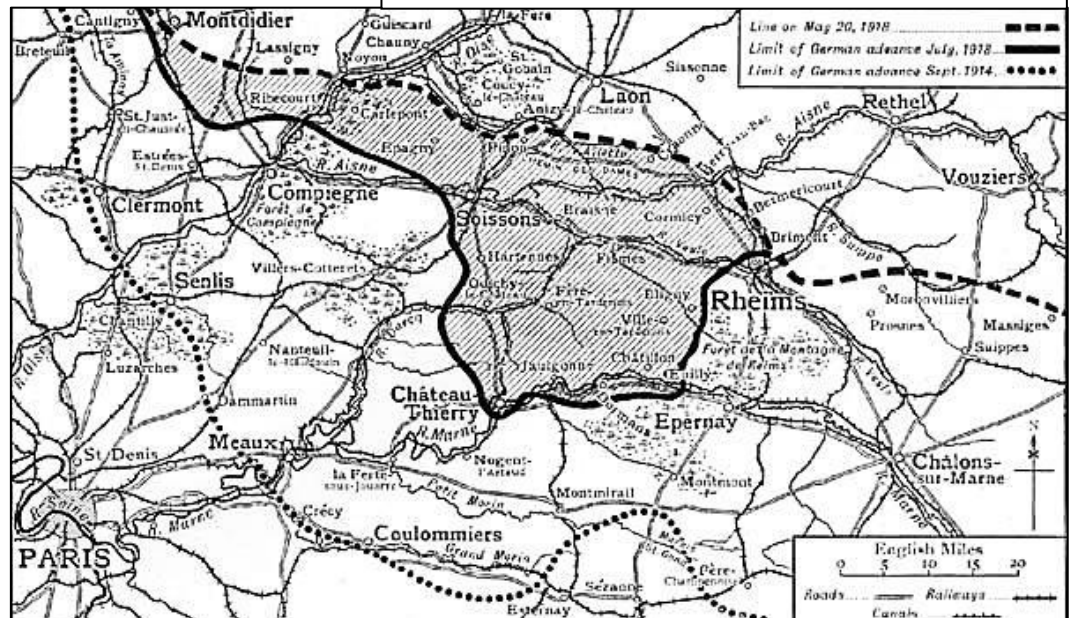
Erich Ludendorff, effectively the German Chief-of-Staff, was convinced that the war could best be won by an attack in Flanders and he believed that an offensive on the Marne would draw Allied troops from Belgium and so weaken their positions further north.

On the opening day of the battle, 23 German divisions of the First and Third Armies attacked the French Fourth Army to the east of Reims, whilst a further 17 divisions of the Seventh Army and Ninth Army attacked the French Sixth Army in the west.

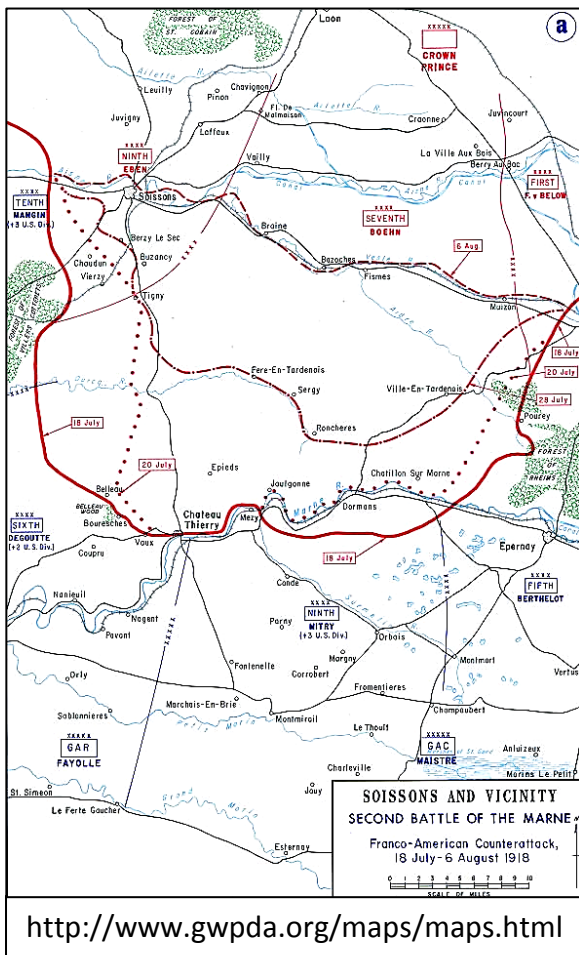
The attack at Reims was intended to split the French forces although these had been strengthened by 85,000 US troops together with some units from Sir Douglas Haig's British Expeditionary Force. However, this attack failed when an Allied counterattack, supported by several hundred tanks, overwhelmed the Germans on their right flank; by 11am on this first day the German offensive in this eastern sector had ended.

The German offensive to the west of Reims was, however, more successful and German troops broke through the French Sixth Army and crossed the Marne before their advance was halted on 17 July.

The following day Ferdinand Foch, the Allied Supreme Commander, launched a counter-offensive with 24 divisions of the French army supported by American, British and Italian troops and around 350 tanks.



<http://pierreswesternfront.punt.nl/content/2008/07/marne-second-battle>



On 20 July the Germans ordered a retreat and by 3 August they were back at the Aisne-Vesle rivers, where they had started before the launch of the 1918 Spring Offensive. The Allied counter-offensive was finally halted on 6 August by the now entrenched Germans. Casualties were high on both sides: France suffered 95, 000 casualties, Germany 168, 000, with Britain incurring 13, 000 losses and the US about 12, 000.

With the failure of the diversionary offensive on the Marne Ludendorff's planned Flanders offensive was initially postponed and then cancelled. There was then no further large-scale German offensive.

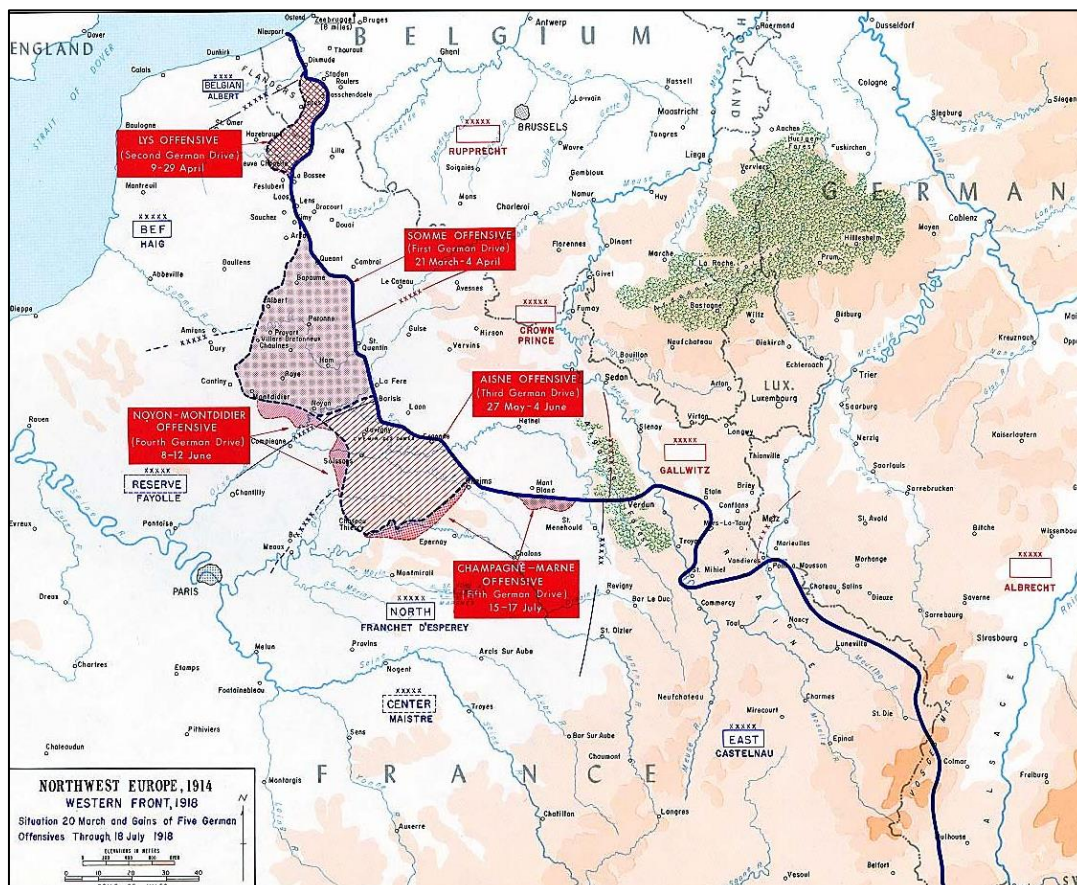
Following the failure of the Germans at The Second Battle of the Marne and their last-ditch attempt to secure victory, the Allied forces began the phase which became known as The Hundred Days Offensive, the final stage of the war.

The commencement of The Hundred Days Offensive was The Battle of Amiens, also known as The Third

Battle of Picardy (8 - 11 August 1918), the most decisive battle against the Germans on the

Western Front.

Amiens, a major rail hub, was of enormous importance to the Allies as it was used to receive supplies and distribute them to the front line. On 21 March 1918 Erich Ludendorff, in an attempt to push the British forces back to the English Channel and demoralise the French, began an attack to capture Amiens.



The Western Front on 20 March 1918 and the gains of the five German advances during the Spring Offensive up to 18 July 1918 [http://www.gwpda.org/maps/westpoint/WWOne18.jpg]

By 5 April Ludendorff's men got to within eleven miles of Amiens, the Germans having advanced 28 miles as far as the town of Villers-Bretonneux. However, the Germans stretched their supply lines too far and forward movement stopped which, subsequently, allowed the Allied forces to regroup. By the summer of 1918 American troops had reached the front line.

One of the main targets of the Allies was the thickly-treed upland area of Belleau Wood where the Germans had entrenched and where military positions were difficult to identify. On 6 June men from the US Marine Corps attacked the German positions in Belleau Wood but it took six attacks, and the loss of 10, 000 US troops, to clear the wood.

