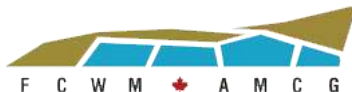


World War I  
**Day by Day**  
1915 – 1918

# January 1915 / Janvier 1915

La première guerre mondiale  
**De jour en jour**  
1915 – 1918



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## 8 January 1915 [Thursday]

The 'kernel' of Germany's war aims policy in the West—Holding the Belgian ports

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Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz

On January 8, 1915, the German Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg wrote to **Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz**, calling for his suggestions, not in terms of his naval department, but 'quite generally that of Germany's future world power position.'

Tirpitz in his reply was adamant that Belgium must be owned because of the Channel ports. He saw Belgium as the key to the war: *'If we fail to keep secure the possibilities of development offered in Belgium, I should regard the war, considered in relation to Germany's world power status, as lost; with Belgium, as won.'*

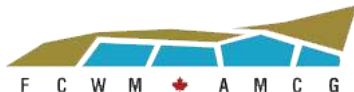
Tirpitz's influence as a navalist with wide strategic views, influenced by his hate of British world power, was instrumental in pushing the notion that the Channel ports were crucial to Germany as they were crucial to Great Britain. German historian Fritz Fischer comments:

«In other words: Belgium had become the kernel of Germany's policy in the west. Only thus we can explain how it came about that the leaders of Germany, while constantly changing their views on the possible forms under which Belgium could be drawn into the German sphere of interest, were never, up to the autumn of 1918 able to decide to relinquish it altogether.»

The emerging view, in British military circles, inspired by British navalists such as Admiral Jellicoe, which General Haig will come to represent in the Army, that the Flanders region is more important than the rest of France for the Western Front (thence the sacrifices of Ypres and Passchendaele), is based on a German interpretation, therefore of highest consequence, that Belgium is indeed 'the kernel of Germany's war aims policy in the west.'

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Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, (1967), p. 113.



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## 9 January 1915 [Friday]

McGill University's doubles the size of its projected military General Hospital for France

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Lieutenant-Colonel (Canadian Militia) Herbert Stanley Birkett, MD

In October 1914 McGill University was the first university of the Commonwealth to offer to the British War Office a full military General Hospital for the treatment of the wounded and the sick service personnel near the battlefields in France. The plan for the hospital was for 520 beds.

Sometime in January, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, **Lieutenant-Colonel (Canadian Militia) Herbert Stanley Birkett, MD**, Commanding Officer of the projected hospital, received a phone call from Ottawa telling him that the plans for general hospitals as standardized by the War Office was now of 1040 beds. Would McGill consider meeting this requirement?

– Birkett answered immediately: Yes!

McGill was already putting together the medical staff, mostly out of professors and students of the Faculty of Medicine, as well as overseeing the recruiting of nurses and hospital hands, and gathering the equipment for medical operations and logistics support in Montreal. All this now had to be doubled to 33 officers, 73 Nursing Sisters, and 205 other ranks.

The Hospital left Canada on 6 April 1915, and became the **No. 3 Canadian General Hospital (McGill)**. It served under 250 tents in Dannes-Camiers, near Boulogne, France, from June until December 1915, and then moved to the Jesuit College in Boulogne where it stayed until May 1919.

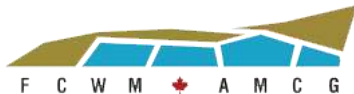
No. 3 Canadian General Hospital became the largest of 45 sanitary facilities provided by Canada in France. It received 143,762 patients and its staff performed 11,395 surgical operations.

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Featherstonhaugh, [McGill University at War](#), p. 42-60.

Litalien, [Dans la Tourmente](#), p. 42.

MacPhail, [The Medical Services](#), 353-77.



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## 10 janvier 1915 [samedi]

Le retour de Gandhi aux Indes après avoir passé 21 ans en Afrique du Sud

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (2 oct 1869 – 30 jan 1948)

À l'âge de 24 ans, **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi** avait quitté son Inde natale pour aller exercer sa profession d'avocat en Afrique du Sud. Gradué en Angleterre, il désirait prendre de l'expérience dans les affaires internationales. Dès son arrivée au port de Durban, il vécut une expérience brûlante de racisme. Dès lors, il se résolut à combattre le racisme en tant qu'avocat.

Mais sa réflexion personnelle, aidée de lectures variées, particulièrement de John Ruskin, de Henri Thoreau et de Tolstoy, le dirigea vers un ascétisme remarquable qu'il développa en Afrique du Sud. Il devint un chef de la communauté indienne en Afrique du Sud et s'illustra comme leader charismatique dans un style de protestation pacifique qui fit sa renommée mondiale. Dorénavant les armes de la désobéissance civile et le refus de la violence marquèrent ses conquêtes comme défenseur des droits humains.

**Le 9 janvier 1915**, il rentra dans la ville de Bombay où des foules l'attendaient comme héros. Il prit domicile dans une petite ville industrielle où il recréa un milieu simple dans une ferme communautaire, comme celle qu'il avait créée en Afrique du Sud. Les Indiens l'appelèrent bientôt Mahatma– Le grand Esprit en habit de mendiant.

Gandhi résolut qu'il appuierait le gouvernement de l'Inde dans son association avec l'Empire britannique pour combattre dans la Première guerre mondiale. Comme plusieurs autres il nourrissait l'espoir que la Grande-Bretagne répondrait ensuite aux aspirations nationalistes légitimes de son peuple.

Ces espoirs furent frustrés avec la Loi de Rowlatt, de février 1919. Ce grand leader prendra alors sur lui-même de diriger l'Inde dans une campagne protestations non-violentes pendant les prochains 30 ans.

