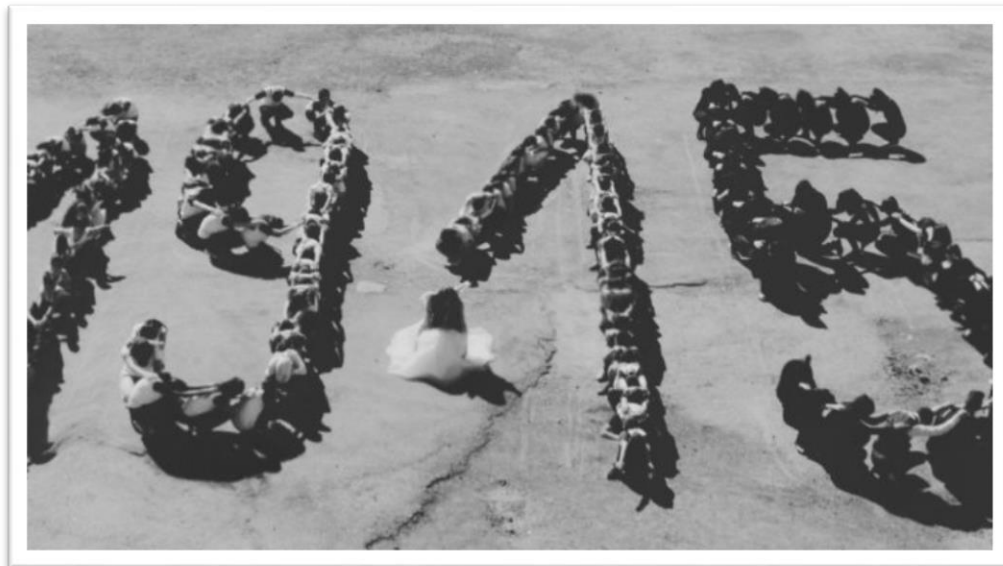


World War I
Day by Day
1915 – 1918

October 1915 / octobre 1915

La première guerre mondiale
De jour en jour
1915 – 1918



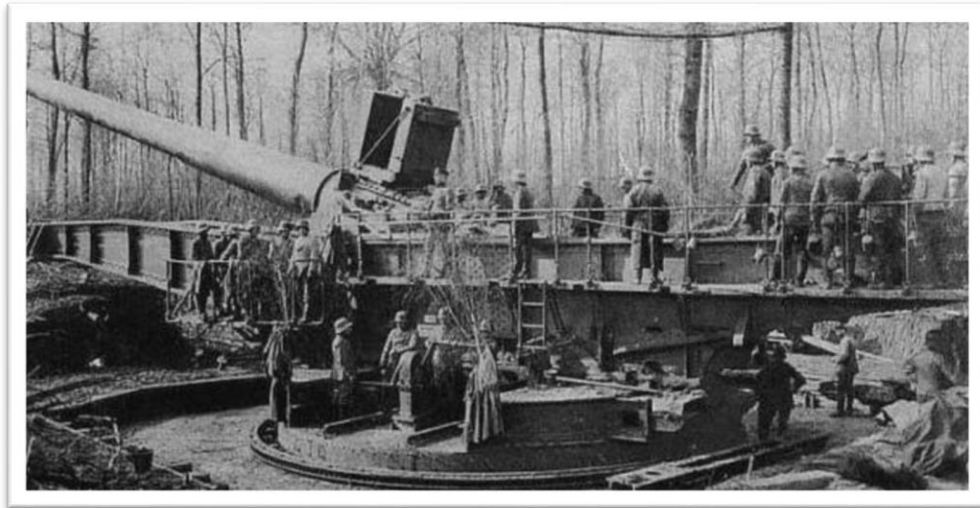
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1er octobre 1915

Les 380mm tirent de Duzey, à 40km de Verdun



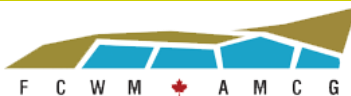
Canons allemands en place pour Verdun

Le canon de Duzey, près de Spincourt, tire pour la première fois sur Verdun **le 1^{er} octobre 1915**. Il s'agit d'un canon naval long destiné aux cuirassiers de type Bayern, monté sur des cuves en béton, approvisionné d'obus de 750kg.

Le réseau ferroviaire achemine les munitions en pièces jusqu'à Longuyon, d'où elles sont transportées par chemins de fer étroits jusqu'à des sous-terrains.

À partir de l'automne 1915, plus de mille pièces d'artillerie, dont 640 de gros et de très gros calibres, seront installées pour la campagne du printemps. Parmi elles, trois canons de 380mm (15 po.) de 220 tonnes, des **Lang Max S KL/45 (Max le Long)** (illustration), tirent de 40 km.

Allain Bernède, « Verdun 1916: un choix stratégique, une équation logistique », [Revue Historique des Armées](#), #242 (2006).



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2 October 1915

Gallipoli – Kitchener offers a hand to Hamilton



Much blame has been received recently in London on General Ian Hamilton's handling of the Gallipoli campaign. Hamilton is reported in many quarters --and has acquired the reputation among the troops, of not being involved enough in the coordination of action between his various corps and divisions. His staff is seen as being too detached from the situation on the ground, and his Chief of Staff is arrogant.

On 2 October 1915, Kitchener offers Hamilton to change his Chief of Staff, General **Walter Braithwaite**, known for his 'facility at getting people's back up.' He offers to send the new Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Major-General Lancelot Kiggell, to turn things around in the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF).

Hamilton refuses, unable to ditch his COS in a manner that might look as if he blamed him for the lack of success.

Kitchener knows that he has extended a last hand to his friend. The generous decision is an onerous one for Hamilton. In London ministers are curt with his lack of willingness to take drastic action.

In a few days only, Hamilton will be recalled in disgrace.

In a few weeks Kiggell will become Haig's Chief of Staff in France for the rest of the war.

James, Gallipoli, 59, 316-7.



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3 October 1915

Imbroglia by excellence



Allies landing in Salonika

With the evidence that the recent campaign in France was not crowned with success, the Allied governments agreed that a major effort would have to be done to prevent Serbia from being invaded.