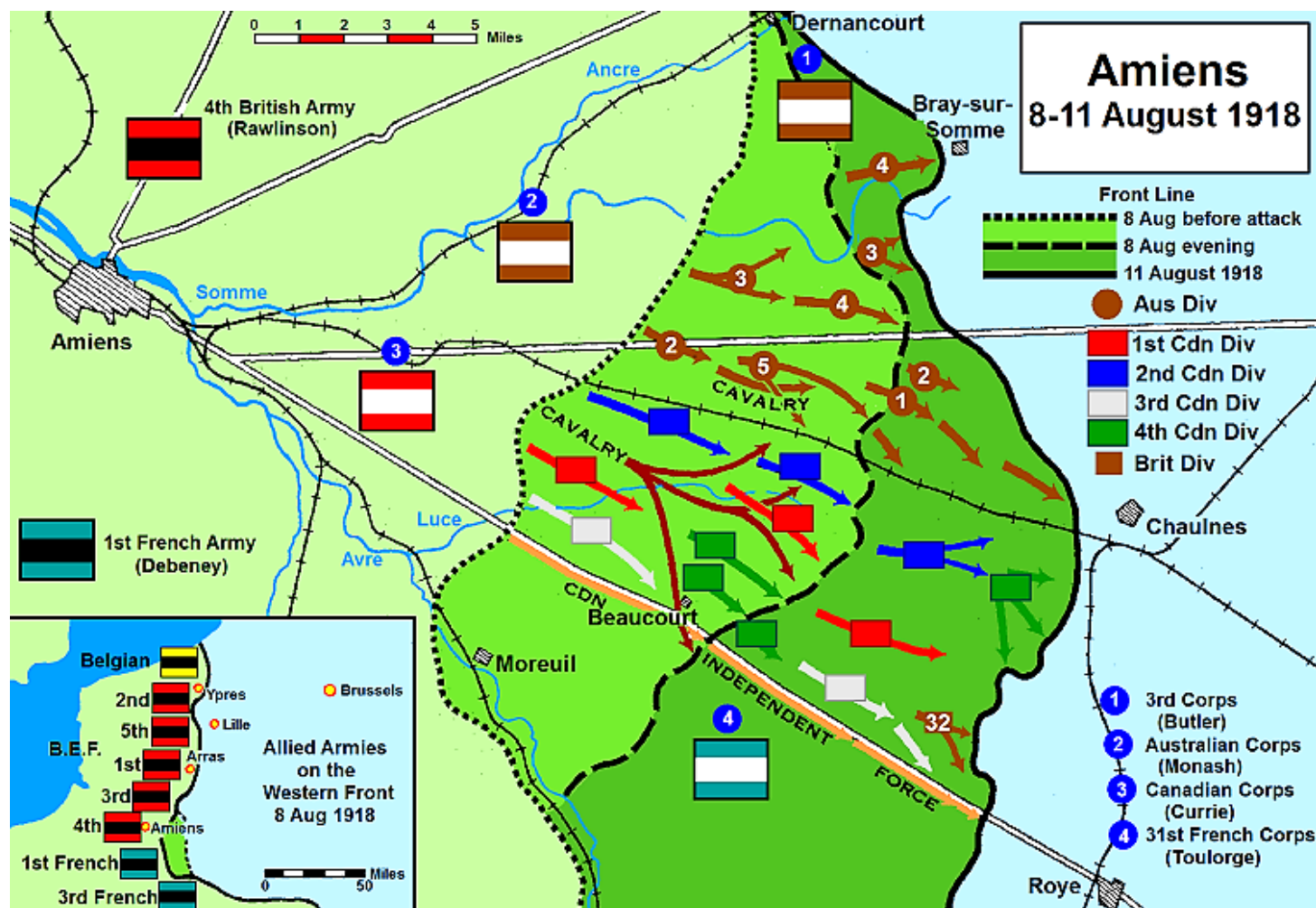
By July 1918, 350,000 Allied troops, greatly outnumbering the German forces, had been concentrated along a seventeen-mile front to the east of Amiens. Sir Henry Rawlinson, who had commanded British troops at the ill-fated Battle of the Somme in 1916, returned to the British Fourth Army in July 1918 in preparation for the Allied counter-offensive to force the Germans back from Amiens. The land Rawlinson selected for the counter-attack was mostly dry and flat and ideal for tank warfare.

The attack was to be on a relatively narrow front, with no prior bombardment and limited objectives. To ensure a breakthrough, Haig gave Rawlinson command of virtually the whole British armoured forces. By this stage of the war British manpower was severely depleted, and Rawlinson relied heavily on Australian, Canadian and American troops to achieve the breakthrough. To complement the tanks and artillery, Rawlinson also planned to use 600 aircraft from the newly formed Royal Air Force to drop phosphorus bombs, mainly to generate a thick white smokescreen.

The Allies achieved complete surprise, and The Battle of Amiens proved a striking success, the Allies taking 12, 000 prisoners and capturing 450 guns. At 4.20am on 8 August the attack began as the troops advanced under a creeping barrage from 700 artillery guns that advanced 100 metres every three minutes. Heavy tanks were used to attack well-defended German positions whilst smaller tanks, known as 'Whippets', were used to probe the German defences. Rawlinson had set a target of an eight-mile advance on Day 1 of the attack, the largest Allied advance if his plan proved successful. The action that morning was helped by the weather, early morning fog helping to disguise the Allies' movements.

The Canadian and Australian troops advanced five miles by midday but the British troops in the hillier northern sector, where tanks found it more difficult to operate, proceeded more slowly. Because of the dry conditions Rawlinson felt confident enough to order 20, 000 cavalry troops to advance, gaining much ground but sustaining heavy casualties.

Both the German and Allied commands were struck by the collapse in German morale; Ludendorff had told the German Emperor, Wilhelm II, that he believed that the war was lost and high numbers of Germans were surrendering without a fight. Nevertheless, the Allies were still cautious about pressing their advantage too far and, on 11 August, Rawlinson advised Haig to halt the offensive.



<http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/forums/ViewPost.aspx?ForumID=56&ID=32197>

Following the victory at Amiens successive attacks were launched at different locations along the Western Front and plans were made for the British Third Army to attack at Bapaume whilst the First Army pushed towards Cambrai led by the Canadian Corps. The British Fourth Army was in reserve and would be brought into the action if the Germans retreated along the Somme.

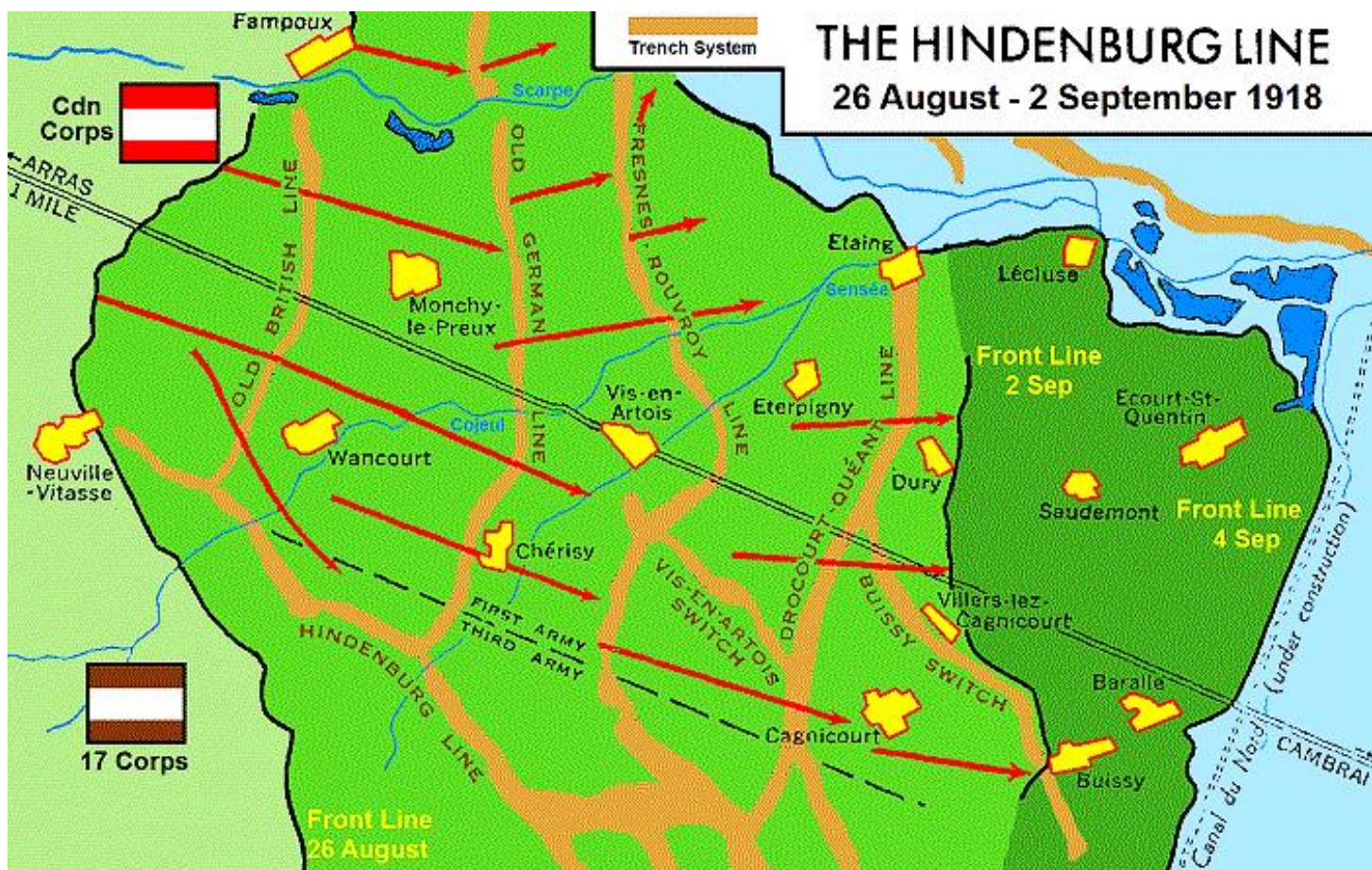
On 21 August the French forces attacked south of Soissons, pushing ahead four miles in two days; on the same day the British Third Army attacked at Bapaume and progressed two miles, taking 5,000 prisoners. On 22 August, the Fourth Army was brought into action, staging attacks on both sides of the Somme.