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Collins et Lapierre, Cette nuit la liberté, (1975).



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## 11 January 1915 [dimanche]

### Sarikamish: La campagne de Russie du Pasha Envers

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Ismail Enver Pasha (22 nov 1881 – 4 août 1922)

Le ministre de la Guerre du gouvernement des Jeunes Turcs, **Le Pasha Envers**, a participé à la signature d'un traité d'alliance défensive avec l'Allemagne, contre la Russie, en novembre 1914.

Il a ensuite pris le commandement de la Troisième Armée ottomane de 80,000 hommes pour aller faire une percée le long de la frontière russe, à Sarikamish [*Sarikami*], au delà de la chaîne de montagne connue sous le nom de *Allahuekber* (Dieu est Grand).

Son but est de 'libérer' les Turcs de l'Asie centrale de l'autorité russe pour les rallier au mouvement Pan-Turc de Constantinople et turquifier la région entière.

Partie le 18 décembre, l'expédition mal préparée doit faire face à des conditions atmosphériques atroces. La montée jusqu'à 3,000 mètres est accablée par des températures qui chûtent à -26°C. Des milliers d'hommes mal habillés, mal nourris, mal chaussés, meurent avant d'arriver. Aux frontières ils sont attaqués par les Russes qui les déciment facilement. Le retour n'est pas moins dur puisque la troupe, maintenant réduite au nombre de 10,000, est frappée par une épidémie de typhus.

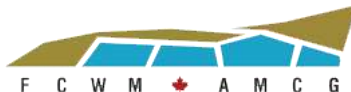
Le Pasha Envers remet ce qui reste de son armée à son ami, le Pacha Hafiz Hakki, le 8 janvier, pour retourner plus rapidement à Constantinople pour prévenir les retombées politiques. Hakki meurt de la maladie infectieuse.

La campagne de Russie, que Envers avait entreprise contre l'avis de tous ses conseillers, se solde par une débâcle horrible. **Le 11 janvier 1915**, le monde apprend combien les Turcs ont souffert aux mains de leur propre chef.

Envers réussit néanmoins à surmonter l'orage de l'opinion publique. Il reste au pouvoir au sein d'un triumvir qui survivra jusqu'à la fin de la guerre, supporté par les conseils et les ressources allemandes.

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Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 141.



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## 13 January 1915 [Tuesday]

### The Trevelyan letter: The Balkans – Serbia as key to the Middle East

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George Macauley Trevelyan

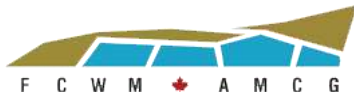
In the discussions on the options offered by a second front in the East, Lloyd George received a letter dated **15 January 1915**, written by the famous historian **George Macauley Trevelyan**, who was travelling through the Balkans. Trevelyan wished to inform the Government of the local political situation prevailing and to urge an intervention by the allied forces as there was a climate of indecision that called for immediate reassurance of support. If Serbia was to fall to an imminent attack by the Austrians aided by the Germans, Bulgaria would likely break its neutrality and side with the Central Powers. This would likely bring Greece along. Roumania would also be lost. This would spell disaster.

*The principle is that we must save Serbia or lose the whole Near East with result on the whole war imaginable to you.*

*Diplomatically everything seems uncertain and fluctuating from hour to hour with regard to the action or inaction of Roumania and Bulgaria—perhaps Greece. It is no very wild guess to suppose that the ultimate choice of Roumania and Bulgaria respectively or jointly, will depend on the result of the coming attempt to conquer Serbia if such attempt is made. Of course, the Roumanians ought to help to save her during that invasion, and they may, and every effort should be made to make Roumania do so. But other plans should be prepared to save Serbia, on the assumption that Roumania will not march till she sees the victor, for that is the only safe assumption. We do not wish to give the impression that Serbia is at the last gasp. Her spirit is splendid and her army, if halved by losses, is in good estate. But if, as at present expected, Germany and Austria can mobilise against her numbers that are beyond her power to resist, the result of the whole War may be affected by an abnormal effort to help.*

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David Lloyd George, Memoirs, I, 400-1.



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## 14 January 1915 [Wednesday]

### The Big Decision: The British War Council - 'Cigar-butt' strategy'

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Field Marshal John French, Commander-in-Chief of the BEF comes to London, on **14 January 1915**, for a War Council to hammer his view, that discussions of a diversion from the France front are wrong, that all attention must be paid to France, and that new troops and new artillery must be sent to a single point. He expounds on his intention of driving through Flanders, Belgium, to the Netherlands, and expatiates on the French Command's plan to gain ground more to the South.

French has much influence over Field Marshal Kitchener, the Secretary for War, who also opposes plans to have other points of attack. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Balfour, the Conservative leader, remain unconvinced, but they cannot sway the Council to devote land forces to diversions.

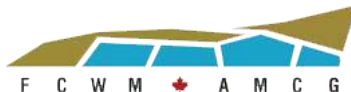
**Winston Churchill**, when the Council is exhausted, brings in a plan to use the Navy to make a diversion by attacking the Dardanelles. He immediately gets the enthusiasm of all present as his plan does not include land forces. The Dardanelles plan includes only the bombardment of the forts defending the passage, and the forcing of naval assets through the straits, so as to be in position to bombard Constantinople and force a Turkish surrender. Churchill believes that access to Constantinople can be acquired by naval forces alone with lots of firepower, which he intends to provide without taxing the Grand Fleet, now on guard for German naval sorties to the North Sea. WC has been in contact with Admiral Carden who has confirmed that two battle cruisers already in the Mediterranean can be devoted to the task, as well as a new battleship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, due for ballistics tests of its impressive 15-inch guns, that might be made on the Dardanelles forts well out of the forts' range. This offer carries the day.

