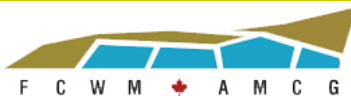
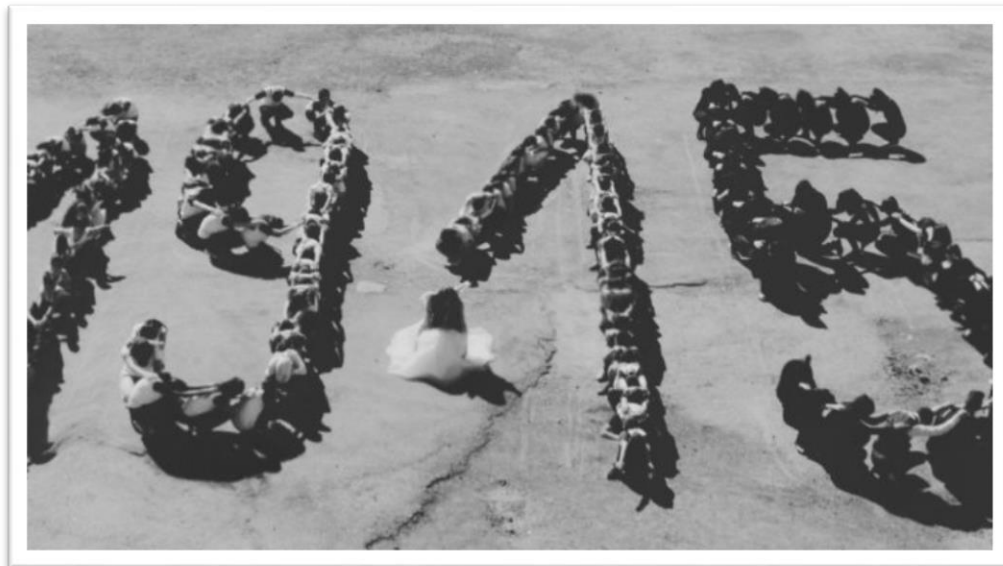


World War I
Day by Day
1915 – 1918

November 1915 / novembre 1915

La première guerre mondiale
De jour en jour
1915 – 1918



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1 November 1915

A Young Commodore Spurs the Giant



Commodore Roger Keyes

Commodore Roger Keyes comes up with a naval plan for the Dardanelles

Commodore Roger Keyes has been in the Dardanelles from early in the operation. He proved himself a daring commander in de-mining work under fire in the Strait. Repeatedly he faced deadly bombardment from the Turkish shore batteries while his squadron went on the work of finding and neutralizing floating mines in the Narrows, a repeated feat of high bravery.

Keyes has now been authorized by his boss, Admiral de Robeck, to come to London and try to sell a plan with which de Robeck does not agree.

That plan comprises a rushing of the Strait by the allied navies another time before the arrival of German reinforcements.

Keyes is so energetic that he succeeds in convincing the First Sea Lord, Admiral Jackson, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Arthur Balfour, and ultimately, Kitchener, the Secretary for War, who is completely taken by the idea that one more all-out try must be made before any thought of abandoning the campaign to seize Constantinople be allowed.

Kitchener is in fact so fired up by Keyes that he decides to go himself to Gallipoli and put some heat on the commanders there.

His decision is typical: improvised, emotional and without consultation with other ministers.

Moorehead, [Gallipoli](#), 318-23;

Magnus, [Kitchener](#), 427-31.



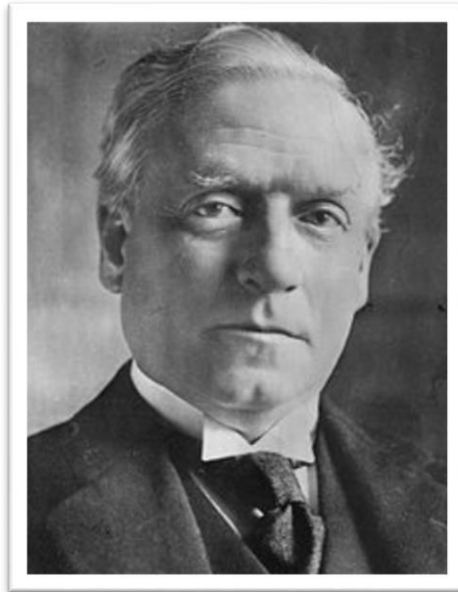
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2 November 1915

Asquith Forms a War Committee



H. H. Asquith

On **2 November, 1915**, British Prime Minister, **H.H. Asquith**, formed a new Cabinet Committee.

The War Committee, as it was called, comprised the Prime Minister, as well as David Lloyd George, the Minister of Munitions, Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur Balfour, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Kitchener, Secretary for War, and Bonar Law, Secretary for the Colonies.

A notable exclusion was Winston Churchill, then the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster. He had been dismissed as First Lord of the Admiralty following the disaster of the Gallipoli in May 1915. Churchill had joined the Asquith coalition government in the hope of renewing the campaign.

However, one of the first decisions of the War Committee will be not to renew the offensive in the Dardanelles.

In light of this, Churchill will resign for good on 25 November.

Winston Churchill, [The World Crisis Vol. II](#), Chap. XXIII, Abandonment of the Dardanelles, p. 481-499.



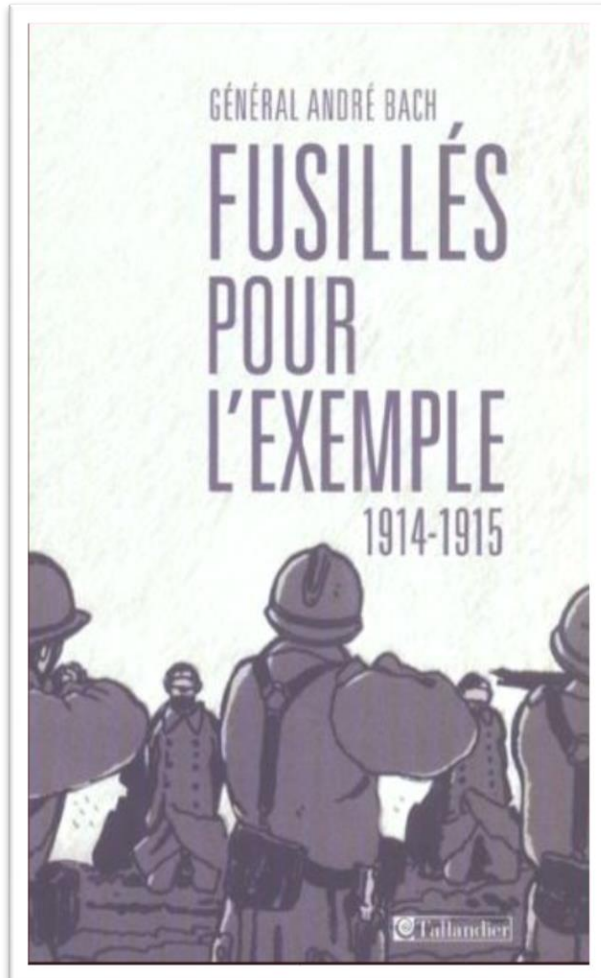
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3 November 1915

Shot at dawn



The case of the hundreds of Entente soldiers that were 'shot at dawn' by firing squads for breach of discipline are now fairly well documented. They were kept secret well after the war.