On 3 October 1915, Allied forces started to land in large numbers in Salonika, Greece.

French and British divisions were sent from Gallipoli to move the main effort from the Turkish Straits to the mouth of the Vardar River.

But the Greeks are faced with a continuing dilemma. The King does not want Greece to become involved against the Central Powers. Prime Minister Venizelos is adamantly pro-Allies. The Government of Greece is divided as to the attitude to take on what some call the invasion of neutral Greece by Allied troops.

Obviously, the French Commander of the Force, Général Sarrail, has a diplomatic challenge before him.

Even the preliminaries are daunting.

Lloyd George, Memoirs, Vol. I: Chap 17 - «The Serbian Tragedy.»

Roy Prete, "*Imbroglia par excellence* : Mounting the Salonika Campaign, September-October 1915", War & Society, Vol. 19, Number 1 (May 2001), pp. 47-70.\



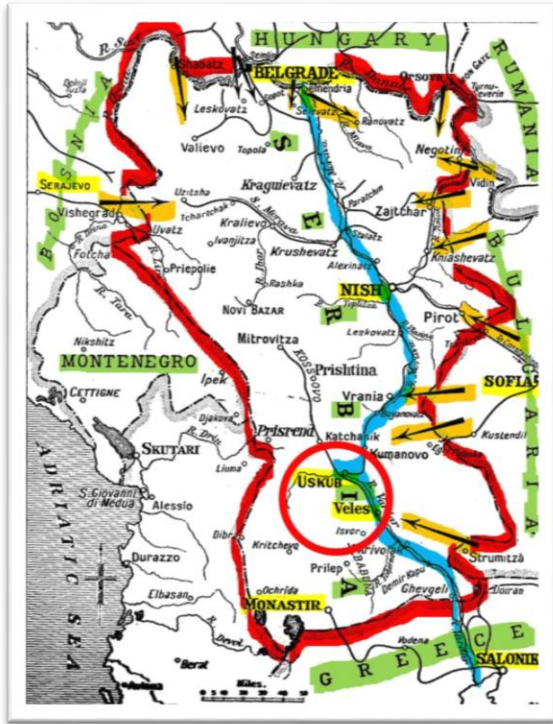
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4 October 1915

The Isolation of Serbia



Map of Serbia

Serbia does not have access to the Sea. In the past, its good relations with Greece allowed it to access Salonika, the fourth port of Europe.

But the Bulgarian advance on its east frontier will aim to cut the VARDAR River valley as soon as possible at places such as Nish, Uskub (Skoplje) and Veles (Kuprulu), preventing traffic on the River from and toward Salonika.

The Allied forces will therefore strive to link with the Serbian armies through Uskub.

The original plan was counting on a Greek army joining the Allies, but this plan is compromised with the King's Royal prerogative of forcing Greece to stay neutral.

French General Sarrail and British General Mahon will divide the task, with French forces pushing forward and the British 10th Division (Irish) securing the Valley for safe passage.

The TIMES History of the War, XII: Chap. 181: «The Salonika Expedition: October 1915 - November 1916.»



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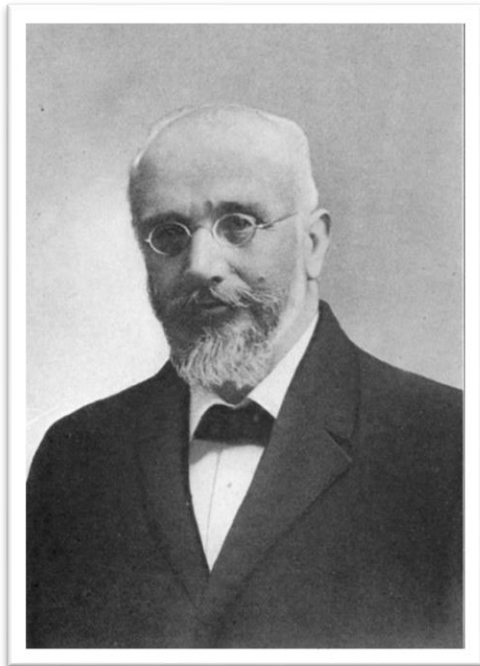
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5 October 1915

Greece at the fork in the road

On this day, **5 October 1915**, despite the fact that he obtained a majority of 142 to 102 (with 13 not voting) in the Chamber of Deputies, **Premier Eleftherios Venizelos** resigned.



King Constantine of Greece stated that he could not support his foreign policy which dictated that Greece should align with the Entente powers.

At the very moment of this upset, the Allies are entering into Salonika with troops and arms, in view of protecting Serbia against the Alliance powers.

Venizelos was replaced by Premier Zaimis, who agreed with the King's view of an 'armed neutrality' for Greece. Venizelos remains with his party in the Chamber, for the time being, insisting that the new Government should extend '*benevolent* neutrality' to the Entente powers in Salonika.

At the same time, in Calais, General Joffre, having pursued his campaign in France since 25 September, agreed under strong political demands to shift emphasis to Salonika and release more divisions for this front.

At this point, Bulgaria's intentions have become quite clear to all. Russia has broken diplomatic relations and promised more troops for Salonika.

King Constantine, mindful of family connections with the Hollernzollerns, is walking on a tight rope.

John Nicholas Mavrogordato, «Greece», [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#), Twelfth Edition, 1922, XXXI: 300-10.



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6 October 1915

Pesky Churchill at it again



Cartoon of Winston Churchill

Churchill is seeing that divisions are being taken out of Gallipoli to be sent to Salonika and he does not like it.

On **6 October 1915** he sends a letter to the First Lord of the Admiralty, his friend Arthur Balfour, urging him to change the decision and fire Admiral de Robeck, whom he considers at the bottom of the whole derailment of the operation in the Dardanelles, back in March.

«I notice the complaints that he makes about the steering of the Monitors. If these are well-founded, it would be necessary to use battleships. These could be protected against under-water damage by a variety of methods. The presence of even a few ships in the Marmora would absolutely cut off the Turkish Army and relieve us of all our difficulties. I believe we have been all these months in the position of the Spanish prisoner who languished for twenty years in the dungeon until one morning the idea struck him to push the door, which had been open all the time.»