Historians called these operations to attempt to divert enemy resources away from France "*side shows*". Few went as far as calling the decision-making methods of the British War Council "*cigar-butt strategy*".

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Hankey, Supreme Command, I, 267.

A.J.P. Taylor, The First World War, p. 71.



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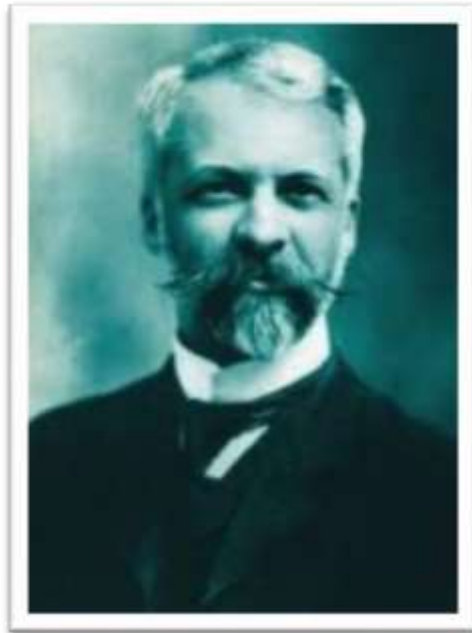
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**15 janvier 1915 [jeudi]**

Le Canada d'abord - Henri Bourassa décrie l'impérialisme

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Henri Bourassa (1 sept 1868 – 31 août 1952)

Le chef du quotidien montréalais *Le Devoir*, au cours d'un discours pour marquer le cinquième anniversaire de la fondation de son journal, donne son opinion sur la vocation continentale du Canada.

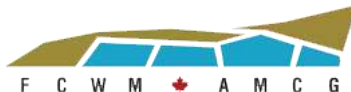
Il s'oppose à l'impérialisme européen sous toutes ses formes et formule une position isolationniste face à cette guerre qui oppose les grandes puissances. Son argumentation est en fait très semblable à celle qui prévaut à ce moment aux États-Unis sous le président Woodrow Wilson.

*« Mesdames et messieurs, je blesse peut-être les sentiments de quelques-uns d'entre vous. Placez-vous sous un autre angle. Que le Canada soit attaqué demain par les États-Unis, en guerre contre l'Angleterre, ou à cause d'un acte du Canada lui-même: combien de Belges, combien de Français, combien d'Allemands viendront de l'Europe combattre dans les rangs de l'armée canadienne ou dans ceux de l'armée américaine? Ce que nous nous efforçons d'inculquer à nos compatriotes, c'est que les Canadiens se doivent au Canada d'abord, avant de se devoir à l'Angleterre ou à la France. C'est là, en résumé, toute la raison d'être de nos luttes contre l'impérialisme. »*

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Remerciements pour avoir attiré l'attention au texte de Henri Bourassa, à Rolando Gomes, «Henri Bourassa et l'impérialisme britannique (1899-1918)», *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, Vol. 16:3, pp. 161-81. La citation y est tirée de J.-N. Cabana *et al.*, *Le 5e anniversaire du Devoir: compte rendu de la grande manifestation du 14 janvier 1915*.

*Allocutions et discours de MM. J.-N. Cabana, G.-N. Ducharme, Armand Lavergne, le docteur J.-B. Prince et Henri Bourassa*, Montréal, [s. n.], 1915, p. 45. [http://www.bulletinhistoirepolitique.org/le-bulletin/numeros-precedents/volume-16-numero-3/henri-bourassa-et-l%e2%80%99imperialisme-britannique-1899-1918/#\\_edn54](http://www.bulletinhistoirepolitique.org/le-bulletin/numeros-precedents/volume-16-numero-3/henri-bourassa-et-l%e2%80%99imperialisme-britannique-1899-1918/#_edn54)



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# 16 January 1915 [Friday]

Call us ANZAC

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When the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division and the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Horse Brigade sailed away from King George Sound, at Albany, in Western Australia, they picked up the convoy of the New Zealand Brigade. The volunteer forces provided by the two governments left the Sound on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1914. Their destination: the 'Western' front of France.

But a few days out, Major General W.T. Bridges, the senior Australian officer in command of the Australian division received instructions that the mission had suddenly changed. With the entry of Turkey into the war on the German side, the protection of Egypt had become a priority. The Suez Canal, the most important lifeline for the British Empire, could not be allowed to be taken or damaged in a raid conducted by the Ottoman peoples, east or west, with the help of German forces. The convoy was directed toward the Red Sea where is disembarked in a quite different climate than what was originally expected and prepared for.

The Australian and New Zealand forces were directed toward Cairo where they established camp. They spent Christmas 1914 under the shadow of the pyramids, in Camp Mena, with the cavalry based on the other side of Cairo, at Camp Maadi.

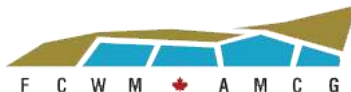
**In mid-January**, the force was formed into an Imperial army corps and placed under the command of British **General Sir William Birdwood**, an Indian Army cavalry officer with a distinguished record of service and the reputation of being an understanding leader of fighting men.

Birdwood has been credited with inventing the term ANZAC to call his command of both Austalians and New Zealanders. His creativity was somewhat helped by seeing the acronym painted on the side of a packing case addressed to the **A**[ustralian] **N**[ew] **Z**[ealand] **A**[rmy] **C**[orps].

The corps was joined by two more Australian brigades in the following month which formed the Second Australian Division. And the rest is ANZAC history...