Canada has had 25 soldiers shot in such a manner, in the First World War.

These are cases where individuals were personally identified as culprits of shortcomings and condemned by a military tribunal.

However, in November 1915, in the vicinity of Vimy, the French Army is said to have had a case where, following an incident where troops refused to follow their officers' orders, soldiers were chosen at random to be shot as examples for the others.

It is alleged that six companies of infantry were ordered to draw lots among soldiers so that one soldier per company would be brought forward to be executed. As one company commander refused to send a man forward, five were shot «pour l'exemple».

It is also alleged that this method was inspired by the tradition of decimation in the Roman army, as many officers were educated in the classical traditions of Antiquity.

Alexander McKee, The Battle of Vimy Ridge, (London: Souvenir Press; Toronto: Ryerson, 1966)



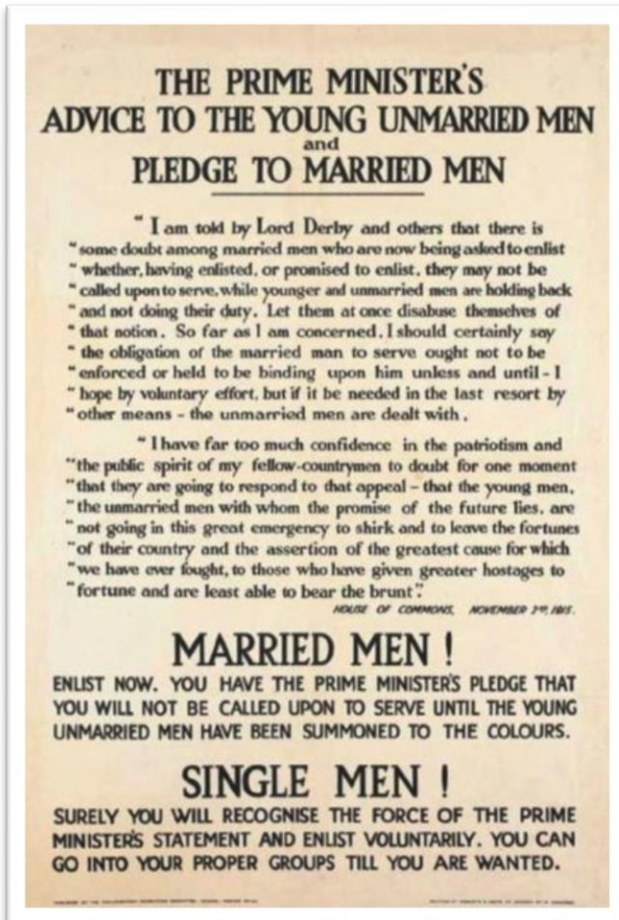
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4 November 1915

The Prime Minister's Trap



On 3 November 1915, the British Government publishes a TIMES Recruiting Supplement outlining the latest offer of voluntary service. The Derby Scheme is the ultimate try to get the numbers required through five more weeks of voluntary enlistment.

Prime Minister Asquith, in a recent speech, has promised that unmarried men would be sent to the Colours before married men. But his «Pledge to Married Men» now depends on the unmarried men's willingness to join voluntarily. Half of them still have not joined. And they are not coming in sufficient numbers.

The Derby Scheme therefore has to promise that married men who enlist now will not be sent to the Front before all twenty-three age classes of unmarried men have been recruited and trained.

This is an impossible conundrum. The need to replenish the depleted armies will require a fourth million men.

Compulsory Service of unmarried men is the only way out of this self-inflicted pledge.

TIMES History of the War, Chap 103 - The King's New armies and the Derby Recruiting Scheme, VI: 281-320.



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5 novembre 1915

Les groupes d'âge du programme Derby

Unmarried.		Married.	
Age.	Group.	Age.	Group.
18—19†	1	18—19†	24
19—20	2	19—20	25
20—21	3	20—21	26
21—22	4	21—22	27
22—23	5	22—23	28
23—24	6	23—24	29
24—25	7	24—25	30
25—26	8	25—26	31
26—27	9	26—27	32
27—28	10	27—28	33
28—29	11	28—29	34
29—30	12	29—30	35
30—31	13	30—31	36
31—32	14	31—32	37
32—33	15	32—33	38
33—34	16	33—34	39
34—35	17	34—35	40
35—36	18	35—36	41
36—37	19	36—37	42
37—38	20	37—38	43
38—39	21	38—39	44
39—40	22	39—40	45
40—41	23	40—41	46

† No man was to be called up until he had attained the age of 19.

La promesse que les hommes non-mariés seront appelés au service obligatoire avant les hommes mariés est un engagement politique très important pour le Gouvernement britannique.

Il s'agit aussi d'un exemple pour tout l'Empire britannique, de l'emphase que l'on désire apporter sur le rôle des pères de famille dans la société.

Le tableau ci-joint donne les classes d'âge du système Derby par lequel les premiers appelés, si le Gouvernement doit avoir recours au service obligatoire, seront les hommes des 23 classes des gens non-mariés, et ensuite, les 23 classes de gens mariés.

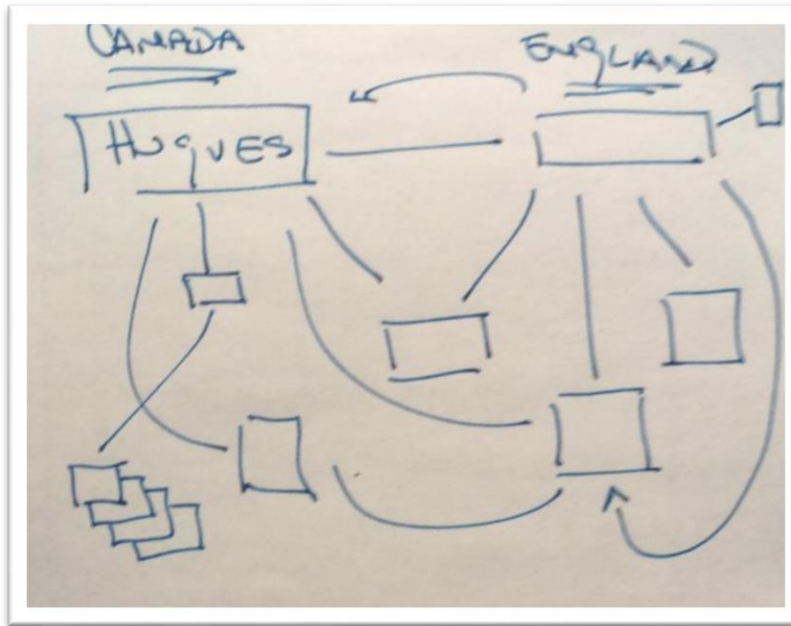
La période de recrutement volontaire de novembre 1915 offre des délais à ceux qui s'engagent immédiatement jusqu'à ce que leur classe soit appelée.