The German front was now the Drocourt-Quéant (D-Q) Line, west of the Canal du Nord, a heavily-fortified trench network section of the Hindenburg Line. On 26 August the British First Army went into the attack supported by Canadian troops. This conflict, The Battle of the Scarpe, began two hours before dawn and the Allied troops, weathering heavy fighting, pushed deeply into enemy territory. By 28 August the Allied forces had broken through the Fresnes-Rouvroy Line, defensive positions which protected the main D-Q Line about a mile to the east. After three days of fighting, the troops had advanced five-and-a-half miles with a loss of 5,800 men.

By the end of August 1918 the Germans had been pushed eastwards to the west side of the Canal du Nord, a large, 40-yard wide partly-unfinished waterway whose construction had commenced in 1908. The heavily reinforced and defended D-Q Line, the northernmost of

the Hindenburg Line fortifications, was now the prime objective and this was attacked by a combined British-Canadian force on 2 September after a massive artillery barrage. Whilst fighting was severe, Germans surrendered in large numbers along part of the line, and by mid-afternoon almost all of the D-Q Line was taken and the Germans had been overrun along a 7000-yard front. The advance continued during the evening and the German forces pulled back to the Canal du Nord as the first stage of a general retreat.

The German High Command had ordered the German 17th Army to retreat behind the Sensée River and the Canal du Nord on the night of 2 September and the German 2nd Army to withdraw to the Hindenburg Line the following night. Further south, the German 18th and 9th Armies were to follow in succession by 9 September, resulting in the abandonment of the entire salient that the Germans had gained during the Spring Offensive.



<https://www.canadiansoldiers.com/history/campaigns/westernfront/hindenburgline.gif>

To the north the German 4th and 6th Armies retreated between Lens and Ypres, abandoning without a fight the Lys salient and the gains they had made during The Battle of the Lys.

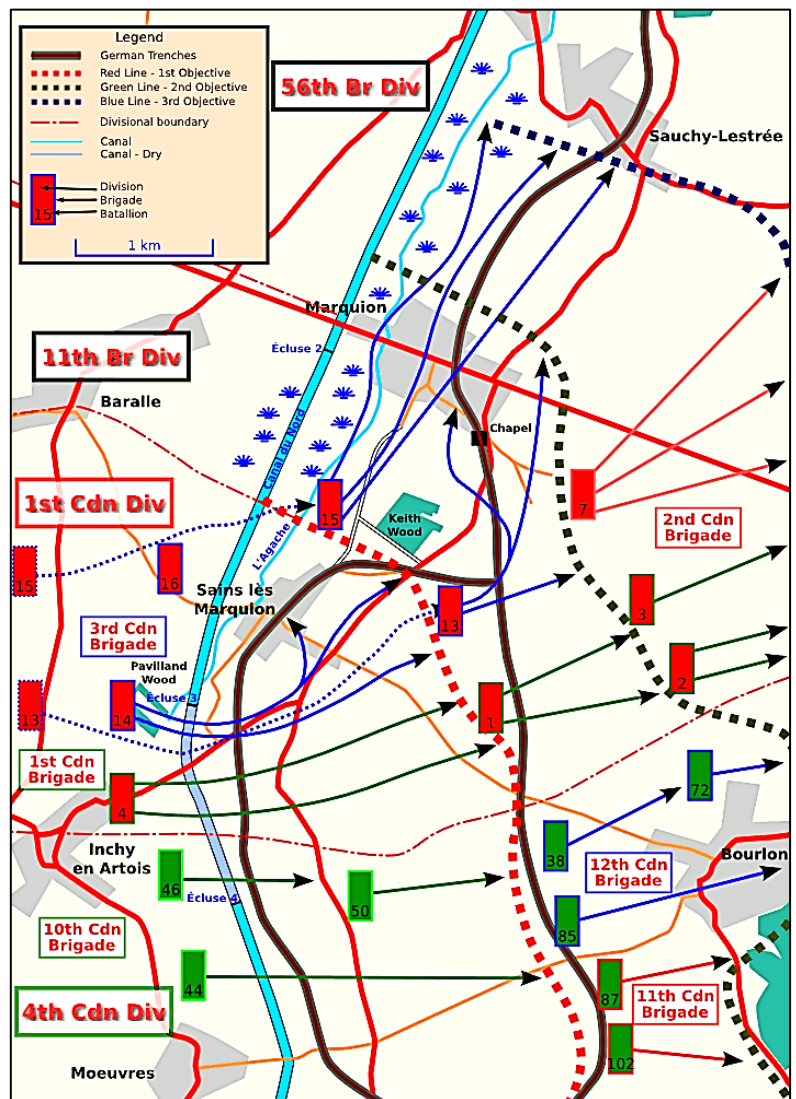
On 3 September the British Third Army was able to occupy the towns of Quéant and Pronville without any fighting and they reported that the Germans were falling back. Advancing, they reported that the east bank of the Canal du Nord was strongly held and that all the bridges crossing the canal had been destroyed. All that was now required by the Allies was to establish a route across the canal.

The attack on the Canal du Nord was to begin on 27 September, a day after the Meuse-Argonne Offensive⁸¹, one day before a major offensive in Flanders and two days before The Battle of St. Quentin Canal. Now sensing complete victory, Rawlinson ordered the Canadian commander, General Arthur Currie, to cross the incomplete Canal du Nord, the resulting battle (The Battle of Canal du Nord, 27 September - 1 October) seeing the Germans decisively defeated.

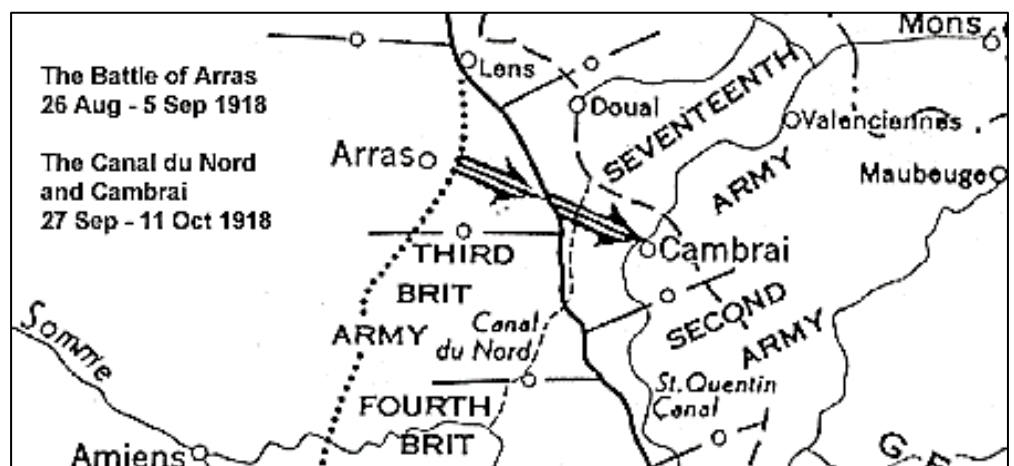
At 5:20am on the morning of 27 September four divisions attacked under total darkness, taking the German defenders by surprise. By mid-morning, all the German defenders had retreated or been captured and the final road to Cambrai was opened to the Allies. By evening a second strategic position, the heights of Bourlon Wood, a forested hill that overlooked the Canal du Nord, had been taken.

Rapidly, by 30 September, a 50km stretch of the Hindenburg Line had been taken, and the Germans were in full retreat. This victory allowed the next attack, The Battle of Cambrai [1918], to complete the penetration of the German defences and begin the Allied advance beyond the Hindenburg Line.

Twelve VCs were awarded for actions during the battle.



<http://www.webmatters.net/txtpat/index.php?id=656>



<http://www.sneydobone.com/webtree/morton/georgedl-1918c.htm>

⁸¹ This, also known as the Maas-Argonne Offensive and The Battle of the Argonne Forest, was fought in the region of Verdun from 26 September until the Armistice of 11 November, a total of 47 days. Conducted largely by US troops - it was the largest battle in US military history, involving 1.2 million American soldiers - cost 28,000 German and 26,277 American lives, making it the largest and bloodiest operation of WW1 for the American Expeditionary Force and the bloodiest battle in American history.

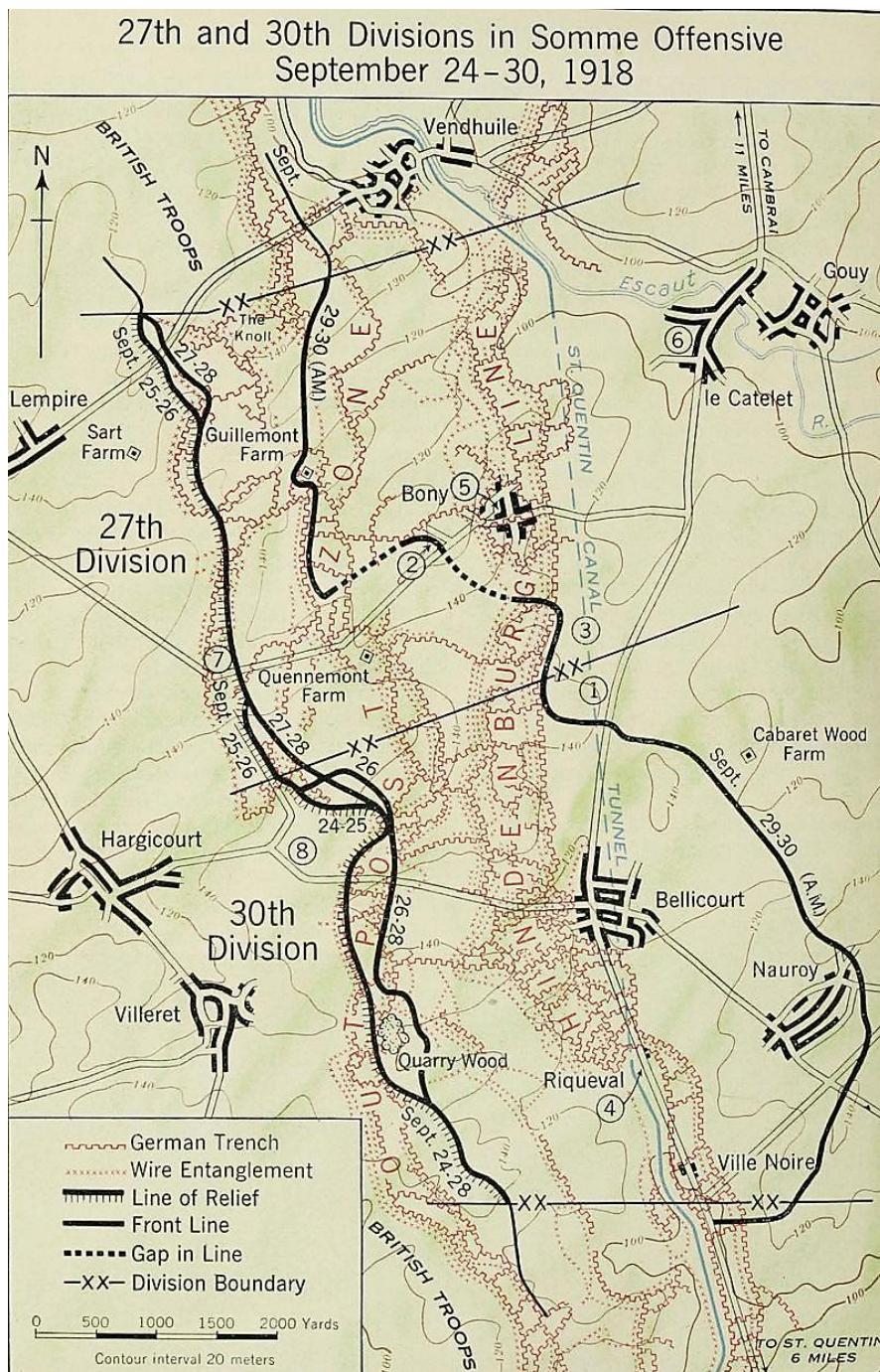
The crossing of the Canal du Nord and the breaking of the Hindenburg Line permitted the Allies to advance, as in late 1917, on the strategic site of Cambrai and the St Quentin Canal.