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Firkins, *The Australians in Nine Wars*, 38-41.



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## 17 January 1915 [Saturday]

### To shoot like the Brits: A match for the Lee-Enfield

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For the troops in the Salisbury Plains, marksmanship was important. So much had been said about the British Expeditionary Force's success with marksmanship. At Le Cateau, France, on that fateful Sunday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1914, the BEF found itself in the obligation to make a hasty retreat under fire, the most difficult 'phase of war' in the book. The manoeuvre must unfold with troops alternating in providing covering fire as the rest 'advances to the rear'.

On that fateful day, the long years of training of the British Regular Army paid off. The waves of Germans coming cross-country met withering fire that was both accurate and extremely rapid. Soldiers who had fondled their rifles for years were able to direct rapid fire at a rate of 15 rounds per minute, reloading their 10-round magazine with a smooth, efficient right hand. The Germans who faced them were in awe of the skill. «Each bullet finds a billet<sup>1</sup>» said a prisoner, a phrase that was repeated throughout the Empire. The .303 fire was so intense that its victims thought that each Tommy had some sort of automatic weapon.

The training of the BEF on the Lee-Enfield in August 1914 was perhaps the sharpest that was ever achieved. Battalion champion shooters could place up to 30 rounds in a target in one minute, a *tour de force*.

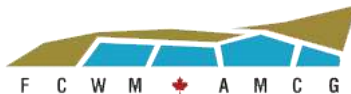
This fame was endlessly recalled to the Canadians at Salisbury: their marksmanship, said the officers, would make the difference and bring respect.

But the Canadians did not have a Lee-Enfield. They had the Ross rifle .303, an American rifle with many modifications that was built in Québec City. It had a straight-back lever that promised quick action, but troops already sensed that there were difficulties with the loading of ammunition and the overheating of the barrel and breach when they fired their full allotment of 155 rounds. Rosses burnt the skin and jammed.<sup>2</sup> But this was not a very big problem. Most of the firing was 'dry' anyway. There were so few shooting ranges available in Salisbury that most of the training was made with inert cartridges. But on **17 January**, most were well aware that this was not enough if they were to leave for France in early February.

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<sup>1</sup> [The TIMES History of the War](#) (1916), I:474.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, Ralph, «The most loved, hated, and debated military weapon of its time: the Ross rifle», in [Ordeal by Fire](#), p. 97-107.



# 18 January 1915 [Sunday]

## The Twenty-One Demands: Japan presents demands to China

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Prime Minister Ōkuma Shigenobu

The Twenty-One Demands were a set of demands made during the First World War by the Empire of Japan under Prime Minister Ōkuma Shigenobu. They were sent to a particularly weak government of the Republic of China on **January 18, 1915**.

The demands were grouped in five categories and forced China to recognize the dominant position and influence of Japan in East Asia.

The fifth group of these demands gave Japan control over the Chinese government through a system of advisers and specific control over the police, arms purchases, arsenals, and the development of the province of Fukien.

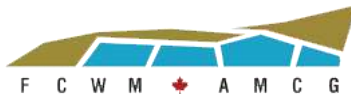
The demands would also greatly extend Japanese control over Manchuria and of the Chinese economy. The Japanese government was criticized by Britain and the United States for such blatant bullying, but they were busy themselves with the German bullying in Belgium.

The demands were challenged by China, and the indirect help of a distant European diplomatic opinion led to a less overtly drastic treaty than initially proposed, the Sino-Japanese Treaty of May 25, 1915.

These moves by Japan were not welcomed by China's trade partners in the West. They were the first inklings of a Japanese Asian imperialism that would fuel another war.

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Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, East Asia: Tradition and Transformation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).



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## 19 January 1915 [Monday]

### Two killed in first Zeppelin attack on British Isles

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The first bombing over England by German Zeppelin dirigible balloon occurred over Yarmouth, Norfolk, in the evening of **19 January 1915**.

Two Zeppelins released nine bombs which killed two civilians, Samuel Alfred Smith, 53, and Miss Martha Mary Taylor, 72.

They were in fact the first two persons to be killed in the British Isles by an enemy aircraft.

Recent reconnaissance overflight had been made by enemy aircraft, but the arrival of Zeppelins left a strong impression. Zeppelins still flew too high, at this time, for defensive action to be effective, either by anti-aircraft gunfire or by aircraft fire.

According to press reports made at the time, both Smith and Miss Taylor were blown to pieces. A few houses were more or less damaged, some holes were blown in the roadway, and a few persons were injured. *“No military or naval damage of any kind whatever was caused.”*<sup>1</sup>

From Yarmouth the raiders went to Sandringham and King’s Lynn, where two more persons were killed, a widow of a soldier and a boy. Others were slightly injured. Bombs were said to be from 30 to 100 pounds.

*“The account of this raid upon a purely civilian population aroused furious indignation in England, and caused a feeling of almost stupefied amazement among neutral nations.”*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Times History of the War](#), VII:4-5.



## 20 January 1915 [Tuesday]

Winston moves a big piece: HMS Queen Elizabeth on task at the Dardanelles

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The Queen Elizabeth is a modern battleship (1913) still involved in its tests in the Mediterranean. The British Admiralty under Winston Churchill orders her on **20 January 1915**, to join the fleet of Admiral Carden, near the Dardanelles. She is to get involved in the bombardment of the Turkish forts protecting the entrance to the Straits leading to the Sea of Marmara and to Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire.



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## 21 January 1915 [Wednesday]

Canadian Railroad Construction Corps created to be sent overseas

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Lieutenant-Colonel C.W.P. Ramsey

The offer made by Canada, in October 1914, and initially refused, is now taken up, **on 21 January 1915**, by the British Army Council, “*for a force of a little over 500 men for railway Repair and reconstruction work in Europe during the continuance of the war*”.