Le but est d'inciter les hommes jeunes (plus de 19 ans) et non-mariés à avancer volontairement en grands nombres de sorte à éviter un service obligatoire pour tout le monde.



6 November 1915

Sam Hugues the Meddler



Sam Hugues, in the course of 1915, has succeeded in creating much confusion in England as to the responsibilities of various Canadian officers and officials.

The respective responsibilities of LGen Alderson (originally given command of all troops in England until his departure for France), Colonel J.C. MacDougall (originally given the command of the Training Depot, then a Zone), Colonel (promoted MGen) J.W. Carson (originally appointed by Sir Sam to be his representative, then skirted), BGen Sam Steele, a friend indeed, given the Training Division, Sir George Perley (a member of the Cabinet acting as High Commissioner, that Sir Sam wished to avoid), Colonel W.R.W. James (meddling in at Sir Sam's wishes) and then Sir J.E.B. Seely (British commander of Canadian cavalry forces, then a zone, and other confused appointments).

« *The bickering continued...* »

Nicholson, CEF, Chap 7 - Behind the Front, 201ff.

Ibid, 204.



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7 novembre 1915

Kitchener à Paris



Le Maréchal Kitchener s'est embarqué intempestivement pour un voyage aux Dardanelles afin de décider sur les lieux si cette opération doit être poursuivie au cours de l'hiver.

Il s'arrête à Paris avant d'aller plus loin pour y rencontrer Joffre et parler des plans pour la Méditerranée.

Joffre est poussé par le nouveau gouvernement français de poursuivre les opérations en Macédoine, où il reste pourtant peu d'espoirs de sauver la Serbie. L'été de 1915 a démontré que l'attention portée par les Allemands au front Est a soulagé le front Ouest. Il faut maintenant les occuper dans les Balkans.

Kitchener croit qu'il est d'importance primordiale de coopérer entre Alliés et se voit serré entre deux objectifs.

Il se rend justement aux Dardanelles pour raviver l'intérêt dans cette campagne, mais réalise à Paris que les Français n'y croient plus et veulent un front permanent en Salonique, de sorte à détourner l'attention des Allemands de la France et des Autrichiens de l'Italie.

Kitchener est troublé par ces contradictions. Son voyage commence mal.

Magnus, Kitchener, 430-1.



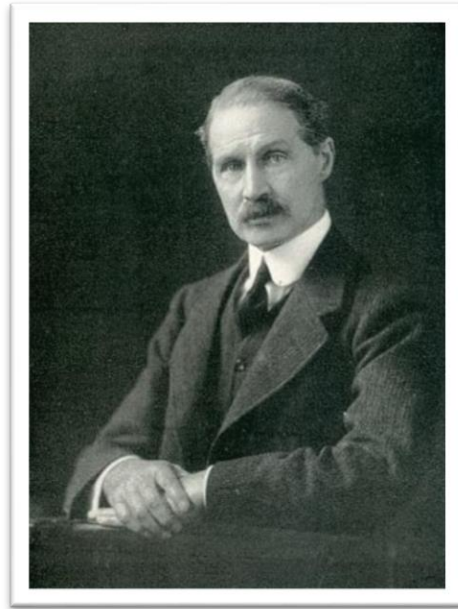
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8 November 1915

The Conservative Silver Bullet: Bonar Law Wants Out of the Dardanelles



Bonar Law

Bonar Law, as British Secretary for the Colonies, is one of the two Conservative ministers of the Coalition government under Prime Minister Asquith. The other is Arthur Balfour, the First Sea Lord. Law is the leader of the Conservative Party, Balfour is a former Prime Minister. Between the two of them, they hold Liberal Asquith in place.

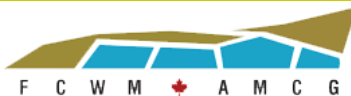
Canadian-born Bonar Law has now come to the conclusion that he cannot accept any longer that so many men be sacrificed for an operation that has no future.

On 8 November 1915, he threatens the prime Minister with his resignation if measures are not taken immediately within the War Cabinet to withdraw the British army from the Turkish peninsula.

This coming while Kitchener is traveling to ascertain matters there, creates a great difficulty for the Prime Minister. Law does not garner immediate support for his position, but Asquith nevertheless promises a quick decision. Law does not resign, but the strength of character that he is known for makes his threat an insurmountable obstacle for the Coalition government, despite the Die-Hards who warned against grievous losses in the retirement of the troops.

The die is cast.

Beaverbrook, *Politicians and War*, 169.



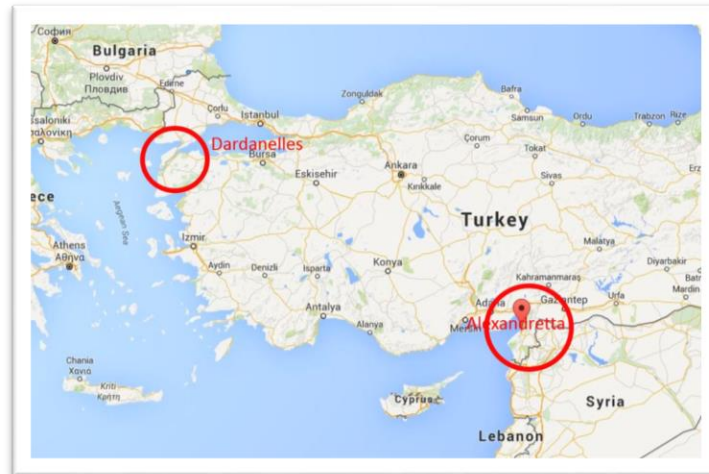
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9 November 1915

Alexandretta becomes an option



With the frustration that the likely abandonment of the Dardanelles is creating, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force is being considered for a new operation to prevent the Turkish forces freed from Gallipoli to be directed against Egypt.

The concern is very strong that the French and British empires will be considerably tarnished in the eyes of the colonies if they fold against Muslims.

An altogether new operation at the joint of Turkey and Syria, in the Gulf of Iskanderun, might catch the Turks in a new angle and lead to more success in the Middle East. — Alexandretta stands out as a clean target.

On 9 November 1915, this alternate plan is being studied by General Monro and his British, French, Australian and New Zealander commanders on the eve of the arrival of Kitchener in theatre.

None of them can consider without great misgivings that no further operation might follow a retreat from the Dardanelles.

This is a deprivation of victory, after so much effort, that they find very hard to swallow.

Magnus, Kitchener, 432;

James, Gallipoli, 330;

Moorehead, Gallipoli, 323.