The St Quentin Canal, an older canal which, around 12 miles to the east, paralleled the Canal du Nord was a significant deep-sided structure which was an excellent anti-tank barrier for much of its length. The Hindenburg Line at that time incorporated and followed the orientation of the canal; however at Bellicourt, immediately south of Cambrai, the canal passed through a north-south four-mile long tunnel and it was here that the Hindenburg Line was most vulnerable and it was here that the main Allied assault took place.

The Battle of St Quentin Canal (29 September - 10 October) was preceded by the greatest British artillery bombardment of the war with around 1,600 guns were firing almost one million shells ⁸².

This bombardment was followed by an attack by two American divisions followed by two Australian divisions with approximately 150 tanks of the 4th and 5th Tank Brigades of the British Tank Corps. The objective of the Americans was the Le Catelet-Nauroy Line, a defensive line east of the canal and it was intended that the Australian 3rd Division (behind the US 27th) and 5th Division (behind the US 30th) would then bypass the American forces and press on towards the Beaurevoir Line.

However, the plans were soon in disarray and on the first day the Americans suffered severe losses - the 107th Infantry Regiment suffered the worst casualties sustained in a single day by any US regiment during the war.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_St_Quentin_Canal

⁸² Over 30,000 mustard gas shells, the first British use of this weapon, were fired at the German headquarters and the artillery batteries. Many of the high explosive shells fired had special fuses which made them very effective at destroying the German barbed wire.

The Australian 3rd Division became caught up in a fight for positions that, had the original plan succeeded, should already have been captured.

German fire from the side, rear and front caught the American and Australian troops and a thick fog across the battlefield in the early stages caused widespread disorientation and confusion ⁸³.

Nevertheless, the US 30th Infantry Division managed to break through the Hindenburg Line in the fog entering Bellicourt and capturing the southern entrance of the Bellicourt Tunnel of the St Quentin Canal. Although the troops reached the village of Nauroy by midday they were unable to hold all of the small settlement.

Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash, the commander of the Australian Corps ⁸⁴, later recorded (of the American forces in the failure to meet the objectives of the conflict) that

..in this battle they demonstrated their inexperience in war, and their ignorance of some of the elementary methods of fighting employed on the French front. For these shortcomings they paid a heavy price. Their sacrifices, nevertheless, contributed quite definitely to the partial success of the day's operations..

and General Sir Henry Rawlinson noted in his diary, on 29 September, that

The Americans appear to be in a state of hopeless confusion and will not, I fear, be able to function as a corps, so I am contemplating replacing them...I fear their casualties have been heavy, but it is their own fault.

Rawlinson also recorded that

My heaviest losses in this battle have been the American Corps. They were too keen to get on, as gallant new troops always are, and did not pay enough attention to mopping up, with the result that the Germans came out of the dugouts, after they had passed, and cut them off.

Rawlinson was always ready to place blame for shortcomings amongst the American forces although it was conceded later that, even for experienced troops, the objectives that they had been set for this conflict were too ambitious. Additionally, it had not been recognised that there were insufficient tanks to support the troops - and many other tanks were destroyed in the early stages of the action as the Germans had developed more effective anti-tank strategies ⁸⁵.

The tactical movements of the troops in crossing the St Quentin Canal and breaking the Hindenburg line are complex ⁸⁶ but resulted in, by the end of the first day (29 September),

⁸³ In fact, some American units passed German positions without realising that they were there and so became vulnerable to infantry fire from the rear.

⁸⁴ The Australian Corps was then the largest corps on the Western Front. The successful Allied attack at The Battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918 was planned by Monash and it is considered that he was one of the best Allied generals of the First World War and the most famous commander in Australian history.

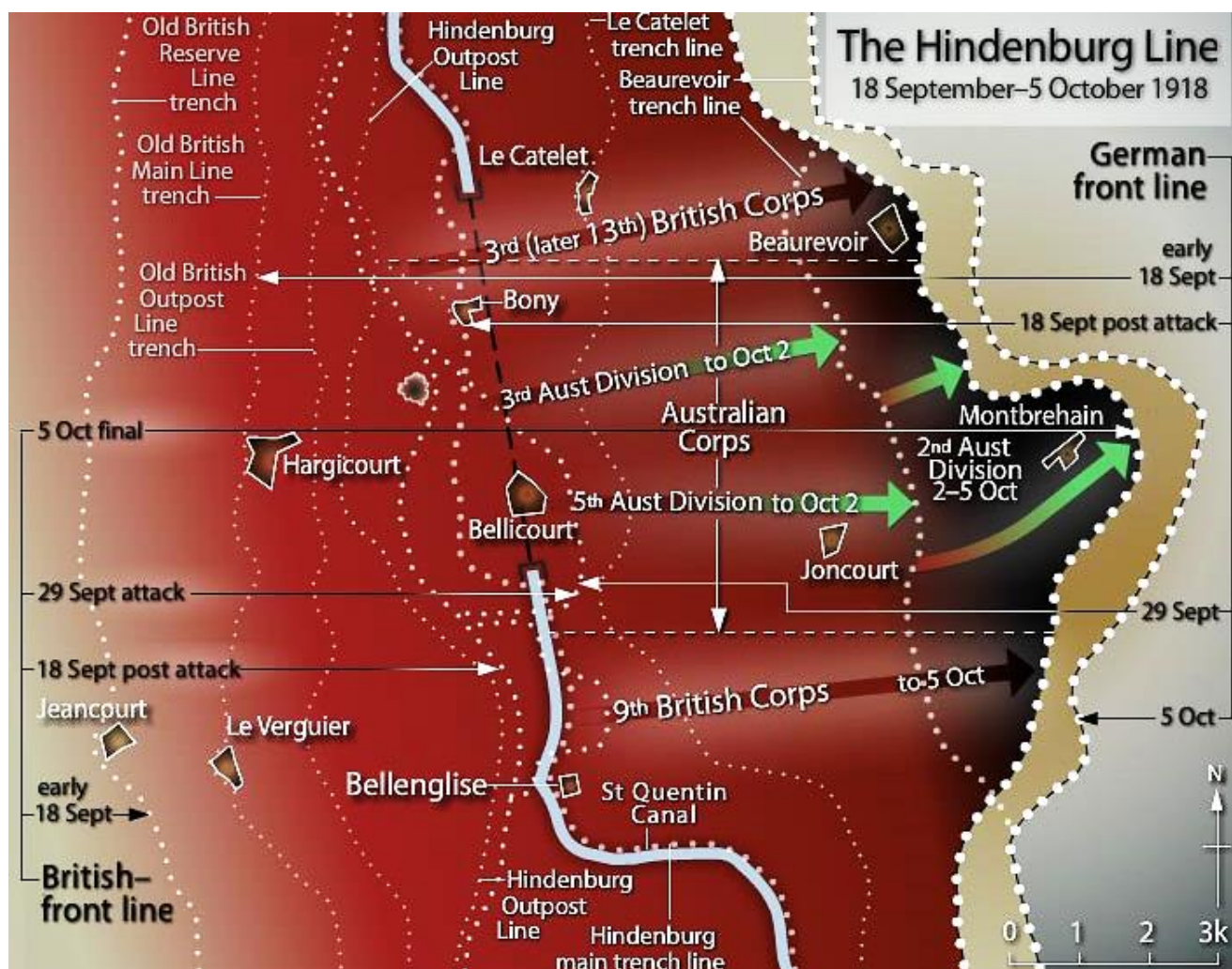
⁸⁵ Eight tanks were destroyed when they strayed into an old British minefield and four heavy tanks and five medium tanks were destroyed in the vicinity of Cabaret Wood Farm in just 15 minutes by German field guns.

⁸⁶ See, for example, (a) <http://www.5thlincs.investigationsofadog.co.uk/bellenglise-breaking-hindenburg-line.html>
(b) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_St_Quentin_Canal
(c) http://www.worcestershireregiment.com/wr.php?main=inc/h_St_Quentin_Canal
(d) <http://www.ww1westernfront.gov.au/bellenglise/what-happened-here.php>

the 46th Division having captured the village of Bellenglise and the surrounding defences whilst taking 4, 200 German prisoners at a loss of 800 casualties to the division. It was considered that, here, the assault across the canal met all its objectives within the time-frame agreed and Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash recorded ⁸⁷ that

There can be no doubt that this success, conceived at first as a demonstration to distract attention from the Australian Corps front, materially assisted me in the situation in which I was placed later on the same day.