This opens a wide new field of involvement for Canada, where the Canadian expertise for railroad building and maintenance in difficult terrain is renowned.

In one month, the Canadian Government will authorize the creation of **The Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps (CORCC)** with the help of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The unit with 507 men will be formed and sent from St. John, New Brunswick under **Lieutenant-Colonel**

**C.W.P. Ramsey**, Engineer of Construction, Eastern Lines, CPR Montreal. The unit will arrive in France on 24 August 1915, after training in Great Britain.

Canadian railway troops employed overseas in the CORCC will eventually number 16,000.

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Photograph of Lieutenant Colonel Worthington Pope Ramsey, Officer Commanding the C.O.R.C.C. 1915-1916, Date: 1916, Photographer C.L. Hervey, Photo: Canadian Pacific Limited. A-4374, from Peter Wilson, Ed., Canadian Railroad Troops During World War I – 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Canadian Overseas Railway Construction Corps, November 1917- April 1918 (Campbellford, Ontario: Wilson’s Publishing Company, March 1995).



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## 22 janvier 1915 [jeudi]

Une maladie se propage dans le camp de Salisbury

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Une récente propagation de la méningite, associée à l'adoption progressive de huttes de logement chaudes et surhabitées, plutôt que des tentes bien aérées, en a forcé plusieurs à devoir être internés à l'hôpital.

**Le 22 janvier**, on compte environ 1200 soldats sur 31,000 qui sont sous traitement médical. Certaines grandes maisons, écoles, salles publiques des alentours du camp ont été transformées en hôpitaux pour les besoins pressants.

Beaucoup de maladies sont aussi reliées au manque d'hygiène dans le camp, insuffisamment développé pour la population soudaine qui y vit. Des inoculations contre la typhoïde, commencées au Canada, se poursuivent de sorte que tous les hommes y soient soumis.

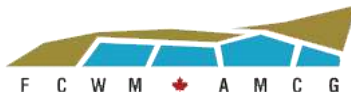
On invite des médecins à faire des conférences aux officiers sur les risques d'infection, incluant les conséquences associées aux poux et aux maladies vénériennes, à l'eau impropre à la consommation, de sorte qu'ils puissent passer ces enseignements à la troupe. Des visites et inspections des quartiers par des infirmiers ajoutent aux attentions que l'on accorde aux questions médicales.

Quatre mille hommes seront admis à l'hôpital en quatorze semaines d'entraînement. L'expérience de Salisbury ne sera toutefois pas inutile en France, où les conditions ne seront guère meilleures...

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Crawford, *The Canadian Army in Salisbury Plains* (2014), p. 100-6.

Rawling, *Death Their Enemy*, (2001); *La Mort pour Ennemi*, tr. Pierre R. Desrosiers.



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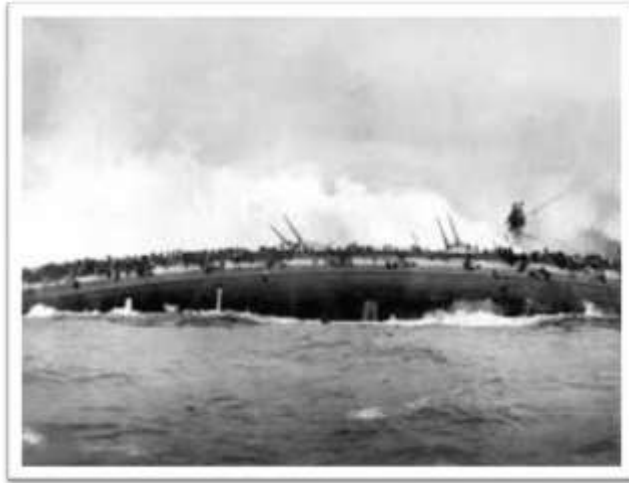
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## 23 January 1915 [Friday]

### The naval battle of Dogger Bank (24 January 1915) – Part 1

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HMS Lion: The flagship of Admiral David Beattie, damaged in the engagement.

#### *Notes from the battle:*

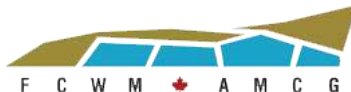
1. British possess codes taken earlier from shoaled Magdeburg.
2. Can therefore predict excursion by Adm Franz von Hipper to north of Dogger Bank (North Sea, midway between Germany and England). Know that Von der Tan is in dry dock and Hipper on Seydlitz, with battleships Moltke and Derfflinger and Blücher.
3. German Squadron under Hipper comes out of hiding behind Kiev Canal for raid on English coast.
4. Intercepted by Beatty's Fast Squadron rushed out of Firth of Forth, near Edinburgh, with Lion, Tiger, Queen Mary, Princess Royal, New Zealand, Indomitable. These are fast and heavily-armed cruisers, with eight 12-inch guns, but thin skinned (6 vs 10-inch armour in German Von der Tann).
5. Beattie has difficulties with signals.
6. His main intent is denied when a wrong signal takes ships away from escaping Germans to harrow on already sinking Blücher. Hipper is saved by this mistake.
7. Beatty shot out of battle in Lion, towed back into port.
8. Adm Moore does not take over command fast enough. Germans escape with one major loss, Blücher, sunk in hot pursuit, and Seydlitz, damaged, as German Squadron, caught in the open, races back to shelter of minefields and defended estuary ports of Elbe River and Wilhemshaven.
9. The British Grand Fleet to the north under Adm John Jellicoe never gets to fight.
10. German High Seas Fleet confined to shelters for 15 months.