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10 novembre 1915

Foch réoriente sa pensée



Général Ferdinand Foch

Le général Ferdinand Foch, fameux Commandant de la Dixième armée et ensuite du Groupe des Armées du Nord, avait été un des grands penseurs de la stratégie militaire française avant la guerre.

La doctrine qu'il a instituée pour l'Armée française en tant que Commandant de l'École de Guerre, de l'offensive à outrance, a été employée sans réserve dans les batailles des frontières, en 1914, dans la deuxième bataille de Ypres, au printemps 1915, et dans les batailles d'Artois et de Champagne, en 1915. Les attaques à l'emporte-pièce répétées se sont soldées par des pertes énormes sans résultats offensifs majeurs. La défense adverse a dominé l'échange et a considérablement affaibli l'attaquant.

Le 10 novembre 1915, Foch propose à Joffre que les opérations pour l'année 1916 soient conduites plus au sud, et limitées à des actions répétitives d'envergure réduite, de sorte à saisir et retenir des objectifs successifs.

Il rejoint de cette façon les vues de Joffre, qui s'est résolu au 'grignotage' lorsqu'il a constaté la difficulté de franchir les tranchées.

Les deux généraux discutent du secteur de la Somme comme un nouveau tremplin pour 1916.

Liddell Hart, Foch, I:215 ;

Roy Prete, « Joffre and the Origins of the Somme: A Study in Allied Military Planning », The Journal of Military History, 73, 417-448, esp. 432.



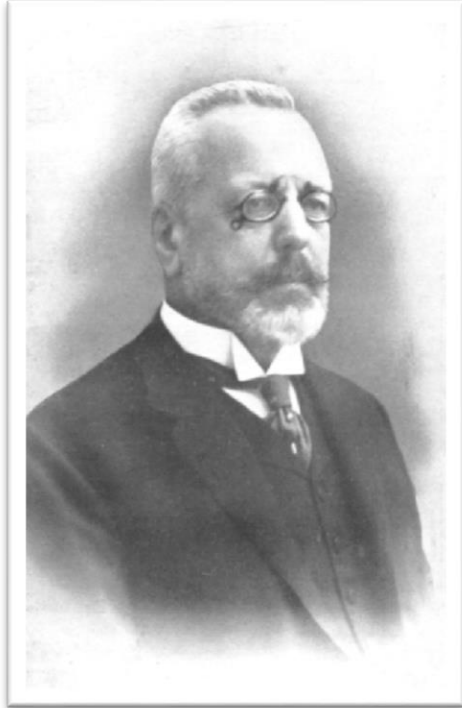
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11 November 1915

Diplomatic slight of hand: German-Austrian meeting in Berlin



Baron Istvan Burian von Rajecz

On 11 November, 1915, the Austrian-Hungarian Foreign Minister, **Baron Istvan Burian von Rajecz**, met with the German Chancellor Bethman-Hollweg to discuss the fate of Poland, largely conquered in recent campaign.

The Austro-Hungarians came to the meeting with the hope of creating a Polish kingdom under the Austrian Emperor.

The Germans wanted to incorporate Poland into the German Empire, as part of the Mitteleuropea Plan, which sought German control of all Central Europe.

During the course of the discussion Bethman-Hollweg agreed to concede the territory, but demanded many pro-German economic guarantees, which would not benefit Austria-Hungary.

Burian tried, but failed, to ease the conditions by which Germany would relinquish control of Poland. The Foreign Minister did not press the matter, and at the conclusion of the discussions Germany retained control of Poland.

Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, Chap 6 – 'The War Aims Policy of the Reich's leaders, 1915: From depression to the claim for hegemony,' p. 184-214, see 208ff.



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12 November 1915

Will China Join the Allies?



China suffered from imperial exploitation and civil war in the 19th century and originally adopted a neutral status towards the War.

Chinese interest later began to focus on a place at the table of an eventual peace conference, prompting renewed consideration of joining the Allies.

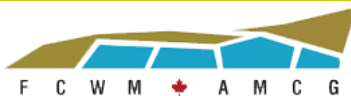
Allied interest was primarily motivated by the need for front-line labour, freeing Allied troops for combat roles.

On November 12, the Russian Ambassador to France, Isvolsky, discussed with French Foreign Minister Cambon the possibility of China joining the coalition against the Central Powers. Cambon noted that there might be objections from Japan, which had entered the War in August 1914 as a close ally of Great Britain, and perhaps also from the British. Nevertheless, Cambon thought that it could be done.

In the event, Japan, which had benefited from the capture of German interests in Shantung, in China, did not approve, and the effort to bring China into the War was abandoned until 1917.

Renewed pressure for labour will then lead to the provision of a large corps of Chinese workers.

Thomas E. La Fargue, [China in the World War](#)



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13 November 1915

Industrial firepower: Lloyd George Urges More Machine Guns



Combat experience had shown that the machine gun was the dominant infantry weapon of trench warfare and all of the belligerents rapidly increased their number.

The British Army formed the Machine Gun Corps in October 1915 and the Canadian Expeditionary Force authorized its equivalent later in the month.

David Lloyd George, Minister of Munitions, considered that the General Staff were resistant to innovation and he was gravely concerned that the War Office was apathetic towards the new Machine Gun Corps.

His letter to the Acting Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir Archibald Murray, **on 13 November 1915**, insisted that the number of machine guns and personnel be radically increased; Murray agreed and the Corps establishment was rapidly filled.

The machine gun episode was but one of many confrontations between the dynamic Welsh politician and what he considered the hidebound War Office and Army leadership.

The primary weapon of the Machine Gun Corps was the Vickers water-cooled medium machine gun which fired the same .303 cartridge as the Lee Enfield rifle at a rate of 450 to 500 rounds per minute.

Major Charles Francis Atkinson, « Machine-Guns », *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th Ed. (1911), Vol. 17, pp. 237-49;

Major (USA) J.S Hatcher « Machine-Guns», 12th Ed. (1922), Vol. 31, pp. 818-25.



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14 November 1915

African Muslims (Sennusites) attack Egypt from the West



Ahmed Sharif as-Senussi

On the night of **14 November, 1915**, Senussite troops shelled Sollum, a coastal town about 400 km west of Cairo, on the confines of Egypt and Libya.

The Senussi, a peaceful religious sect of the Sahara Desert, had fought French and Italian imperialist forces but had so far been on relatively good terms with the British authorities in Egypt.

However, the Ottoman Empire made strenuous efforts to attract the Senussi to their side and attack Egypt as a diversion for a planned Turkish attack on the Suez Canal from the east.

Ahmed Sharif as-Senussi, the Senussi supreme leader, agreed to raise Jihad against the British. The Ottomans and Germany covertly delivered modern small arms, machine guns and artillery to the Senussi, even using German submarines.

The plan was to attack eastwards along the fertile coastal plain of Egypt, towards Alexandria, with a force numbering more than 5,000 men.