Later in the day the forward brigades of the 32nd Division ⁸⁸ crossed the canal and moved forward through the 46th Division. By nightfall the whole of the 32nd Division was east of the St Quentin Canal.



http://www.ww1westernfront.gov.au/battle-maps/bellenglise_4_final.jpg

⁸⁷ *The Australian Victories In France In 1918*, Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash, 1920, Hutchinson & Co., London.

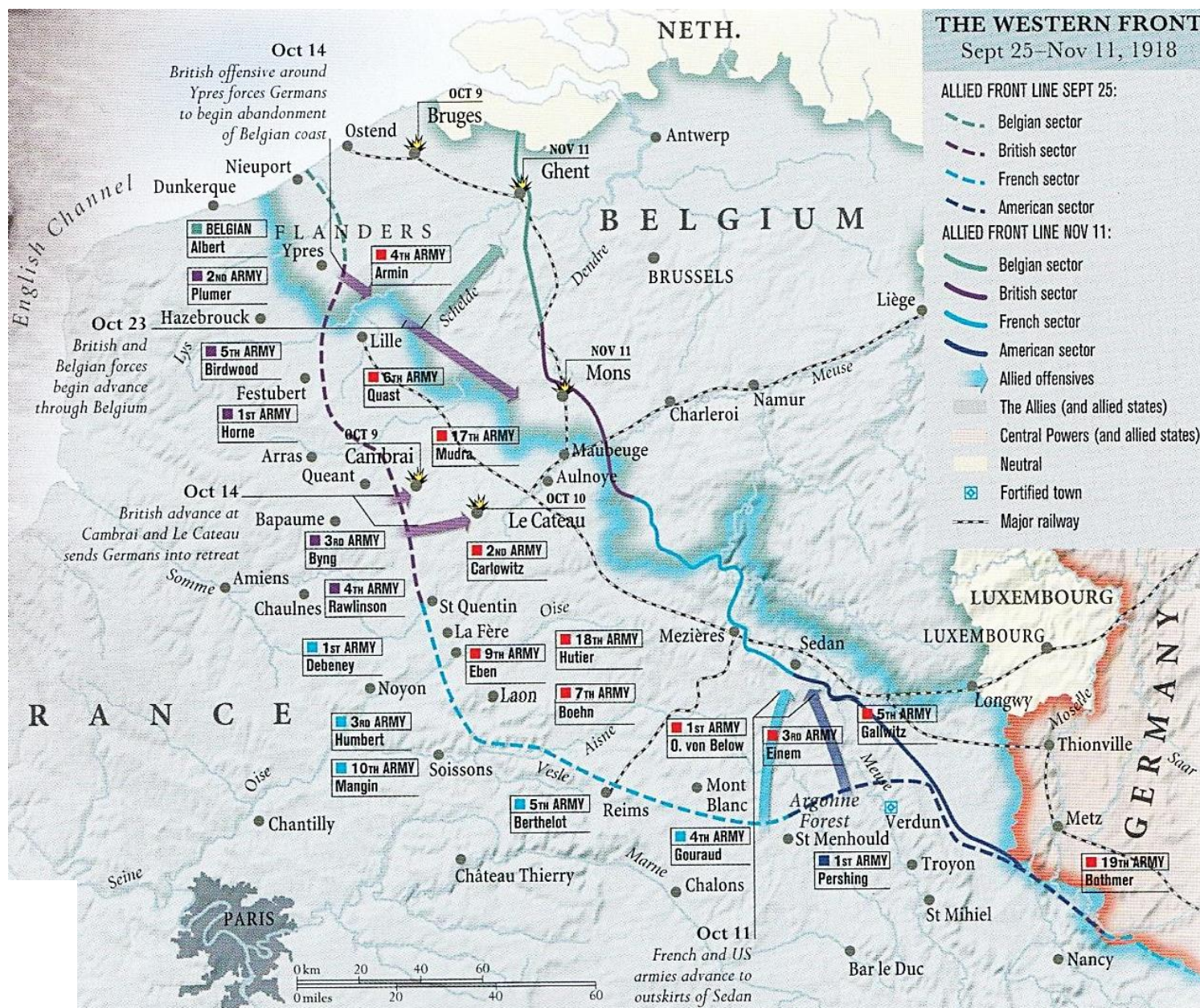
⁸⁸ The noted war poet Wilfred Owen, of the Manchester Regiment, was amongst these troops. In early 1917, in the St Quentin area, he was severely concussed by a trench mortar and returned to England to recuperate. In July 1918 Owen returned voluntarily to the Western Front and, subsequently, took part in the breaking of the Hindenburg Line at Joncourt on 1 October 1918. For this action, with the 5th Battalion Manchester Regiment, Owen was awarded the Military Cross

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the attack on the Fonsomme Line on October 1st/2nd, 1918. On the company commander becoming a casualty, he assumed command and showed fine leadership and resisted a heavy counter-attack. He personally manipulated a captured enemy machine gun from an isolated position and inflicted considerable losses on the enemy. Throughout he behaved most gallantly

He was killed on 4 November 1918 during the battle to cross the Sambre-Oise canal at Ors exactly one week (almost to the hour) before the signing of the Armistice which ended the war. He was promoted from Second Lieutenant to the rank of Lieutenant the day after his death.

On 2 October the British 46th and 32nd Divisions, supported by the Australian 2nd Division, had the objective of capturing the Beaurevoir Line, the third line of defences of the Hindenburg Line, together with the village of Beaurevoir and the heights overlooking the Beaurevoir Line. Whilst the assault was unable to capture the higher ground, the Beaurevoir Line was broken through and a 17km breach in the Hindenburg Line was created. The Allies were now in areas which had not seen fighting since 1914.

Allied attacks continued until 10 October; Montbrehain and Beaurevoir were taken by 6 October, the heights overlooking the Beaurevoir Line were seized and the Hindenburg Line was shattered. The way was now clear for the Allies to advance on the strategically-important site of Cambrai.



From the book *World War 1*, H. P. Willmott, Dorling Kindersley Ltd (Penguin Random House), 2nd Ed., 2015

The Battle of Cambrai (1918), known also as The Second Battle of Cambrai, took place from 8 - 10 October when the weakened German defences around the city were overrun by Canadian troops supported by aircraft. The three German lines, covering about 7 000 yards,

had been bombarded by 324 Allied tanks before the troops advanced and when the 2nd Canadian Division entered Cambrai they encountered only sporadic and light resistance. When the 3rd Canadian Division entered the town on 10 October, they found it deserted.

However, although the capture of Cambrai was achieved significantly sooner than expected, German resistance north-east of the town stiffened, slowing the advance and forcing the Canadian Corps to dig in. However, on 10 October the British Third Army entered Le Cateau to the south-east of Cambrai.

In early October the American forces in the region of the Argonne Forest near Verdun (in the south of the map on the facing page) were pushing northwards and to their west the French 4th and 5th Armies were also advancing east and northwards. It was now apparent that German administration was in disarray and the defence of their surviving positions was increasingly improvised. On 13 October German forces were in general retreat across a front between St Quentin and, to the south, the Argonne. By 14 October the British offensive around Courtrai (now Kortrijk, east of Ypres) was so intense that the Germans began to abandon Lille (to the south of Ypres) and the Belgian coast. On 17 October King Albert 1 of Belgium was able to re-enter Ostend⁸⁹ and on 19 October Belgian troops were able to enter Bruges and Zeebrugge.

BRITISH BATTLE ON EDGE OF LE CATEAU; 15,000 OF FOE SEIZED

LONDON, Oct. 10.—British troops which drove through Cambrai yesterday have reached the outskirts of Le Cateau, 14 miles south-east of Cambrai, the war office announced this afternoon.

British cavalry and tanks have swept 15 miles east of the old Hindenburg line and are rounding up large detachments of Germans.

It is estimated that 15,000 Germans and 400 guns have been taken although the Huns are being brought behind the Anglo-American lines in such numbers that no official count is being kept.

The new German defense running through Douai, Le Cateau and Laon has already been penetrated by British and American forces northeast of Cambrai.

It was a comparatively weak position as compared to the Hindenburg defense system.

The Germans in their retreat are wantonly firing villages and burning everything they cannot carry off.

ON FULL RUN

British and American detachments in the forefront report that at numerous points the Germans have retreated on the full run before the allies' advance.

That a great retreat toward the Meuse is in progress is strongly indicated by developments today. At some points, however, German shock battalions are holding strongly in an effort to cover this retreat. The Canadians, between Cambrai and Le Cateau, are within 15 miles of the Belgian border.

The British and American advance continued all night along the Cambrai-St. Quentin front, and the Cambrai-Le Cateau road was crossed.

ADVANCE 2 MILES

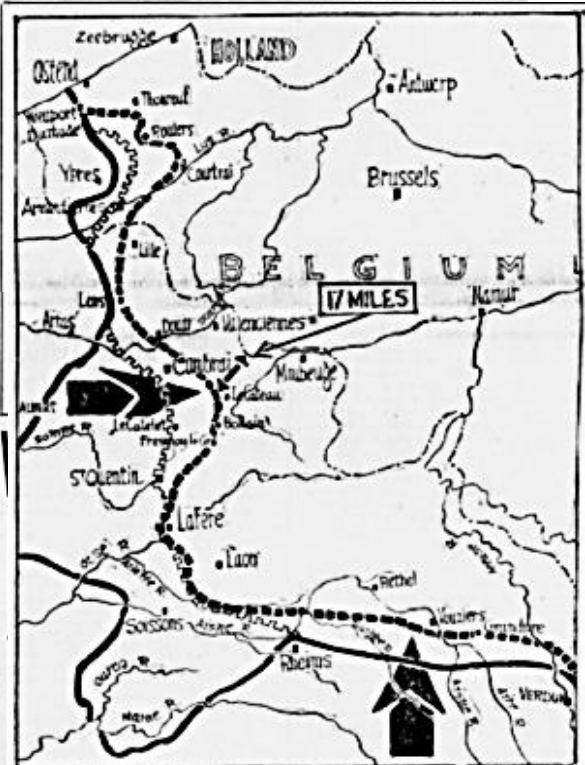
The British east of Lens also advanced two miles, striking well into the great French coal fields.