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Howarth, David, The Dreadnoughts (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, Series The Seafarers, 1979)

Herman, Arthur, To Rule the Waves (2004).

Dupuy & Dupuy, Encyclopedia of Military History (1977).



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## 24 January 1915 [Saturday]

### The naval battle of Dogger Bank (24 January 1915) – Part 2: The Results

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German Blücher, sunk in the battle.

*Notes from the battle (continued from 23 Jan):*

11. German Imperial Navy will not commit to High Seas operations in fear of interception by Fast Squadron out of Forth, and Grand Fleet out of Scapa Flow (Orkney Islands).
12. Based on the results of this engagement, First Lord of the Sea Winston Churchill wants Grand Fleet to be brought south nearer to Forth, but Adm John Jellicoe refuses. Grand Fleet will not be brought to Forth until 1917, when Beattie will take command.
13. Lessons not learned are that Dreadnought are vulnerable to superbly accurate German fire, and submarine presence can ruin momentum of Fleet attack.
14. Commander of the High Seas Fleet Ingenohl, once again not aggressive enough to support Hipper effectively, is replaced by Adm Pohl.
15. However, Kaiser shirks Adm Tirpitz and does not promote Hipper, leaving Pohl to linger uselessly.
16. The Dogger Bank action teaches the Germans that they have a flaw in flash containment in gun turrets and correct it.
17. When Seydlitz is hit, the problem is revealed. The same problem, perhaps worse, not experienced on the British side, remains uncorrected. Lion will be hit in the same manner in Jutland (May 1916). Seydlitz will be hit again in a similar manner at Jutland and, because of new antflash doors, will be spared much severe damage.
18. The frustration of this engagement will impact the relationship between Churchill and Fisher.
19. Fisher wants to take the Fleet to the Baltic, land Russian troops, and block the Germans with massive mining. This goes nowhere. Rancor builds up.

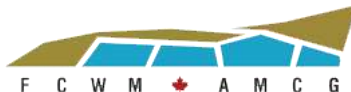
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David Howarth, *The Dreadnoughts* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, Series *The Seafarers*, 1979).

Churchill, *World Crisis*, II, 100ff.

Liddell Hart, *History of the First World War, 1914-1918* (1976). p. 75.

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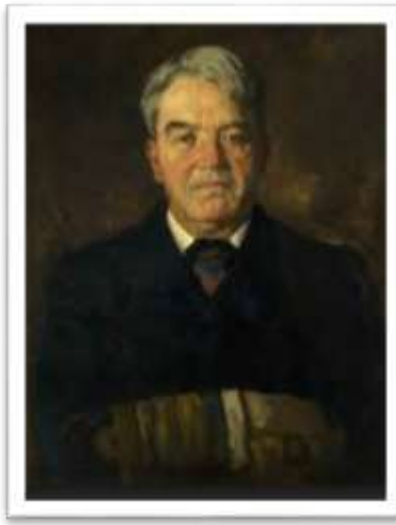
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## 25 January 1915 [Friday]

### Jacky Fisher's Birthday

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Admiral 'Jacky' Fisher

Winston Churchill had recalled **Admiral John 'Jacky' Arbuthnot Fisher, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron of Kilverstone (25 January 1841-10 July 1920)** from retirement at the beginning of the war, reinstating him in his old job as First Sea Lord, the uncontested commander of the Royal Navy.

Fisher had been known in his long career as a firebrand, challenging all assumptions about efficiency and success in naval warfare. He had been the main architect of the great turning points of the early 1900s, when he introduced, among other things, the famous all-big-gun Dreadnought Class, the battleships that made all other battleships of the world obsolete. He was also interested in cruisers, submarines and mines before others were. And he implemented the plans with a fiery energy that made things happen with a vengeance.

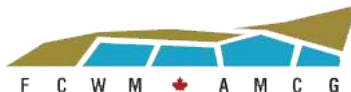
The association of Churchill and Fisher has been celebrated. At the end of 1914 and early 1915, they worked in tandem with explosive energy. However it did not end well. Fisher was too old for the pace of war. He turned 74 today, **25 January 1915**, when his hyperactive boss was 40. He just could not keep up with Winston and they parted company in May. But this was said of Fisher:

*"Admiral Fisher was not a minister and he had no power to decide on policy. Yet to the public and even inside Whitehall he was something more than the First Sea Lord: he was the expression of the Navy itself. With his curiously gnarled face, which gave him almost an oriental appearance, his irreverence and drive, his tremendous knowledge of the Navy, he answered every requirement in the conception of what a great British sailor ought to be. In the past the Admiral's pugnacity had caused serious disputes inside the navy, but all that was done with now. He was as solid and tried as one of his own dreadnoughts, and if his authority was not as great as Kitchener's he had one thing the Field Marshal lacked, a shrewd, fresh, humorous mind that enabled him to come to the heart of a problem in language that everyone could enjoy and understand. Kitchener was respected, but Fisher one really liked."<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup>

Moorehead, [Gallipoli](#), p. 44.