Churchill, World Crisis, II:475.

The above cartoon was published in a German newspaper as "A Souvenir" after Churchill had been dismissed as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1915.



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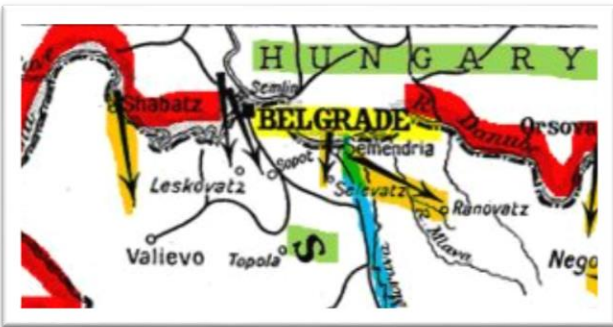
7 octobre 1915

L'Automne se dessine

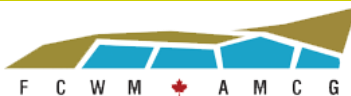


Les forces auto-hongroises étaient déployées le long du Danube, au nord de la Serbie, depuis de longues semaines. L'attaque imminente est déclenchée **le 7 octobre 1915**.

Attaque de l'Autriche contre la Serbie



Belgrade est prise sous assaut et les régions environnantes sont envahies par des divisions bien appuyées en matériel. Ainsi commence la longue défaite des Serbes qui marquera leur hiver de souffrances.



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8 October 1915

The aim of the Invasion of Serbia: The Orient Railway



Map of the Orient Railway

On 8 October 1915, the German and Austro-Hungarian armies are now crossing the Danube and the Save rivers with very heavy artillery support. Their immediate aim is to seize Belgrade and the surrounding areas.

But a few days later, the plan calls for the Bulgarians to attack from the east and join with them well inside Serbia.

The ultimate prize is the seizure of the whole of the Serbian portion of the **Orient Railway**, which goes from Belgrade, through the Morava valley, to the Nish valley, where it branches off, to the south toward Salonica, through the Vrnja valley, and to the east, toward Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. From Sofia, the Orient railway goes to Constantinople.

This is the artery that the Quadruple Alliance Powers want to seize so as to be able to support Turkey in its defence of the Dardanelles.

Atkinson, Major C.F., «Serbian Campaigns», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Twelfth Ed., 1922, XXXII: 408-19, esp. 416-9.

Chedomille Mijatovich, «Servia», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Ed., 1911, XXIV: 686-98, esp. 689, map 686.



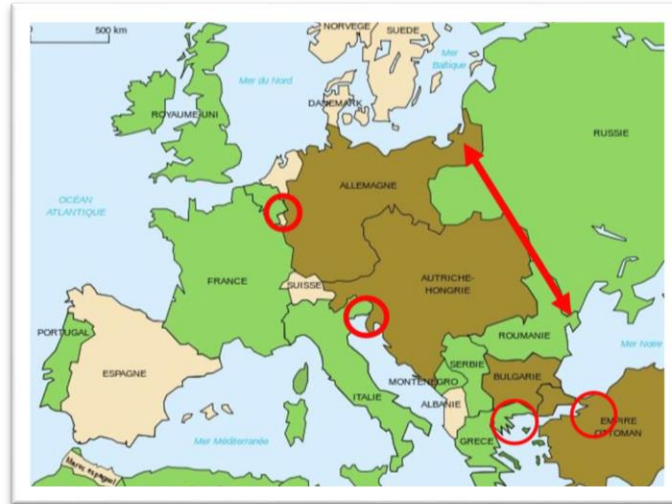
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9 octobre 2015

Décisions, Décisions, Décisions: Le dilemme des Alliés



Le lendemain de l'invasion de la Serbie, les Alliés font face à des décisions difficiles:

- **Dardanelles:** Les premières tempêtes d'automne commencent, laissant présager que les renforts seront difficiles.
- **Loos:** La bataille a été un échec et le reste est une improvisation inutile.
- **Salonique:** L'effort vient trop tard; les Grecs refusent de participer; les Serbes sont isolés et faibles; le transport vers le nord est inadéquat.
- **Italie:** Le front est immobilisé malgré les pertes atroces.
- **Mésopotamie:** Progression lente vers Bagdad.
- **Russie:** Retraite et désorganisation.

Les gouvernements de l'Entente sont maintenant divisés sur la répartition des efforts. Les ministres au sein des mêmes gouvernements ne peuvent se mettre d'accord. Les chefs militaires ne peuvent travailler ensemble. La fin de 1915 s'avère désastreuse. Elle le sera...



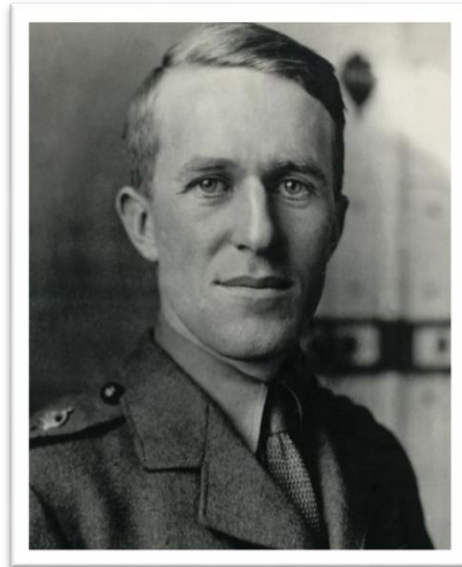
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10 October 1915

The Arab Connection in Cairo: Sherif Hussein wants a deal



Captain T.E. Lawrence

In September, a young Arab officer who came under a white flag in Gallipoli to discuss burials, asked to see high British authorities on behalf of Sheriff Hussein.

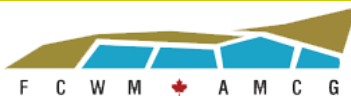
Al-Faroki was taken to Egypt where he was interrogated by an Intelligence officer of the Cairo Bureau by the name of **Captain T.E. Lawrence**.