Fires are reported in both Douai and Lille and the evacuation of those cities by the Germans is believed under way.

Strong British forces have crossed the road between Cambrai and Valenciennes, near the Belgian border. These troops are rapidly conducting an encircling movement designed to cut off Douai and Lille.

CAMBRAI LITTLE HURT

British troops that passed through Cambrai report that the city was comparatively little damaged except from shell fire. Cavalry which pushed ahead reported fires and explosions in the area about Courtrai, Le Cateau, St. Benin, St. Remy, Vaux, Adigny, Beauchain and Bertry.



Map of western battlefront, showing the rapid breakdown of the German front in France. Upper arrow shows where French and Americans have driven a salient almost to Le Cateau, within 17 miles of the Belgian border. Lower arrow shows where the Americans and French are rapidly pushing northward, threatening the flanking of Laon and La Fere and the encirclement of the German armies in the tip of the Hun salient. The American advance also threatens to make impossible a stand by the Germans on the line of the Meuse river. The Anglo-American salient through the Hindenburg defense system between Cambrai and St. Quentin has reached a depth of about 14 miles.

Los Angeles Evening Herald, 10 October 1918

⁸⁹ The German invasion of Belgium brought Britain into the war and King Albert took personal command of the Belgian army and held the Germans off long enough for Britain and France to prepare for The Battle of the Marne (6–9 September 1914). Albert led his army throughout the war and fought alongside his troops. His wife, Queen Elisabeth, worked as a nurse at the front and Albert allowed his 14-year-old son and successor, Prince Leopold, to enlist in the Belgian army as a private and fight in the ranks. Whilst Albert was on the front line it was suggested that German soldiers never fired on him out of respect for him being the highest ranked commander in harm's way, while others feared risking punishment by the Kaiser, his cousin.

By 20 October, although the Allied forces had over-stretched their supply lines, the Allies had moved into the areas east of Lille and to near Pecq, by the River Scheldt.

On 23 October the British Third and Fourth Armies staged a series of offensives between Le Cateau and Valenciennes (east of Cambrai) which moved the front line 1 - 3 miles after they encountered strong resistance; 9,000 prisoners and 150 guns were taken. By this date the German forces had withdrawn from their positions in the Aisne region, south of St Quentin, and were staging an active withdrawal eastward as the French and American armies moved towards the River Meuse.

On 24 October the French made successful attacks between the Rivers Serre and Oise, and between Rethel and Sissonne, whilst stiff American fighting continued north of Verdun and French and British troops advanced to 10 miles east of Courtrai. On 31 October it was calculated that British captures over the previous three months amounted to 172,659 prisoners, 2,378 guns, 17,000 machine guns and 2,750 trench mortars.

On 1 November the Americans and French continued to advance between Aisne and Meuse in the Argonne Forest; the following day German forces withdrew totally from the region, the Americans captured Buzancy and the French captured the south bank of Canal des Ardennes between Semuy and Neuville.

The Second Battle of the Sambre (4 - 6 November 1918) in Belgium was one of the final Allied offensives in Europe and the last large-scale battle fought by the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front. It was this conflict - the battle was on a huge scale with thirteen divisions of the BEF leading the assault along a front of twenty miles, supported by over a thousand guns - that led to the death of war poet Wilfred Owen.

Whilst the German Supreme Army Command, through Erich Ludendorff, had informed Kaiser Wilhelm II that the military situation facing Germany was hopeless as early as 29 September nothing happened until 5 October when the German government sent a message to President Wilson to negotiate peace terms on the basis of a speech that Wilson had made to the US Congress on 8 January 1918 setting out basic terms for negotiation⁹⁰. However, Wilson did not feel that the form of settlement suggested by Germany went far enough and he noted that it *failed to convey the idea that the Kaiser's abdication was an essential condition for peace. The leading statesmen of the Reich were not yet ready to contemplate such a monstrous possibility.* On 23 October, with no indication of German capitulation in sight, Wilson wrote that *If the Government of the United States must deal with the military masters and the monarchical autocrats of Germany now, or if it is likely to have to deal with them later in regard to the international obligations of the German Empire, it must demand not peace negotiations but surrender.*

⁹⁰ This was Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' speech in which he identified 14 strategies to ensure national security and future world peace. Eight of the 14 points treated specific territorial issues among the combatant nations. Five of the other six concerned general principles for a peaceful world: open covenants (i.e. treaties or agreements) openly arrived at; freedom of the seas; free trade; reduction of armaments; and adjustment of colonial claims based on the principles of self-determination. The 14th point proposed what was to become the League of Nations to guarantee the "political independence and territorial integrity [of] great and small states alike." The French, British and Italian governments were, in general, not in favour of the Fourteen Points. The full text of this speech can be read at https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson's_Fourteen_Points and a slightly condensed version is available at <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=62&page=transcript>

In late October, Erich Ludendorff, the Quartermaster general and leader of the German war efforts declared the conditions of the Allies to be unacceptable and demanded a continuation of the war. Whilst the Imperial Government discussed peace proposals Ludendorff resigned and was replaced by Wilhelm Groener, but the war lingered on. General Sir Henry Rawlinson was unconvinced by the German approach and, whilst believing that this was a ploy to take time to reinforce their remaining positions, advocated a full continuation of hostilities which would lead to a complete victory for the Allies. Indeed, on 20 October Rawlinson wrote *I think the Bosch mean to go back gradually to the line of the Meuse* in his journal and on 22 October, when he envisaged that the war could continue into early 1919, he wrote

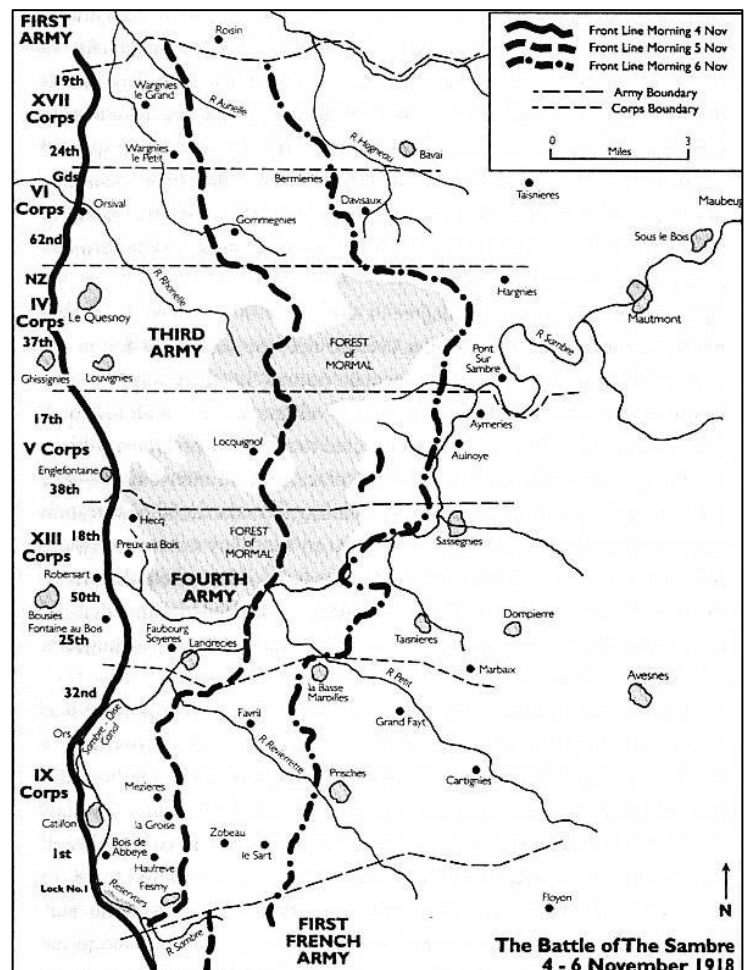
The negotiations are like selling a horse:- we have to fix the reserve price - If it is too high the Bosch won't buy and we shall go on fighting. - I am inclined to keep up the pace and to insist on unconditional surrender. It will probably prolong the war but it is better so than having an unsatisfactory peace. If the Bosch continues to destroy all railways we shall not be able to get to the German frontier before Feb'y we will then enter Germany and dictate terms. After all it is worth another 3 or 4 months' delay.

Along the front lines it was known that German resistance was weakening. For the battle the French 1st Army and the British First, Third, and Fourth Armies were advancing from south of the Condé Canal along a 30-mile front toward Maubeuge-Mons and towards Namur.

At dawn on 4 November, 17 British and 11 French divisions headed the attack although there were just 37 tanks available for their support.

The first barrier to the northern attack was the 70-foot-wide Sambre Canal (in the south west of this map) and the surrounding swamp. The XIII and IX Corps reached the canal first but came under heavy artillery fire from the Germans before mobile bridges could be placed over it. Around 1,150 men of IX Corps, including Wilfred Owen, were lost in the crossing. German forces continued to defend the small villages to the east of the canal and it was not until midday that a 15-mile-wide breach was secured.

Further north, IV and V Corps attacked into the Forest of Mormal. At Le Quesnoy, attacked by the IV Corps, the German defence was so disorganized that the 13th Royal Welsh Fusiliers hardly needed to use their guns. All objectives were secured by 5 November.