# 26 janvier 1915 [lundi]

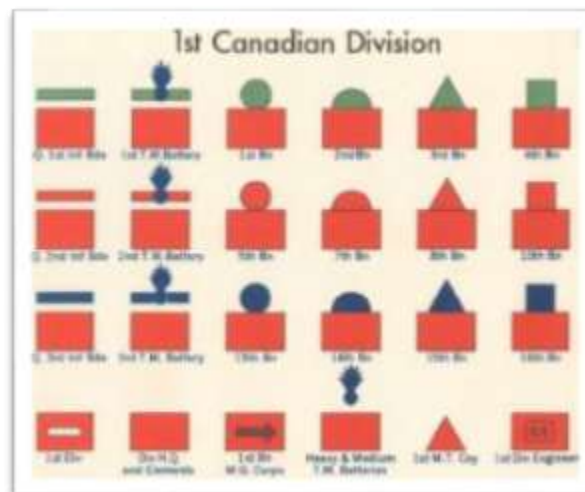
## Le couteau de sélection

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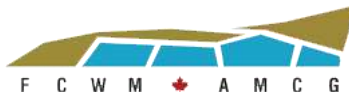


Panneau de formation utilisé pour identifier les véhicules de la 1<sup>re</sup> Division d'infanterie canadienne pendant la guerre

**Le 26 janvier 1915**, les autorités canadiennes arrivent à une décision sur la composition de la Division canadienne qui partira pour la France en février. De seize unités d'infanterie il faut faire trois brigades de quatre. Les 6<sup>e</sup>, 9<sup>e</sup>, 11<sup>e</sup> et 12<sup>e</sup> bataillons ne font pas partie de la sélection finale. Leur personnel doit être affecté aux autres unités ou se retrouver en réserve. Les insignes d'épaule de la Division sont finalement comme suit:



Nicholson, Le Corps expéditionnaire canadien, appendice 'G', p. 203-4.



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## 27 January 1915 [Tuesday]

### The infamous Sham Shoes

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A boot for no season at all

A rifle is the soldiers' best friend. But his boots should come close second (and third). The care taken by soldiers of their boots attests to the importance that good boots hold for the marching troops.

Canadian soldiers in Salisbury Plains, in January 1915, were not pleased with their boots. Hastily put together with badly tanned leather, the boots had by now been exposed to more rain than had ever been foreseen. The seams were coming apart and nothing could be done any more to give them any amount of resiliency. The marching associated with training in the Plain of Salisbury became a chore that gave sores, infection, and led to many being incapacitated with diseases associated with cold and wet feet.

Perhaps this was just appropriate training for what was to come in France: the horrifying trench foot.

— *If you don't take care of your feet, the Sergeants say, nobody will...*

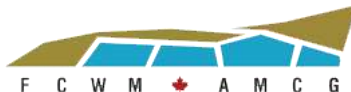
Nevertheless, the soldiers' frustration escalated and during the English winter, they took a jab at Sam Huges, the Minister of Militia, with the nickname 'Sham Shoes', who was too proud to admit that the soldiers' complaints might have an element of truth.

But on **27 January 1915**, it was finally ordered that officers were required to certify that every man was in possession of a pair of British boots<sup>1</sup> throughout the Contingent:

*'every man must be in possession of a pair of perfectly serviceable Imperial [British] pattern Army Regulation boots.... No Canadian pattern boots are to be taken overseas.'*

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<sup>1</sup> T.S Crawford, The Canadian Army on Salisbury Plain, p. 90.



## 28 January 1915 [Friday]

Sir George Perley représente le Canada au Comité de Défense de l'Empire

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Sir George Perley, Haut Commissaire Canadien à Londres

Le Haut Commissaire canadien à Londres, **Sir George Perley**, un membre du Parlement canadien nommé à ce poste temporairement par le Premier ministre Borden, est convoqué à assister au fameux *Committee of Imperial Defence (CID)* du Cabinet britannique.

La présence des troupes canadiennes en Angleterre ouvre la porte au forum des décisions au plus haut niveau de la hiérarchie de l'Empire. Perley peut ainsi y recevoir des briefings classifiés sur les opérations militaires et diplomatiques de tous les fronts, et peut informer le gouvernement canadien de ce qu'il y apprend.

George Perley, en tant que ministre sans portefeuille dans le cabinet Borden depuis juin 1914, ne pouvait pas jouir du plein rang d'ambassadeur. Il n'était d'ailleurs que Haut Commissaire par interim, en 1914. Par contre il a été nommé Chevalier Commandeur de l'Ordre de Saint-Michel et Saint-Georges (K.C.M.G.), le 1er janvier 1915, ce qui lui donne un statut social qui lui permet de fréquenter les milieux huppés du gouvernement et de la Cour, et d'y trouver des connaissances informées.

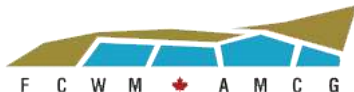
Il sera plus tard nommé au poste de Haut Commissaire à plein titre, et après une réorganisation des structures gouvernementales outre-mer, en 1916, – après que Sam Hughes aura finalement été démis de ses fonctions comme Ministre de la Milice–, Sire George deviendra le ministre plénipotentiaire du Canada auprès du gouvernement britannique jusqu'à la fin de la guerre.

L'historien C.P. Stacey raconte de lui que le **28 janvier 1915**, lorsqu'il rapporte sa participation au Comité de défense impériale de la veille au Premier ministre, il décrit une harangue de Kitchener qui dit qu'aucun frein ne sera appliqué sur le recrutement jusqu'à ce que 3 millions d'hommes soient sous les drapeaux. Son commentaire, qu'il n'y avait là 'rien d'intérêt spécial pour le Canada', aurait sans doute été différent s'il avait pu entrevoir l'avenir...

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Nicholson, *Le Corps expéditionnaire canadien*. *passim*, p. 219, 23, 27-9, 30.

Stacey, *Age of Conflict*, 185.



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## 29 January 1915 [Thursday]

### The Side Shows

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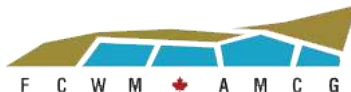
Two options are proposed to round the Germans from the rear.