Lawrence concluded that indeed al-Faroki was connected to two secret Damascus civilian societies, al Fatat and al Ahd, intent on undermining Ottoman authority, and that indeed he was genuinely representing Hussein of Mecca. The message was that Hussein was in a position to bring Arab tribes on the British side if guarantees of post-war independence could be made.

The situation is tense in the Middle East. The Ottomans are predicting that the Orient railway will be shortly re-connected in Serbia and that German support will be pouring into Turkey. Gallipoli will be cleared and forces there will be re-directed against Cairo. Connecting railways are already being built in the desert to Bersheeba.

On 10 October 1915, the Cairo Bureau can only conclude that representations must be made through the chain of command so that the British Cabinet seize the opportunity of defending in the Hejaz with an Arab revolt.

Jeremy Wilson, Lawrence, Chap 11 - The McMahon Pledge, p. 195-217.



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11 October 1915

The Great Game derailed in Salonika



On this day, the crucial decisions that were made among Allied governments two days ago start to be implemented. On the British side, matters in the Mediterranean are in dreadful balance.

First, Kitchener is looking at closing out in the Dardanelles. He asks Hamilton what the prospect would be if he ordered him to withdraw completely from Gallipoli:

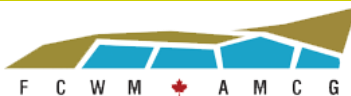
«In your reply you need not consider the possible future danger to the Empire which might be thus caused.»

Second, orders go out to FM French that he is, willy-nilly, to designate more divisions to be sent to the Mediterranean. Cabinet will decide later if they will go to Turkey or Greece.

Third, news are received that the Bulgarians are on the march against Serbia. Mackensen is rushing relentlessly in Belgrade. Sarrail is pushing French forces to meet the onslaught as far north as possible. But he is having difficulties. Autumn storms are raging, to the detriment of both sides, but his troops and materiel are not moving north as would be required. The railroad through the Vardar valley is inadequate.

The eyes are now turned toward Serbia — The whole future of the British Empire in the Middle East is at stake, but the Great Game may very well be already lost in a too quiet railyard in Salonika.

Magnus, Kitchener, 424.



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12 October 1915

Herbert W. McBride and Smoke



Herbert W. McBride

Herbert W. McBride, on **12 October 1915**, as a member of the 21st Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), saw his first attack where smoke shells were used as a cover to moving infantry.

McBride was an American citizen from Indiana who joined the CEF to take part in the action against the Germans. He was in France from September 1915 to April 1917. He had always had an interest in rifles and soon developed an expertise in marksmanship that made him an efficient trainer, and later, a respected writer. His two books, *A Rifleman Went to War* (1935), and *Emma Gees* (nd) reflect hard-nosed experience in what he called 'rifecraft': military field craft, small arms fire tactics and practical ballistics for riflemen, snipers and machine-gunners.

In this incident, smoke shells were being used by the artillery to cover the advance of infantry who attacked enemy trenches. The advance of wire cutters was shielded from enemy fire by a drifting wall of smoke. Then grenades were thrown forward as the attackers progressed through No Man's Land.

The answer to such attacks was fixed lines of fire. Machine gunners such as McBride tried to match the curvature of the ground with the fall of bullet to hit walking men they did not see.

Herbert W. McBride, *A Rifleman went To War* (Plantersville, South Carolina: Thomas G. Samworth, Small-Arms Publishing Company, 1935);

Emma Gees, Project Guttenberg eBook.



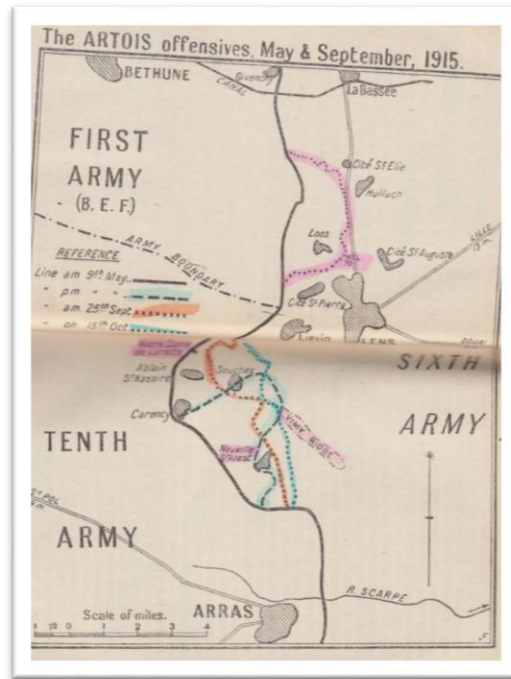
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13 octobre 1915

L'Offensive d'Artois tire à sa fin



L'offensive d'Artois s'achève dans le secteur britannique. Elle résulte, depuis le mois dernier, en 60,000 pertes contre les 20,000 des Allemands.

Les Français, ont perdu 192,000 hommes en Artois et Champagne contre les 120,000 des Allemands.

Pourtant, les objectifs originaux, de prendre le saillant de Noyon par des avancées de Arras et de Rheims et Soisson sont complètement oubliés.

À Loos, les Anglais ont avancé de 2-3 milles, et à Vimy, les progrès se sont bûtés immédiatement contre la crête.

L'offensive française d'Artois-Champagne, dans sa phase du printemps et celle d'automne, que le BEF a appuyées au nord, s'avère un échec cuisant.

C'est Joffre qui doit maintenant en répondre, après qu'il ait eu tant d'appui de son gouvernement malgré la critique.

Liddell Hart, Man from Orléans, Chap 13: «Blunting the Sword of France», p. 190-216, illustration p. 207.



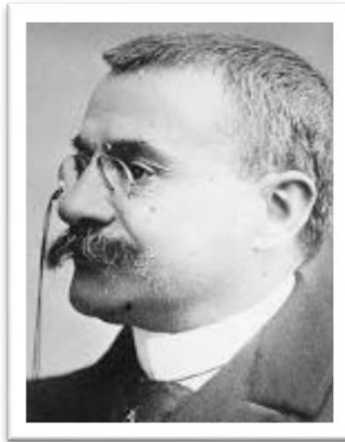
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14 October 1915

France's Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé resigns



Théophile Delcassé

The man that Kaiser Wilhelm II called the most dangerous man for Germany in France presented his resignation on **14 October 1915**.