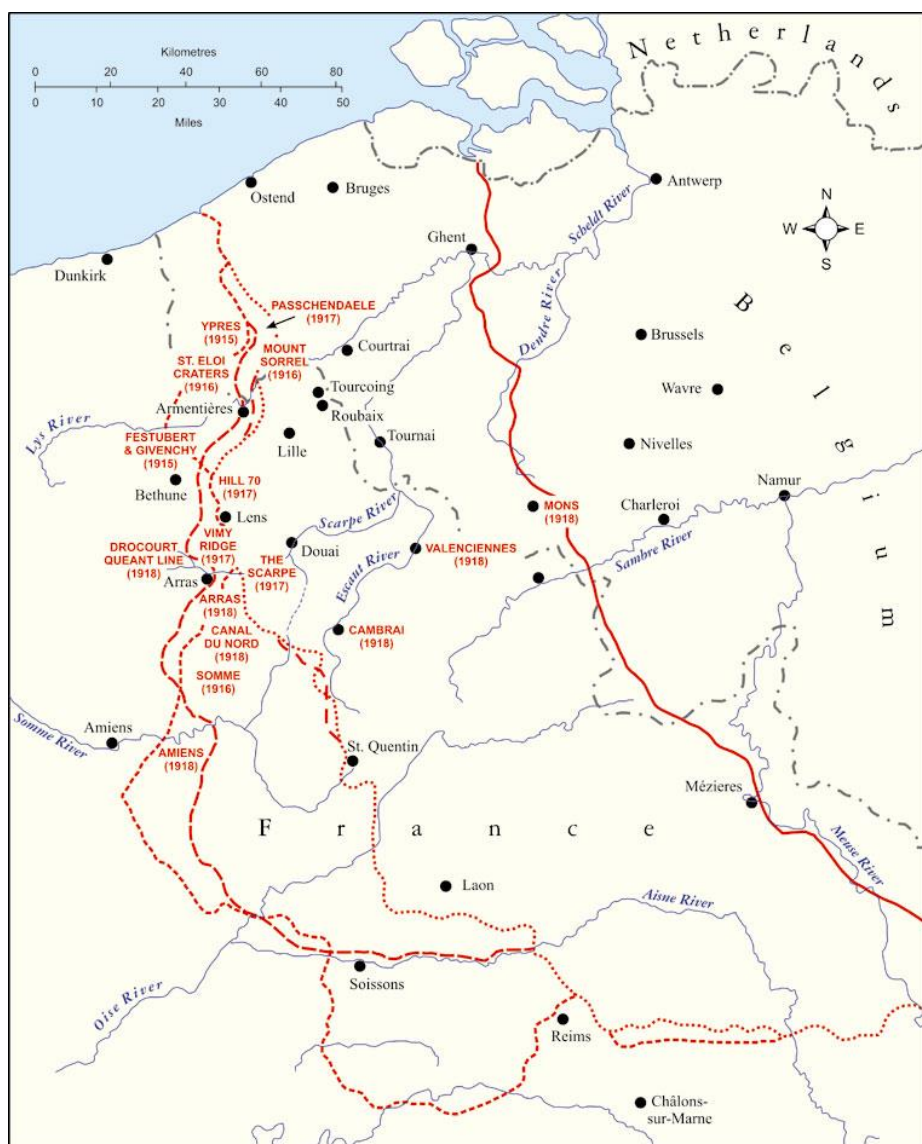


<http://s120.photobucket.com/user/gporta/media/Rooting%20for%20Laughton/SambreMap.jpg.html>

Further south, the French First Army advanced to capture the communes of Guise and Origny-en-Thiérache (at The Battle of Thiérache).

Although, on 5 November, the Allies agreed to take up negotiations for a truce (now also demanding reparation payments) the ground forces continued to push forward from Ghent, through Hourain, Bauffe, Havré, to near Consoire, and Sivry. Little resistance was met in most areas and the troops managed to advance up to five miles a day until, the Armistice Line of 11 November was reached.

In the early days of the war in 1914, British forces had put up a fierce resistance around Mons in an effort to slow the German drive towards Paris - and Mons became the last significant settlement to be regained by the Allies before a peace settlement was agreed.



The Western Front, 1914–1918
Front Lines and Major Canadian Operations

--- 30 November 1914 21 March 1918 — 11 November 1918
--- 31 December 1917 18 July 1918

Recapturing Mons at the end of the war was of symbolic importance and this action was left to the Canadian Corps led by Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Currie.

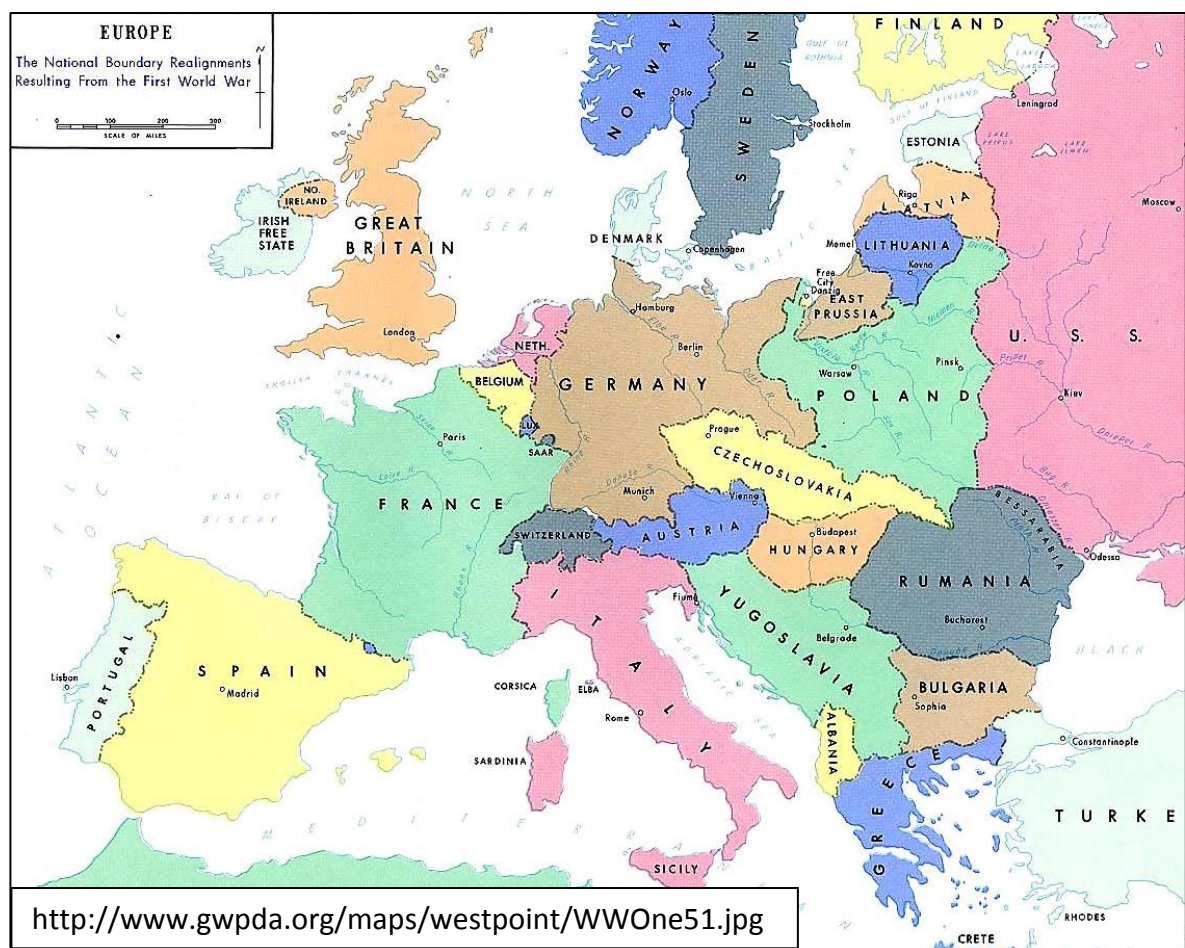
After encircling the town the Canadians broke through, against stiff German resistance and constant machine gun fire. By early morning on 11 November they had taken most of Mons without any heavy shelling and little destruction. At 6:30am Currie received notice that hostilities would cease at 11:00am although, by then, fighting had almost ceased.

Overall casualties in The Battle of Mons were slight, compared with other engagements of the war, although 280 men were killed, wounded, or were officially missing during these last two days of the war.

Following the Armistice of 11 November 1918 the political and economic map of Europe changed significantly and some aspects of the political changes

<http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo9/no2/09-leach-eng.asp>

can be seen from the following maps:



® An outline of trench warfare

One of the enduring images of WW1 is of the complex trench systems used on both sides of the conflict. Whilst the military concept of using trenches to consolidate a position in the field did not originate with this war, the tactical use of trenches certainly reached its ultimate form during the conflict and relatively little use was made of trenches in the more mobile and open warfare of World War II in Europe or in later warfare ⁹¹.

Long before WW1 a number of military historians and authors recognised that trench warfare would be important in future military engagements:

At first there will be increased slaughter on so terrible a scale as to render it impossible to get troops to push the battle to a decisive issue.

Everybody will be entrenched in the next war; the spade will be as indispensable to the soldier as his rifle.

Then, instead of a war fought on to the bitter end in a series of decisive battles, we shall have as a substitute a long period of continually increasing strain upon the resources of the combatants.

[Ivan Bloch, *War in the Future* (1898) and *Has War Become Impossible?* (1899)]

The following, taken with only minor amendment from Encyclopaedia Britannica provides a concise history and description of trench warfare:

Trench warfare, warfare in which opposing armed forces attack, counterattack, and defend from relatively permanent systems of trenches dug into the ground. The opposing systems of trenches are usually close to one another. Trench warfare is resorted to when the superior firepower of the defense compels the opposing forces to “dig in” so extensively as to sacrifice their mobility in order to gain protection.

A trench system may begin simply as a collection of foxholes hastily dug by troops using their entrenching tools. These holes may subsequently be deepened so that a soldier can safely stand up in one of them, and the individual foxholes may be connected by shallow crawl trenches. From this beginning a system of more permanent field fortifications may be constructed. In making a trench, soil from the excavation is used to create raised parapets running both in front of and behind the trench. Within the trench are firing positions along a raised forward step called a fire step, and duckboards are placed on the often muddy bottom of the trench to provide secure footing.

The tactical ancestor of modern trench warfare was the system of progressively extended trenches developed by the French military engineer Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban for the attack of fortresses in the 17th century. Trenches remained merely a part of siegecraft until the increasing firepower of small arms and cannon compelled both sides to make use of trenches in the American Civil War (1861–65). The trench lines of the Petersburg–Richmond theatre of operations in the final months of that war were the foremost example of trench warfare in the 19th century.

Trench warfare reached its highest development on the Western Front during World War I (1914–18), when armies of millions of men faced each other in a line of trenches extending from the Belgian coast through northeastern France to Switzerland. These trenches arose within the first few

⁹¹ In WW2 the Japanese in the Pacific theatre of war heavily fortified many of their islands with chains of deeply dug caves and bunkers. In the Korean War in the early 1950s North Korean and Chinese forces used trenches and trenches were used also in the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88). In the Gulf War (1990–91), Iraq built an elaborate system of defensive trenches and ditches.

months of the war's outbreak, after the great offensives launched by Germany and France had shattered against the deadly, withering fire of the machine gun and the rapid-firing artillery piece. The sheer quantity of bullets and shells flying through the air in the battle conditions of that war compelled soldiers to burrow into the soil to obtain shelter and survive.