With British forces drawn from the Indian Army, Australia and New Zealand confronting the Ottoman Empire at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia, General Sir John Maxwell commanding the forces in Egypt could only oppose a 'scratch force.' The Senussi diversion was not a mere side-show but a component of a strategic level operation aimed at a vital Imperial communications link.

LCol F.M. Rickard, «Senussi and Sennussites», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12th Ed. (1922), XXXII: 395-8.



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15 Nov 1915

A perfunctory Estimate of the Situation: Kitchener Reports From the Dardanelles



Lord Kitchener's initial thoughts on arriving at Gallipoli on the 9th were that the situation was serious but that the peninsula need not be abandoned. However, after touring the battlefields he concluded that the terrain was much worse than he had imagined and that it was untenable should German troops arrive to assist Turkey.

On 15 November 1915, Kitchener reported to PM Asquith that he believed that an evacuation could be conducted with light losses and argued that in the case of withdrawal, a landing should be made at Alexandretta on the Turkish mainland “for prestige purposes” and to cut the railway to Egypt.

Kitchener had not, however, made a definite recommendation on evacuation. The War Cabinet was already decided that no further operations, including the desperate Alexandretta concept, should be ventured in the East.

In the end, Kitchener authorized evacuation.

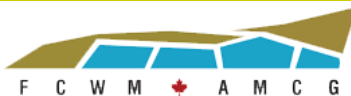
His reputation as the all-knowing authority on the East had been shattered in the eyes of the civilian government.

Prior, [Gallipoli](#);

James, [Gallipoli](#);

Moorehead, [Gallipoli](#),

Magnus, Kitchener.



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16 November 1915

A Greek Tragedy of Errors: Kitchener visits King Constantine in Athens



In his visit of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, Kitchener insists on calling on King Constantine, who still maintains Greece's neutrality in the War.

The King has dismissed his pro-Allies prime minister and has insisted, so far, that the Allies are occupying Salonica against Greece's will, although invited to do so by his former prime minister, Venizelos.

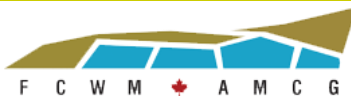
The discussion between Kitchener and Constantine short-circuits the diplomatic ties between Britain and Greece, and will require from Kitchener that he withdraw assurances that he made to the King, notably that the Allied force in Salonika would withdraw.

This statement was anathema to French policy, and also contradicted British Cabinet policy, as far as it could be ascertained from the conflictual ministerial positions.

Kitchener once again acted without the full consent of his colleagues.

The two Minister of Munitions, Mr. Thomas from France and Lloyd George in England, will have to meet to unravel the imbroglio in which Kitchener will have thrown their previous understanding that Salonika was indeed to be occupied at long term, even if Serbia is lost.

Lloyd George, Memoirs, Chap 17 - The Serbian Tragedy, I: 489-529.



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17 novembre 1915

Les surprises nocturnes des Canadiens: Le raid de tranchées à Petite Douve



Après que les lignes de tranchées se soient stabilisées, les deux côtés ont commencé à utiliser des patrouilles de combat et des raids, – les Britanniques et les Canadiens en fait plus que les Allemands.

Dans le secteur de Messines, le 7e Bataillon du CEC devait endurer une situation déplaisante puisque les Allemands pouvaient bloquer la rivière Douve et ensuite relacher une vague déferlante sur les positions canadiennes. Il a alors été décidé de retourner la monnaie de la pièce et un raid fut organisé.

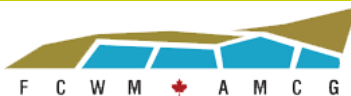
La nuit du 17 novembre 1915, après un barrage soudain d'artillerie pour tasser les fils barbelés, le raid se solda par un grand nombre de pertes pour l'ennemi, incluant une douzaine de prisonniers, au prix d'un tué et d'un blessé.

Les raids ont évolué pour assurer que le Corps canadien dominait le *No Man's Land*.

Ce genre d'action se prêtait bien à la nature agressive des officiers canadiens mais ne fut pas toujours aussi réussi que pour la nuit de Petite Douve.

La troupe s'est souvent plaint des pertes lourdes pour des gains «psychologiques» qui ne semblaient pas suffisants.

Nicholson, Corps expéditionnaire canadien, «Les premiers raids de tranchées», p. 133-6.



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18 Nov 1915

Gorizia and the Fourth Isonzo Offensive: Total War on the Isonzo



The Italian Army launched the Fourth Battle on the Isonzo front on 11 November; the events of **18 November 1915** marked a turning point.

The Italians shelled the attractive town of Gorizia for three hours, the first time Italy had deliberately targeted civilians.

Previously, it had been Austrian warships and planes which had attacked several cities on the Adriatic coast, notably in May 1915. In July, General Cadorno had offered a joint commitment not to target 'open cities,' but the Austrians had declined.

Why did Cadorno abandon restraint and concede the moral high ground to the Austrians? His memoirs provide no answer but he may have thought that the relative normalcy of life in a town where the cafés and gardens catered to Austrian officers harmed his own men's morale. It is possible that Maréchal Joffre, while visiting the front, advised that he could not afford to spare the city, especially as it housed several thousand Austrian troops.

Austrian General Zeidler decided not to evacuate the town because the attack was a gift to Hapsburg propaganda.

Mark Thompson, [The White War: Life and Death on the Italian Front 1915-1919](#)



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19 Nov 1915

Deeper into the Mesopotamia quagmire: and the British Drive Towards Baghdad



In late September, after seizing Kut-al-Amara, the British-Indian force commanded by General Townshend had been ordered to seize Baghdad.

By 19 November 1915, Townshend's 6 (Poona) Division of the Indian Army was approaching **Ctesiphon**, a town located about 25 km south-east of Baghdad.

Although the British had won easily at Kut, the Ottoman army was better prepared at Ctesiphon, which was a strong defensive position in a loop of the Tigris River.

The British advance from Kut was slow, as the wet season had hampered their columns and the Ottomans took the opportunity to build solid defensive positions.

They deployed four divisions with about 18,000 infantry under the command of Colonel Nureddin.

The British assumed that Nureddin was not very competent and prepared to join battle although outnumbered by the defenders, the Poona Division numbering about 11,000 men.

Moberly, BGen F.J., History of the Great War – The Campaign in Mesopotamia, 1914-1918, 2 Volumes (London: Historical Section, Committee of Imperial Defence, H.M. Stationary Office, 1924).



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20 November 1915

Serbia's Demise: Mackensen Defeats Serbia



Field Marshall August von Mackensen in the Serbian town of Novi Bazar

On 20 November 1915, the Austrian army took the town of **Novi Bazar** in Serbia. Serbia had been cut in half by the entry of the Bulgarians into the war, with the Allies in Salonika blocked from effectively supporting Serbia.

The seizure of Novi Bazar, historically an important area of medieval Serbia, was emblematic of Serbia's defeat.