Théophile Delcassé was the longest serving Foreign Minister of the Third French Republic, having occupied the post for seven years in six consecutive governments. He was instrumental in developing the Entente Cordiale between France and Britain, in 1904, and the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907.

After having served as Minister of Marine in 1911-1913, a time when the cooperation between the French Navy and the Royal Navy led to the arrangements for the war, he returned to *Affaires Étrangères* in the Viviani Cabinet in August 1914 and negotiated the formal Entente with Russia and Great Britain.

Delcassé is well aware that things are not going well for Joffre, but he remains a 'Westerner', believing that the war effort must be concentrated in France. Prime Minister Viviani has now committed to support the intervention in Salonica.

Viviani is indeed too late in his resolution. He put his money on Joffre in the recent operations in Artois and Champagne, and his efforts to recoup in the Balkans are wasteful afterthoughts.

Viviani and Joffre are both accountable for the severe failures of 1915. The axe will fall for them too.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh Ed. (1911), VII: 953; Twelfth Ed. (1922), XXX: 816.



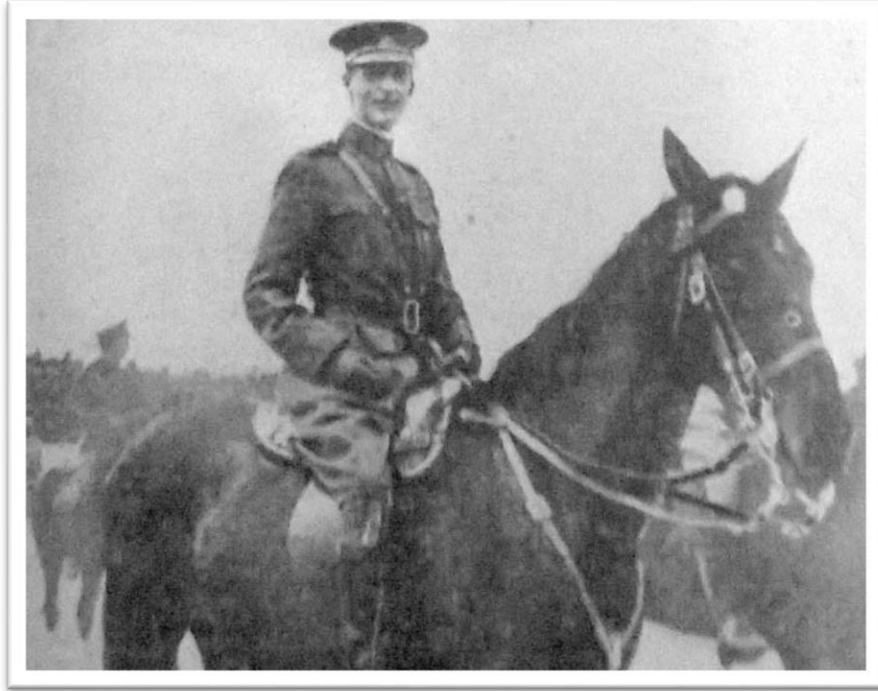
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15 October 1915

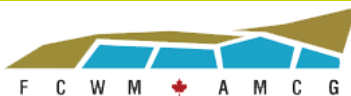
General Hamilton recalled from Gallipoli



General Ian Hamilton is recalled from his command in Gallipoli.

«The war council held last night decided that though the government fully appreciate your work and the gallant manner in which you personally have struggled to make the enterprise a success in the face of the terrible difficulties you have had to contend with, they, all the same, wish to make a change in the command which will give them an opportunity of seeing you.»

Moorehead, Gallipoli, p. 312



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16 October 1915

The Offer of Cyprus to Greece



King Constantine and Sir Edward Grey

Greek King Constantine, who was married to Kaiser Wilhelm's sister, was eager to remain neutral. He and his supporters maintained that the alliance with Serbia was rendered null because Bulgaria's incursions were the result of the general European war, not an act of independent Bulgarian aggression.

Ultimately, King Constantine forced Prime Minister Venizelos from office and replaced him with one of his own supporters, Alexandros Zaimais.

As a last effort to secure Greek support for the Salonika offensive, on **16 October, 1915**, **Sir Edward Grey**, the British Foreign Secretary, offered **King Constantine** the island of Cyprus in exchange for honoring the Greco-Serbian Alliance.

The British offer was officially rejected on 24 October, 1915.

When Greece eventually entered an Alliance with Britain in 1917 the offer to acquire Cyprus was not repeated.

Stevenson, 1914-1918: The History of the First World War, Chap 6 "The Land War in Europe - Strategy."



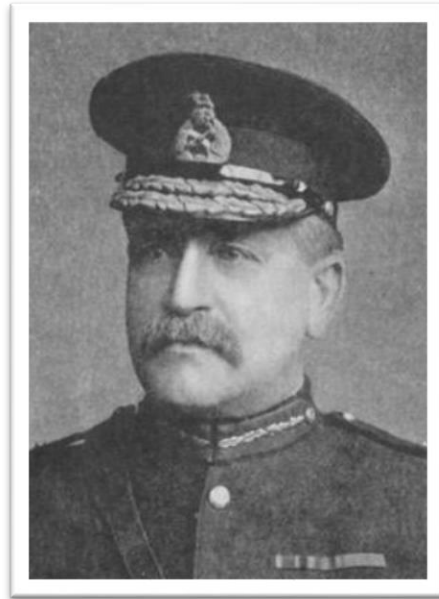
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17 October 1915

Enters Sir Charles: Sir Charles Monro Becomes the new Commander at Gallipoli



Sir Charles Monro

With the recall of General Ian Hamilton from his command in Gallipoli, the commander of the Third British Army in France was assigned to replace him.

Sir Charles Monro had already been sent in the wing, in Egypt, to conduct an enquiry on behalf of the Secretary for War, Field Marshal Kitchener, to recommend changes to the Dardanelles strategy.

Monro is therefore at hand and well acquainted to take over command.