The typical trench system in World War I consisted of a series of two, three, four, or more trench lines running parallel to each other and being at least 1 mile (1.6km) in depth. Each trench was dug in a type of zigzag so that no enemy, standing at one end, could fire for more than a few yards down its length. Each of the main lines of trenches was connected to each other and to the rear by a series of communications trenches that were dug roughly perpendicular to them. Food, ammunition, fresh troops, mail, and orders were delivered through these trenches. The intricate network of trenches contained command posts, forward supply dumps, first-aid stations, kitchens, and latrines. Most importantly, it had machine-gun emplacements to defend against an assault, and it had dugouts deep enough to shelter large numbers of defending troops during an enemy bombardment

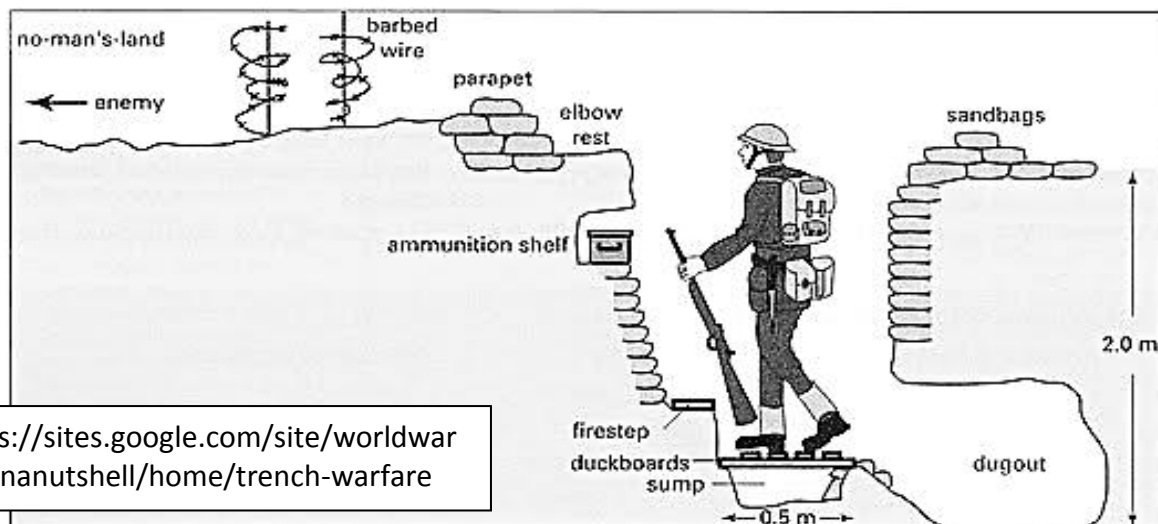
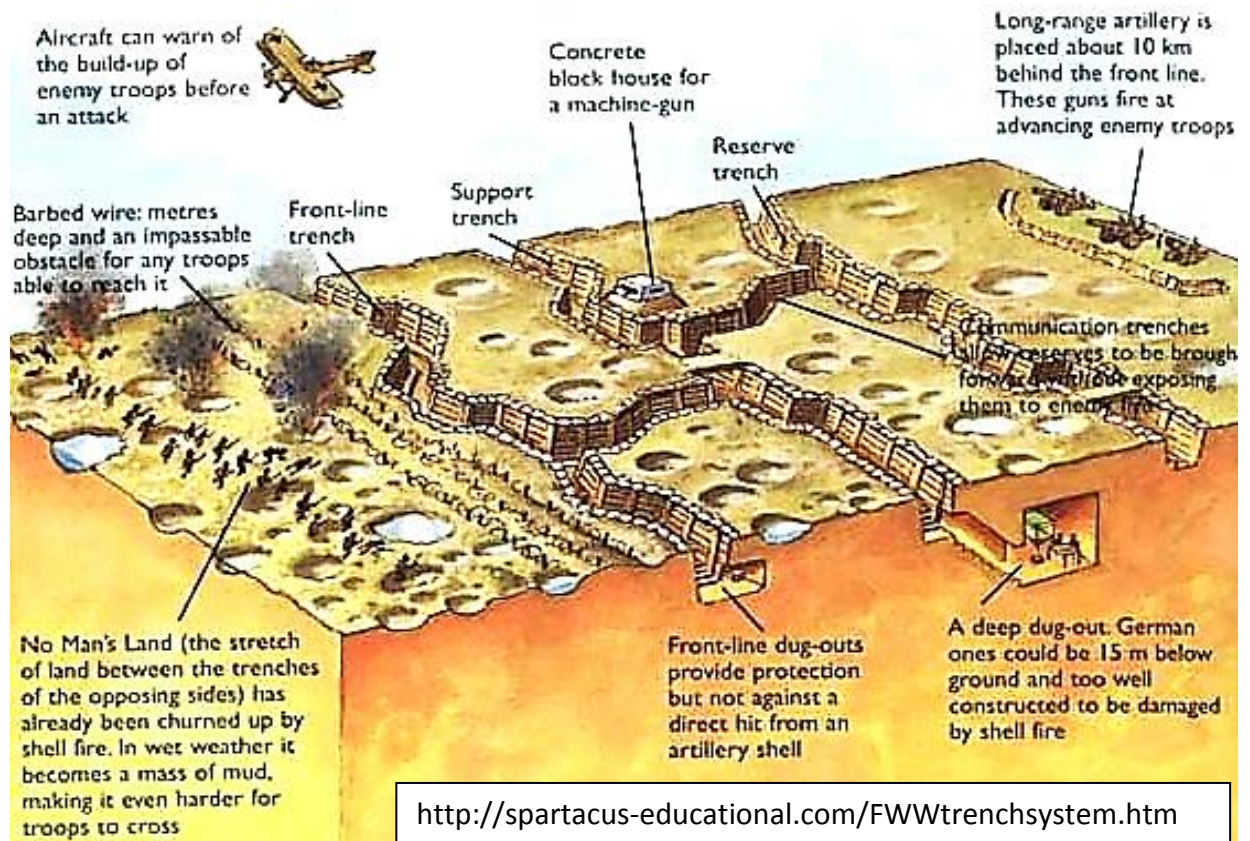
The first, or front, line of trenches was known as the outpost line and was thinly held by scattered machine gunners distributed behind dense entanglements of barbed wire. The main line of resistance was a parallel series of two, three, or four lines of trenches containing the bulk of the defending troops. The defenders' artillery was posted to the rear of the main line of trenches. Each main line of trenches was fronted by fields of barbed wire intended to slow down and entangle attacking infantry. As World War I progressed, both sides, but particularly the Germans, developed trench systems of progressively greater depth and strength in order to ensure that the enemy could not achieve a breakthrough at any particular point. The Germans evolved an extremely elaborate defense system using pillboxes, i.e., concrete shelters for machine guns. Behind the pillboxes were more lines of barbed wire and more trenches and dugouts reinforced with concrete to withstand artillery bombardment. Behind these defenses were still more lines of trenches that were effectively out of range of the enemy's artillery fire. By 1918 the Germans had constructed some trench systems that had a depth of 14 miles (22km).

Throughout most of World War I, the opposing armies on the Western Front tried to break through the enemy's trench system by mounting infantry assaults preceded by intense artillery bombardments of the defending trenches. These attacks usually failed, partly because the preliminary bombardment alerted the defenders to the imminence of an attack, thus allowing them time to bring up reserves for a counterattack, and because the bombardments themselves turned the "no-man's-land" between the opposing sides into rough, shell-pocked terrain that slowed down the attacking infantry. The crucial elements in attacking a trench system, surprise and overwhelming numbers of infantry, were thus almost impossible to attain. The Allies' increased use of the tank in 1918 marked the beginning of the end of trench warfare, however, since the tank was invulnerable to the machine gun and rifle fire that were the trenches' ultimate defence.

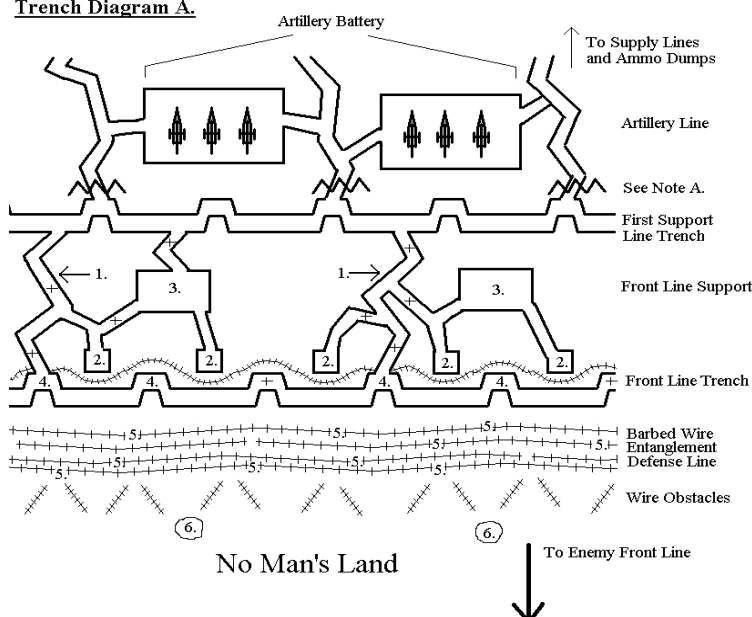
[<https://www.britannica.com/topic/trench-warfare>]



Trenches of the 11th Cheshire Regiment at Ovillers-la-Boisselle, on the Somme, July 1916. One sentry keeps watch while the others sleep. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trench_warfare]



Trench Diagram A.



Key

Note A. Usually in between the first support line trench and the artillery line there would be two or three more support trench lines. This diagram has been condensed.

1. Communication Trench
2. Machine Gun Nest
3. Underground Bunker
4. Traverse
5. Wire Break
6. Listening Post
- + Trench Block

<https://www.quora.com/What-does-a-trench-diagram-indicate>

It is estimated that there were about 2,490km of trench lines dug during World War 1. Most trenches were between 1-2 metres wide and 3 metres deep. It took 450 men six hours to build around 250 metres of British trenches.