The campaign against Serbia had opened in October 1915 when **Field Marshall August von Mackensen** led a Army Group south into Serbia.

It was composed of three armies, German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian. The Serbian campaign had become feasible after Russia's retreat into its vast spaces effectively paused operations on that front, followed by the Bulgarian decision in September to join the Central Powers. Allied assistance to Serbia was too little, too late. Mackensen's operations will end on November 28.

Although the Serbian army had been defeated and the country overrun, the Serbian army evaded destruction by escaping into the Albanian hills.

Mackensen was one of Germany's finest commanders of the war, adept at managing his allies' sensibilities and using their forces effectively.

Cruttwell, History of the Great War, Chap Chap 14 – The Collapse of the Entente Plans in the Balkans in 1915, p. 228-36.



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21 November 1915

The Decision is taken: Gallipoli to be evacuated



On 22 November 1915, Kitchener informed the Cabinet from the Middle East that its decision would be carried out, to leave Gallipoli before the winter and that no operation would be undertaken against Turkey as a substitute.

Troops would be withdrawn from the Anzac and from the Suvla beach-heads, and the Helles hold would be maintained longer, but only temporarily.

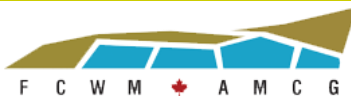
The plan is now to achieve an unobserved withdrawal, seeking to extract the divisions without the losses that might be expected from such a difficult enterprise.

This marks the definite failure of the whole campaign in the Dardanelles in 1915.

For **Churchill**, this marks the end of all his hopes for the strategic checkmate that he anticipated with the taking of Constantinople, the rejoining of the Russian forces in the Black Sea, and the expedition up the Danube with the help of Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Albania and Italy to catch Vienna from the wrong side.

As a Greek tragic figure, Winston had nothing left to do than to gird up his loins and head for the field of battle.

Gilbert, Churchill: A Life, (Holt 1991), Chap 16 - In the Trenches, p. 332-60.



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22 November 1915

Disaster at the Wall of Ctesiphon



Colonel Nureddin

General Townshend divided his force into three columns of infantry for a frontal assault on the Ottoman lines with a fourth column of cavalry and infantry to execute a flanking attack on the left of the Ottoman positions. The attack went in at dawn on the **22nd November 1915** as planned.

Two of the British columns were halted but the third, of Punjabis and Gurkhas, reached the second Turkish line where they were stopped when the Turkish commander, **Colonel Nureddin**, committed his reserves.

The next day would see renewed British assaults and a Turkish counter-attack. Both armies became exhausted. Townshend ordered a withdrawal towards Kut. Nureddin originally intended to fall back on Baghdad but seeing the British retreat, he followed them.

Turkish casualties were 6200 and the British suffered 4600 soldiers killed and wounded.

Colonel Nureddin had shown that the Ottoman army was capable of effective combat: he had rebuilt the local forces, shaped an effective defence, used his reserves at the right moment, and all without the presence of any of the German army advisors who were attached to many Ottoman commands.

Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson, «MESOPOTAMIA», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12th Ed (1922), XXXI: 915-22.



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23 November 1915

A repeat of the Alexandretta Scenario



The Alexandretta Scenario was a plan which Britain had long considered as one possible scenario in a war against the Ottoman empire.

An amphibious landing in multi-divisional force on the Turkish / Syrian coast at Alexandretta on the Bay of Iskanderun near the most vulnerable point on the railway linking Turkey with Baghdad and Egypt would disrupt Turkish rail traffic to key areas of the empire.

In 1914, the War Office and Lord Kitchener had favoured the Alexandretta scenario but Winston Churchill and the Admiralty won out with the naval plan to force the Bosphorus, which became the Dardanelles campaign.

On 23 November 1915, the Cairo intelligence section (and Gertrude Bell who had joined the intelligence staff and would later play a large role in shaping the post-war Middle east) resurrected the concept.

Discussions with France to field a combined force failed because French aspirations in Syria and Palestine were not acceptable to Britain. The concept went again into hibernation, although on several occasions British cruisers did shell the railway where it was nearest to the coast.

J. Wilson, Lawrence of Arabia. The Authorized Biography, p. 181-2.



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24 November 1915

Is the British Empire at Risk?



Maurice Hankey

At the end of November, the Central Powers were gaining the upper hand over British armies in three separate theatres: Gallipoli, Mesopotamia (Ctesiphon) and Salonika.

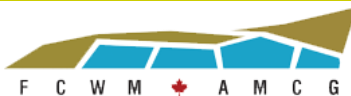
While often described as of marginal importance to the struggle in France and Belgium, reverses in these theatres challenged Britain's ability to hold its world-wide Empire.

In London, the Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, **Maurice Hankey**, expressed his concern:

“Combined, these three misadventures will destroy the last vestige of our prestige, upon which our Eastern Empire depends; it will ruin our hopes among the Arabs, in Persia and probably in China; it will place our position in India and possibly in Egypt in peril.”

Hankey's comment highlighted a fundamental reality of the British Empire: it was held by a handful of British troops who relied on locally formed units such as the Indian Army. British prestige was therefore of fundamental importance. For the Army, its dilemma was whether it should be mainly an Imperial occupation force or designed for a Continental strategy.

Hankey, Supreme Command, II:460, quoted in Michael Howard, The Continental Commitment: the Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of the Two World Wars (London: Temple Smith, 1972), p. 60-1.



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25 November 1915

German post-war plans: Belgium to be a Tributary State



Admiral von Holtzendorff

On **25 November 1915**, the German Chancellor received a memorandum emphasizing the importance of attaching Belgium to Germany after the war.

The note outlined the most critical aspects of this plan: Belgian industry must be under German influence, if not altogether transferred to German ownership.

Belgian law would be changed to put it in line with German law, and Germany would have the right to impose a state of emergency on Belgium.

More importantly, annexation would give the German navy access to the Ostend-Zeebrugge-Antwerp triad of ports.

Admiral von Holtzendorff wanted these ports in order to launch an invasion of England in the present conflict. He also believed that they would be a safe base of operations for submarine warfare in case of future war.

All these points will be formed into a draft treaty in February 1916, with the government's full support.

Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, Chap 8- 'The Objectives of War Aims Policy, I: Vassal States, A Germanic North-East and Economic Integrations,' p. 260-271.