In the next few days he will thoroughly inspect his command and come to a conclusion as to the prospects of the operation.

The British Cabinet has a very difficult strategic decision to make. With the approach of winter and the growing evidence that the Germans will finally be able to send heavy materiel through the Orient railway to reinforce the Turkish front around Constantinople, will it be advisable to withdraw the coalition land forces completely from the Gallipoli peninsula, or will it be to greater advantage to leave them there for the winter?

Monro is a key factor in this equation. What he will see himself as able to do will influence the view in London and Paris.

Hamilton was adamant that he wanted to stay the course. He was seen in London as too narrow-minded in his decision. That's a cue for Monro.



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18 octobre 1915

Un retournement plutôt surprenant: Joffre à Londres



Joffre

Le 17 octobre Joffre est à Londres pour conférer avec les alliés britanniques sur les grandes stratégies de l'immédiat.

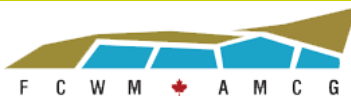
Celui qui faisait un culte de la stratégie du front de France et qui a réussi à mener, envers et contre tous, les grandes opérations d'Artois et de Champagne du printemps et de l'automne, se révèle tout à coup converti à une autre stratégie.

Il sait que le gouvernement du premier ministre Viviani est sur le point d'être renversé pour la faillite militaire de 1915 en France. Il lui faut s'associer à une nouvelle stratégie pour ne pas être emporté par la vague politique.

Il devient donc l'apôtre d'une forte concentration des forces alliées à Salonique et implore le gouvernement de Londres de supporter un transfert massif de forces vers la Grèce.

Le Cabinet anglais attend justement les commentaires du général Monro qui vient de prendre le commandement des Dardanelles.

Le 18 octobre 1915, le poids de cette décision est écrasant.



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19 October 1915

Sir Henry McMahon gets the “go”



Sir Henry McMahon

Earlier in the month, Captain Thomas Edward Lawrence, an Intelligence staff officers in the Cairo Office, has recommended that the avenues of communications recently opened with the Sherif of Mecca, King Hussein, be explored by high authority.

The Cabinet, on **19 October 1915**, thus authorized the British High Commissioner in Egypt, **Sir Henry McMahon**, to cautiously and very secretly open discussions with the Arab leader in view of assessing the possibility of alliance with a conglomeration of Arab tribes under his influence.

This is perceived in the British Intelligence community in Cairo to open doors to at least obtain some information on Ottoman designs in the Middle East, and perhaps undermine their effectiveness through infiltration, spying and perhaps creating dissention. Almost nobody foresees at this time an open revolt that Hussein might be able to lead. There is not enough cohesion among the Arabs to allow this prospect to emerge as a viable plan. But the conversations may be worthwhile...



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20 October 1915

Julian Byng – «Pour encourager les autres»



Julian Byng at Suvla Bay

The son of the Second Earl of Strafford, **Julian Byng** took command of IX Corps in Suvla Bay on 24 August.

General Stopford's Corps had had tremendous losses, including the 5,300 casualties incurred in the attack of Scimitar Hill out of the 14,300 men involved in it, three days before. 300 men are being evacuated every day because of dysentery. Out of an establishment of 75,000 men, the Corps strength was still at 42,000 in October, after Byng had struggled to rebuild for seven weeks.

Byng was the descendant of Admiral John Byng, who had been famously shot by firing squad after having been found by a court-martial as 'not having done his utmost' against Marquis de la Gallissonnière around the island of Minorca, in the Mediterranean, during the Seven-Year War. In the words of Voltaire, the British Navy had done this '*pour encourager les autres.*' — Julian, who has proved his mantle as a tough cavalry commander in Ypres, no doubt remembers these words...

Williams, Byng, 91-110.



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21 October 1915

Creation of the British Machine-Gun Corps



Machine-Guns rattle the Establishment

Machine guns were used since the beginning of the war by all countries. By October 1915, it had become evident that the Germans had a better doctrine in the tactical employment of their machine-guns. Senior British officers had been severely disturbed by their experiences in South Africa, where early machine-guns proved unreliable, mechanically challenging, non-integrated tactically, and devourers of munitions.

With industrial production revving up, a new type of machine-gun arrived in greater numbers at the front. **The Lewis air-cooled 'machine-rifle'** created by Colonel (Ret'd USA Army) I.N. Lewis, proved much lighter and useable for the front-line infantry than the heavy water-cooled Colts and Vickers.

This created a division between light and heavy MGs, which made the heavies move to the rear in support role. The new Machine-Gun Corps catered to the support role of these heavier weapons. Tactics evolved rapidly from there.

Well ahead of the British thinking, the views of Colonel Raymond Brutinel of the CEF were progressively recognized. The creation of the British Machine-Gun Corps was influenced by this innovative French-Canadian engineer.

Hatcher, Major Julian Somerville, « Machine-Guns », *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12th Ed. (1922), Vol. XXXI, pp. 818-25.



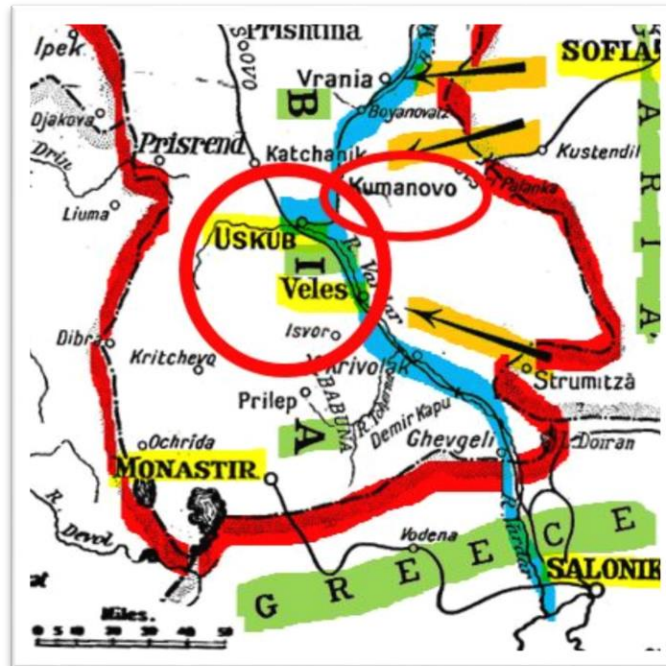
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22 October 1915

The Fall of Üsküb and Kumanovo, Serbia



Map of Serbia

The Bulgarian forces have now taken the cities of Kumanovo and Üsküb, in south eastern Serbia.