**On 29 January 1915**, Winston Churchill traveled to France to meet Field Marshall John French, the Commander-in-Chief of the BEF. Churchill wanted to have another go at the Field Marshal to convince him that some British troops should be diverted to the East instead of all going to his command in France.

Churchill was of course bent on attacking the Germans from the rear through the **Dardanelles**, getting the Turks out of the war in the process, getting access to the Black Sea to resupply the Russians, and working away with them up the Danube, with Bulgaria and Rumania joining in to bolster the Serbs in their action against the Austrians-Hungarians. This was sure to get the yet uncommitted Italians to join them, unbalance the Germans who were busy in France, and deal a terrible blow to the Central Powers' cohesion.

But David Lloyd George and a few French politicians and generals had yet another idea. They saw the road from **Salonika**, in Greece, as a shorter route to Belgrade.

Salonika will remain a key in the door for the whole duration of the war, with the Serbian army moving there after having been pushed out of its home, as well as many French and British divisions, poised there for years, waiting for action. But that key will not open the back door because the 'Westerners' like General Joffre and FM French will not agree with '**side-shows**' elsewhere than in France.



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## 30 January 1915 [Friday]

### German Navigation Laws

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The U.S. merchant navy must come through

The Germans are concerned that too much supply comes to the British Isles from around the world, most notably from the United States. The British Navy has tightened a blockade around Germany and its effects are beginning to be felt. Germany does not have a surface navy that it can use to counter the blockade. The German High Seas Fleet is watched closely by the Royal Navy's Fast Squadron and the Grand Fleet, and all the German great battleships are now confined to the northern ports of Germany. The naval battle of Dogger Bank, 6 days ago, has confirmed that any excursion into the North Sea will cost an unbearable price to the German Navy.

But the Germans can now turn to their 20-odd submarines in the North Sea. They alone can provide some measure of counter-action against the British blockade and stop the international trade that allows the British Isles to remain well-fed and productive in industry.

**On 30 January 1915**, the German Reichstag proclaims the **Navigation Laws** that declare that during time of war, it is the prerogative of the German Navy to prevent all neutral merchant shipping from aiding the enemy.

The Allies of the Entente have already, themselves, negotiated with the United States not to enter German ports; the level of trade lost was not a major concern to America. Trade with Great Britain and France is, however, another matter.

On the day of the announcement, the British Admiralty sends instructions to British trade vessels to fly neutral or no flag at all, to confuse the Germans.

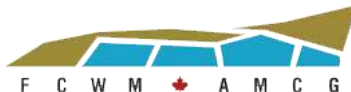
On the same day, the merchant ship *Dacia*, of German origin, re-flagged with United States colors while there, attempts to sail into the German port of Bremen. The German Government is thus attempting to create a legal conflict in international maritime law between the United States and Great Britain.

The *Dacia* is stopped by the French navy. – There will be no discord between Great Britain and the United States on that account...

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David Lloyd George, *Memoirs*, II:666ff; Cyril Falls, *The Great War*, (1959), p. 147ff; Hankey, *Supreme Command*, p. 359.; Johnston et al., *Seabound Coast*, (DND, Dundurn, 2010), Chap 5.

Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, p. 282.



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## 31 January 1915 [Friday]

### Gas lacrymogènes

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Dr. Fritz Haber utilise les gaz lacrymogènes en Pologne.

Le premier emploi de gaz irritants s'est produit en France au cours de la bataille de Neuve-Chapelle, le 27 octobre 1914. Les Allemands ont utilisé 3,000 obus au shrapnel, dans lesquels ils ont introduit du gaz irritant pour le nez et les yeux, en plus des billes habituelles pour ce genre d'obus. Mais les effets ont été si peu ressentis qu'il a fallu attendre la fin de la guerre, du côté visé, pour réaliser que ceci s'était en fait produit.

Le **30 janvier 1915**, des expériences sous la direction technique du **Dr. Fritz Haber** ont donné lieu à l'emploi d'obus améliorés de sorte à pouvoir y contenir plus de gaz lacrymogène. Mais leur emploi dans le froid intense de la Pologne en a empêché l'effet et l'expérience n'a encore une fois pas donné de résultats marquants.

Les essais suivants ont donc été faits avec des contenants inertes plus gros, que l'on ouvrait au vent. Cette expérience a démontré que les gaz pouvaient en fait se montrer nocifs, dans les champs, mais que leur effet n'avait rien de terrible. Toute cette technique d'arme chimique ne laissait pas aux utilisateurs une impression de succès.

C'est pourquoi, lorsque de tels gaz ont été utilisés à Ypres, en avril, les Allemands n'avaient pas préparé de troupes d'assaut pour l'exploitation de la brèche qui s'en est suivi. L'effet a en fait été beaucoup plus efficace à neutraliser, et même à repousser l'ennemi, qu'il n'avait été escompté.

Les expériences du Dr. Haber ont laissé sortir un génie de la lampe qui s'est avéré beaucoup plus fort que prévu.

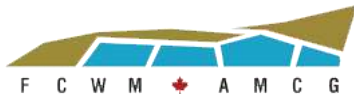
Il est bien connu que les Alliés de l'Entente travaillaient aussi sur de tels produits chimiques, et qu'ils n'avaient pas, non plus, conclu à des résultats renversants.

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•Tom Cook, 'Mourir comme dans un piège à rats': La guerre des gaz et le soldat de la Grande Guerre', Le Journal de l'Armée canadienne, Vol 5, No 4, Hiver 2002-2003, pp. 47-56.

•Liddel Hart, History of the First World War (Pan Books, 1972), p. 144.

•Tim Cook, No Place to Run: The Canadian Corps and Gas Warfare in the First World War (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).



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