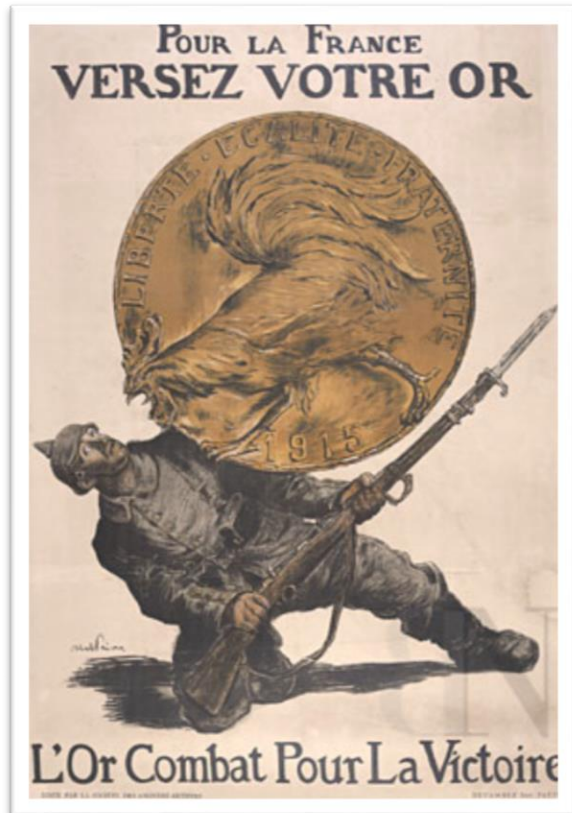
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26 novembre 1915

L'Or combat pour la Victoire: Premier emprunt de la victoire en France



Dès 1914, la guerre pose le problème de son financement, la machine économique tourne au ralenti, ainsi la France doit amorcer un virage vers une économie de guerre.

Le 13 septembre 1914, Raymond Poincaré autorise la première émission de "bons pour la défense nationale", projet soutenu par le ministre des Finances Alexandre Ribot.

Rappelé le 26 août pour rassurer les marchés et les partenaires, ce libéral, sénateur du Pas-de-Calais, contribue à la mise en place d'une économie de guerre. Refusant d'augmenter la fiscalité pour financer l'effort de guerre, il préfère se tourner vers l'emprunt. Jusque-là, les bons du Trésor étaient réservés à une clientèle restreinte de nantis ; Ribot a l'idée originale de les rendre accessibles aux plus humbles. L'entreprise réussit au-delà de ses espérances.

Quatre grandes campagnes d'emprunt national, dit « emprunts de la victoire » sont organisées durant la durée des hostilités : la première, **le 26 novembre 1915**, rapporte 15 milliards de francs (rente à 5 %), et les trois suivantes, lancées en octobre 1916, 1917 et 1918, font entrer respectivement 11, 14 et 27 milliards dans les caisses de l'État.

<http://www.archivespasdecalais.fr/Activites-culturelles/Chroniques-de-la-Grande-Guerre/Albums/Souscrivez-pour-la-victoire> Pour en savoir plus : <http://www.musee-armee.fr/collections/base-de-donnees-des-collections/objet/affiche-pour-la-france-versez-votre-or-lor-combat-pour-la-victoire.html> et <http://centenaire.org/fr/financer-la-guerre-par-patrice-baubeau-et-gerd-ambrosius>



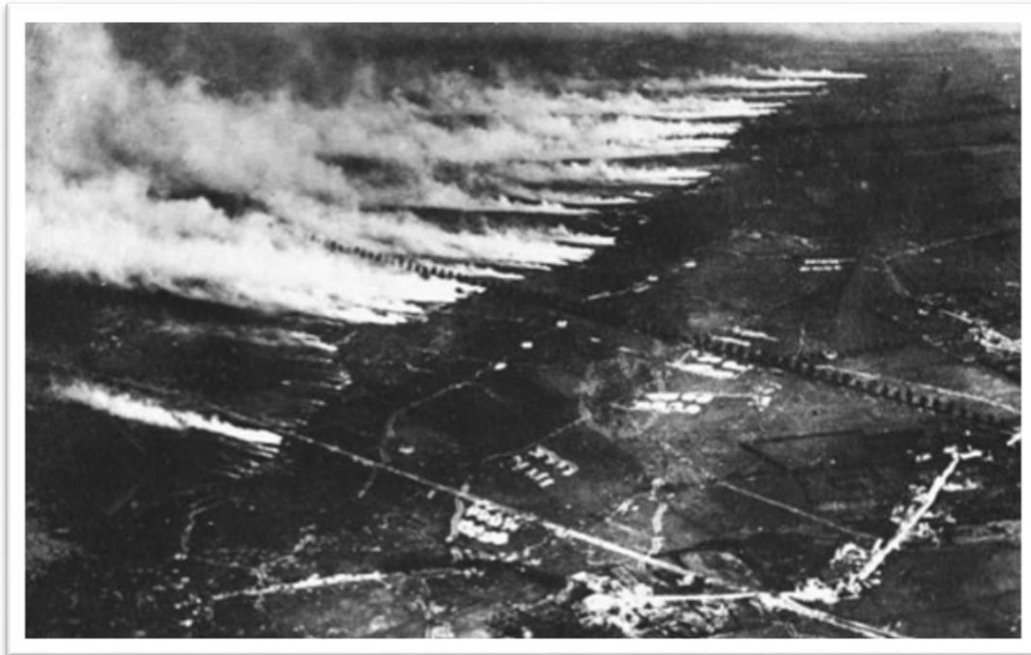
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26 novembre 1915

Vague gazeuse dans la région de Forges-Béthincourt: Nouveau gaz, vieux masques



Dès septembre 1915, les Allemands semblent avoir une longueur d'avance en introduisant un nouveau masque à gaz complet qui protège les yeux et les voies respiratoires, doté d'une cartouche filtrante interchangeable, bien que pas très efficace

Les recherches en France pour développer un meilleur appareil de protection avaient commencé dès le mois d'août, comme celles de Lebeau. Sa nouvelle formule d'imprégnation à la néociane fut définitivement adoptée le 16 novembre 1915, mais avant qu'elle ne soit utilisée dans un nouvel appareil qui devait être aussi parfait que possible, plusieurs éléments vinrent brusquer les prévisions.

Le 26 novembre 1915, les Allemands attaquent à nouveau par vague gazeuse, au nord-ouest de Verdun, dans la région de Forges et de Béthincourt.

Cette attaque est renforcée par un bombardement d'obus chargés de palite (dérivé du phosgène, gaz toxique suffocant).

Il faut alors refaire les plans pour un masque adapté à cette menace nouvelle.

<http://www.querredesgaz.fr/index.htm>



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27 Nov 1915

Hell Freezes Over at Gallipoli: Blizzard in the Dardanelles

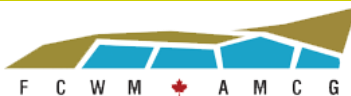


On 27 November, 1915, a violent blizzard hit the Dardanelles peninsula. Snow, hail and water swept through the trenches destroying fortifications and materiel.

Both the Turkish and Allied troops were unprepared for such inclement weather, and lacked any protective clothing.

Most of the Australian and New Zealander troops had never seen snow before, and were shocked to see men freeze to death, and loose limbs to frostbite.

After the storm abated, there were a total of 16,000 frostbite cases, and 280 men died as a direct result of the storm.