They have thus cut contacts between the Allies in Salonika and the Serbs.

The advance deep in the north by the German and Austro-Hungarian forces are now forming a pocket in which the Serbs are being compressed.

Refugees are now taking to the roads and mountain paths toward Montenegro (Black Mountain), to the west, while the Serb army and armed militias cover the rear.

The Allied effort in Salonica amounts to very little. General Sarrail's forces are not being moved efficiently enough along the Vardar River to establish barriers in the Bulgarians' path.

Mackensen's group of armies are proving a juggernaut.

Hankey, Supreme Command, I: 432.



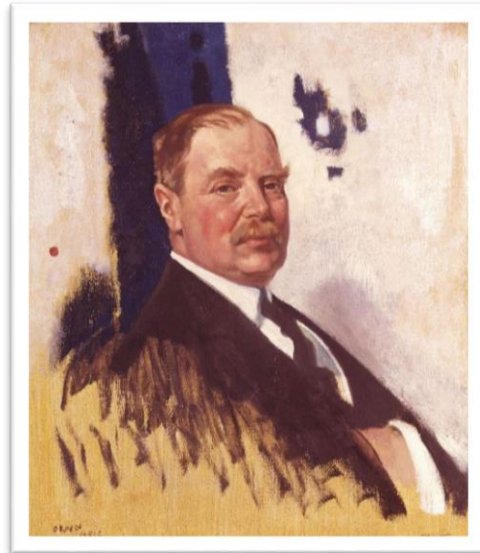
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23 octobre 1915

Le plan Derby pour le recrutement



Earl Derby

Le désaccord est tel au sein du Cabinet Britannique sur la question de la conscription que le premier ministre Asquith, qui n'en veut pas, doit faire un compromis avec ses ministres qui l'exigent.

Si le sous-secrétaire à la Guerre, **Edward Stanley**, le fameux dix-septième **Earl Derby**, grand propriétaire, réussit, avant la fin de l'année 1915, à créer un programme d'enrôlement volontaire qui puisse combler les graves déficits en personnel militaire dont souffre présentement l'Armée britannique, il n'y aura pas de Conscription.

Le «**Derby Scheme**» est le dernier essai pour remplir les armées de Kitchener, toutes formées de volontaires.

Derby se lance donc dans une campagne de publicité nationale, invitant surtout les hommes non mariés qui ne se sont pas encore enrôlés à le faire immédiatement. Sinon, la Conscription générale va obliger toutes les classes d'appelés à se plier aux exigences des fronts et de l'industrie de guerre.

Le 23 octobre 1915, c'est le roi George lui-même qui incite dans une lettre à son peuple à embrasser le plan de Derby pour éviter le service obligatoire des pères de familles.

TIMES HISTORY OF THE WAR, VI, Chap 103 - The King's New Armies and the Derby Recruiting Scheme, p. 281-320.



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24 October 1915

What about the Middle East?



On 24 October 1915, British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, sends his first letter to Sharif Hussein of Mecca outlining the guarantees that the British government is willing to put forward in exchange for loyalty against the Turks and Germans.

The content of the letter is not clear as the British know that they still have negotiations coming with the French about the splitting of colonies.

«Those passages in McMahon's letter which related to Palestine were destined to rank among the most controversial statements in British diplomatic history.»

Wilson, Lawrence, p. 214.



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25 October 1915

Indian Infantry Divisions pulled out of France



Indian troops in the trenches

Field Marshall Sir John French has recently received the order that he is to send six divisions to the East.

The new fronts in Salonika, Egypt and Mesopotamia require more troops.

Among the troops that are to be sent east are the two Indian infantry divisions that have fought in the BEF as an Indian Corps since the fall of 1914.

The winter has been hard for these divisions. They have been involved in most engagements and the reinforcements have been inadequate to replace their losses. They were also short of corps and divisional troops that are normally part of the support establishment.

It is obvious to all British officers with Indian experience, toward the end of October 1915, that they must be spared another winter in France and that the recent battle of Loos has had a profound effect on Indian morale.

The Indian Cavalry Corps will be kept in France some more. It has not been used to such degree as the infantry and its conditions of service were less harsh. High Command still believes that the cavalry will have its day.

Michael Howard, [The Continental Commitment](#), Chap 3 - The Triumph of Empire, 1914-1919, 53-73.



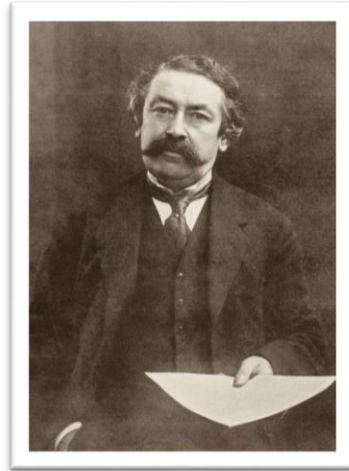
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26 October 1915

French Government toppled: Aristide Briand replaces Viviani in France



The offensives in Artois and Champagne have been hailed by the French government of Viviani as a success, but deputies in the Assemblée Nationale were able to see the difference between what had been anticipated by Joffre and what the end results were.

They are also highly critical of the lack of success in the Dardanelles, in Salonica, and in the fact that the enemy remains too dangerously close to Paris.

The lists of casualties and the dreadful scenes described from field hospitals are evidence that a lot is not being said about the recent fighting.

On 26 October 1915, the René Viviani government is defeated.

Aristide Briand surges forward with new ideas as to how to ensure that military strategy not be removed from the government's hands and conducted solely by the military, as in Viviani's government of Union Sacrée, created at the beginning of the war.

Briand brings a new minister for War, General Joseph Gallieni, and institutes a *Conseil supérieur de la Défense nationale* presided by the President of the Republic, Raymond Poincaré.

This means that the French High Command will now have to submit its strategic plans in detail to the scrutiny of ministers.

This is not very different from what is happening in Great Britain. Men like Lloyd George want the Secretary for War, Kitchener, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to consult with Cabinet.



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27 October 1915

The Brodie Steel Helmet, War Office Pattern: A good tin hat for Tommy



During the summer of 1915, most armies involved in the war came to the conclusion that many wounds would be avoided if men wore a metal protective hat that would cover the head from flying dirt, during shelling, and from shrapnel bullets.

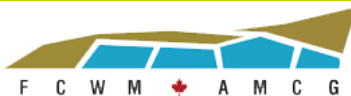
The French soon came up with the *casque Adrian*, drawn by Auguste-Louis Adrian, a light, stylish cap-style hat with a crest and visor, with stamped insignia.

The Germans replaced their spiked combat helmets (*pickelhelm*) with the *Stalhelm*, drawn by Dr. Friedrich Schwerd, a less dreadful headgear with a notorious reputation as the most effective against neck wounds.

The British opted for an easier pattern to stamp. John Leopold Brodie suggested a bowl that could easily be stamped out of a single metal sheet of high-ductility manganese steel and produced in large numbers. The simpler design of the '**Brodie Steel Helmet, War Office Pattern**' of 'Hadfield steel' was the best at stopping low-velocity shrapnel.

These British «Tommy helmets» started arriving in forward companies at the end of October 1915. They were first left in forward trenches as local equipment, but soon each Tommy, –and later, each Doughboy–, got one of the 7.5 million 'salad bowls' that were mass-produced in the War.

Edward F. Law, «Helmet», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12th Ed. (1922), XXXI:366.



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28 octobre 1915

Les États-Unis en marge de la guerre



Le president Woodrow Wilson qui refusait de parler de guerre

Le gouvernement des États-Unis se garde bien de manifester des intentions belliqueuses dans ses relations internationales.

On dit qu'à l'automne de 1915, le Secrétaire d'État provisoire des États-Unis, Henry Breckenridge, fut appelé auprès du **président Woodrow Wilson**. Il trouva le président 'tremblant et pâle de rage,' tenant dans sa main une copie du *Baltimore Sun*.

Le président pointa vers une page rapportant que l'état-major général était en train de préparer des plans pour l'éventualité d'une guerre contre l'Allemagne.

Lorsque le président lui demanda si cela était vrai, Breckenridge répondit qu'il ne le savait pas.

Le président lui enjoignit de faire enquête et s'il trouvait que c'était bien vrai, de congédier tout officier de l'état-major général impliqué et de le faire sortir de la ville de Washington!

Samuel P. Huntington, , *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957, Rpt 1985), p. 144.



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29 octobre 1915

Réforme du Commandement Suprême britannique



Le 29 octobre 1915, le gouvernement britannique se voit poussé vers une décision constitutionnelle importante.

C'est en effet ce jour que le général Joffre, irrité par les discussions qu'il interrompt avec les représentants du haut-état-major britannique à son Grand Quartier-général de Chantilly, près de Paris, arrive en trombe à Londres pour parler directement au Conseil des ministres à propos de l'affaire de Salonica.

Devant le refus du Maréchal French et du chef de l'état-major général impérial, le Général Murray, de lui donner raison sur l'importance d'ajouter encore aux troupes qui s'y trouvent, Joffre insiste pour parler au Conseil de guerre britannique sur la stratégie des Balkans.

Or il n'existe pas de Conseil de guerre dans le gouvernement britannique. Le seul 'comité' que le premier ministre a jugé bon de former à date a été celui des Dardanelles, improvisé et changeant.

L'incident incite les ministres à finalement se décider qu'un Conseil de guerre formel composé de certains ministres et de représentants de l'état-major impérial et naval aurait des rencontres régulières.

Le gouvernement britannique, un an après le début de la guerre, se donne finalement un organe décisionnel qui exclut la plupart des membres du Cabinet et confirme la présence militaire dans les débats.

Hankey, p. 433.



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30 October 1915

Canadian Machine-Gun Companies



With the recent creation of the Machine-Gun Corps in the British Army, the Canadian Corps now has the Imperial blessing to create its machine-gun companies for each brigade.

This means that the four Colt and the four Vickers in the battalions' machine-gun sections will be gathered as a company to provide machine-gun fire where and when required by the brigade, including as a mass shoot when the circumstances will dictate.

The Brigade Staff Officer MG (SOMG) then on becomes the Officer Commanding (OC MGC) of this company, under the direct command of the Brigadier.

The battalions will then on use the Lewis gun for their automatic fire in the trenches and on the advance. The much lighter air-cooled Lewis with their 47-round circular magazines will bring an altogether new firepower to the infantry platoon.

These changes will lead to great innovations in the employment of automatic rifle-caliber fire, but the progress will not be instantaneous. Much remains to be learned with these weapons. But the Canadians are ahead of the curve on the Allied side. Their strength is their willingness to experiment and think 'out of the box,' and absorb all that can be learned from others, including the Germans.

LCol Ian McCulloch, «A War of Machines: A Re-Assessment of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps: Innovation or Tactical Expedient?», *Canadian Army Journal*, 11:2 (Summer 2008), p. 84-92.



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31 October 1915

Horse Trading in Time of War: Canadian Horses at a Premium



Loading a horse onto a ship

So far in the war, Canada has provided the British Remount Commission with thousands of horses shipped overseas.

But by the end of 1915, the price of horse has increased in Canada due to shortage and increase in own use.

From this point the United States will take a greater role in providing horses of all types for Europe.

The breeding of hundreds of thousands of horses in France and in the British Isles and their importation from both North and South America will prove a challenge for the war industry. Feeding them will also prove a daunting enterprise for agriculture and transportation. Fodder is in fact the most demanding of all railroad transport requirements in Europe at war.

The maintenance of huge corps of cavalry that will achieve very little in tactical advantage will prove an immense investment that will not yield much before the end of the war.

Duguid, App 257, p. 187-8.



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