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27 novembre 1915

Moreau, Héroïne de France décorée de la Croix de guerre



Émilienne Moreau

Cette fille de mineur a 16 ans lorsque la guerre éclate. Dès septembre 1914, elle subit l'occupation allemande (Loos-en-Gohelle). Son père meurt de privations, son frère aîné est tué au front.

En 1915, les Highlanders du 9th Black Watch préparent une attaque près de Loos. Émilienne, qui a repéré les casemates des Allemands, va à la rencontre des Écossais et les prévient du piège tendu. Elle leur communique les informations sur les positions de défenses, leur permettant ainsi de les prendre à revers.

La maison des Moreau est transformée en poste médical. Durant vingt-quatre heures, Émilienne seconde un médecin écossais, aide à transporter les blessés et donne les premiers soins. Elle participe également aux combats, abattant quatre soldats ennemis. Finalement, la ville est reprise aux Allemands. Émilienne devient, à 17 ans, "l'héroïne de Loos" et est citée à l'ordre de l'armée par le général Foch. Elle est décorée avec honneur national à Versailles le **27 novembre 1915**.

Cette femme décorée aussi de la Military Medal, la Royal Red Cross, ainsi que l'ordre de Saint Jean de Jérusalem en plus haut lieu, s'avérera aussi une résistante remarquable avec France Libre, de 1940 à août 1944.

<http://www.archivespasdecalais.fr/Anniversaires/4-juin-1898-naissance-d-Emilienne-Moreau-Evrard-dite-Emilienne-la-Blonde-ou-Jeanne-Poirier>



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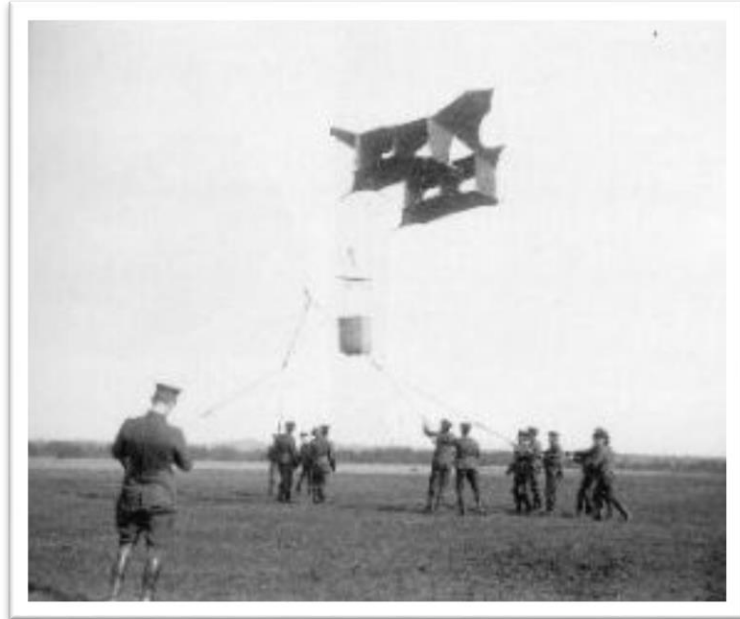
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28 novembre 1915

Le rôle des aérostats et cerf-volistes de guerre dans l'Armée française

Un aérostat est un aéronef « plus léger que l'air », dont la sustentation est assurée par son appesanteur, contrairement à un aérodyne qui est un appareil volant « lourd » (avion, planeur, hélicoptère) dont la sustentation est obtenue au moyen de forces aérodynamiques.

La 46ème compagnie d'**aérostats** devient une compagnie-école et s'installe au camp de Mailly. Cette compagnie a été créée le 8 août 1915, avec des éléments de la 39ème compagnie d'aérostats, dont certains **cerf-volistes**, sous le commandement du Capitaine Pierre Faure.



La Compagnie d'aérostats est la première unité aérienne du monde, créée le 2 avril 1794 en France, pour utiliser des aérostats comme ballons d'observation à des fins de renseignement militaire. L'aérostation a apporté une contribution à la réussite des opérations militaires lors de la Guerre de 14-18.

À priori, on pourrait penser que l'avion, en raison de la mobilité de l'engin et de sa possibilité de survoler les objectifs, offrait des conditions d'observation encore meilleures. Or, c'est l'immobilité des ballons et **cerfs-volants d'observation** qui constituait leur principal atout, en apportant la continuité de l'observation ainsi que la transmission immédiate et directe des renseignements au moyen de sa communication téléphonique avec le sol.

http://www.felix-peaucou.fr/carnet_de_guerre.html



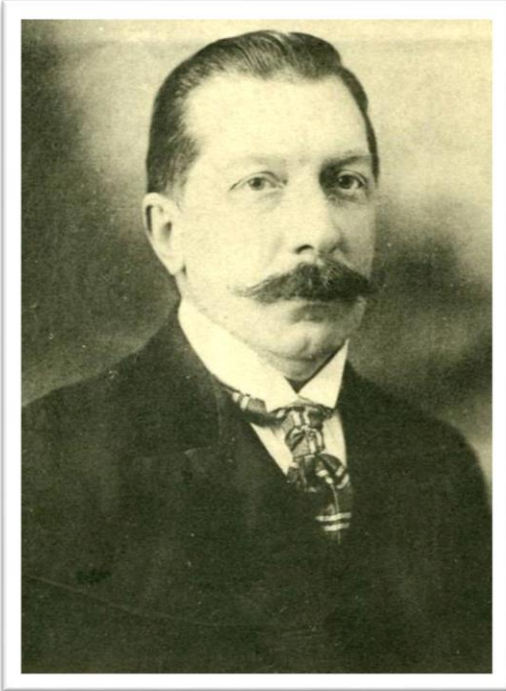
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29 November 1915

Secret Meeting in Zurich between deadly enemies Germany and Belgium



Professor Emile Waxweiler

On 29 November, 1915, Belgian and German envoys attended the second of four secret meetings in Zurich, Switzerland, to discuss the conditions for the cessation of war between the two nations.

King Albert of Belgium acknowledged, at this meeting, that he was willing to discuss the eventual termination of the status of 'neutral' for Belgium, but he was adamant that his country remain whole and sovereign after the War, with the return of the Monarchy.

The German representative, Count H.V. von Törring-Jettenbach, maintained that Belgium must renounce its neutrality; grant the German Army right of passage through its territory; the right to occupy designated points that were deemed critical to Germany's defence; that Germany would be extended economic and railway privileges within Belgium, and that certain frontier districts would be granted to Germany.

The Belgian envoy, **Professor Emile Waxweiler**, suggested that he was willing to convey these points to the King. This convinced Törring that Waxweiler could be moved to a pro-German position.

He arranged to meet Waxweiler again on 6 January 1916, to see if the Belgians would drop their neutrality and concede these demands for the sake of peace.

Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, Chap 7- 'The War Aims Policy of the Reich's Leaders, 1919,' p. 215-224.



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