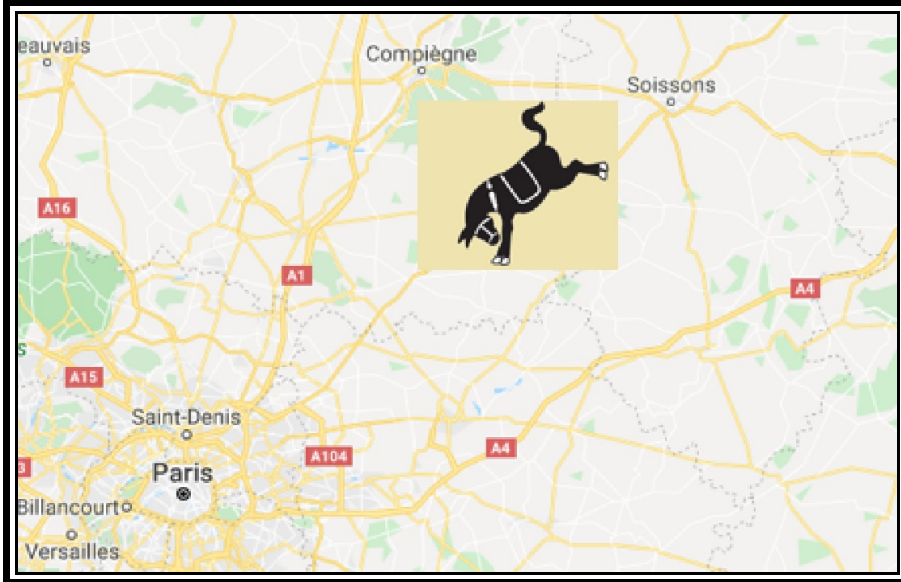


# Le 1er septembre 1914

## Une Ruade de Mule



### Entre Villers-Cotterêts et la Forêt de Compiègne

Le Corps expéditionnaire britannique se replie, poursuivi par le Première Armée allemande.

Le Maréchal French suit le plan du Général Joffre, qui dicte que toutes les armées doivent prendre une ligne de défense pour se retrouver bien coude-à-coude derrière la rivière Marne, entre Paris et Verdun, de sorte à ne pas laisser de fissure entre elles où l'avance allemande pourrait trouver un point faible.

Mais le retrait se fait sous contact, alors que le Général von Kluck, dans l'armée allemande la plus au nord, croit que les Anglais sont en déroute, et qu'il faut poursuivre à bride abattue l'arrière de leur dernier Corps.

Talonné de trop près, French décide qu'une action de blocage doit être improvisée par son arrière-garde entre Villers-Cotterêts et la Forêt de Compiègne, pour se donner du temps pour franchir la Marne tout juste à l'est de Paris, comme le désire Joffre.

Le coup s'avère une ruade de mule, qui frappe l'avant de von Kluck solidement et lui impose une halte.

Le BEF est sur l'extrême gauche de l'alignement des armées française en mouvement, mais pour la défense de Paris, Joffre a prévu la création d'une Sixième Armée française, qui a pris position au nord de la capitale et se terre sur la gauche.

— C'est une surprise que Joffre réserve à von Kluck, qui n'en a pas fini des ruades surprenantes.

•Tuchman, Guns of 1914, 400; Liddell Hart, Reputations, 100-1.



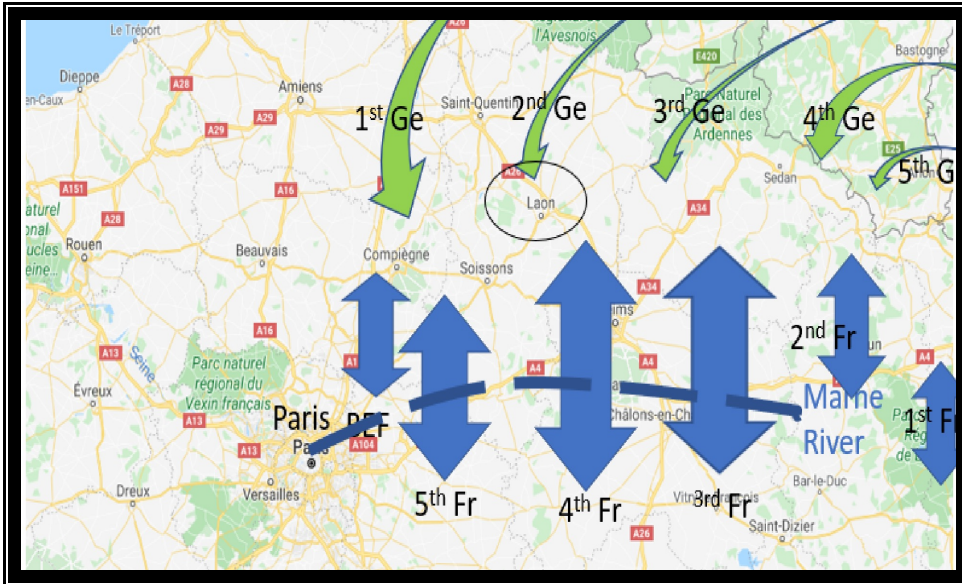
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# September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1914

## Withdrawing under contact



### The Loss of Laon on Sedan Day

On this day, **September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1914**, the 44<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Sedan (1870), which marked the end of the French Second Empire of Napoléon III, the German forces take the city of Laon, 80 km W of Sedan, after the major engagement of Saint-Quentin (The Battle of Guise) against French Fifth Army.

Their progress is continuing toward Paris while the French armies of the left are

withdrawing.

Fifth, Fourth and Third French armies and the BEF are withdrawing while still in contact, trying to delay the German advance with rear guards. The aim is to conform to Joffre's clear plan for a rally behind the River Marne and a consolidation there before a counter-attack toward the north, hitting the German armies in the face.

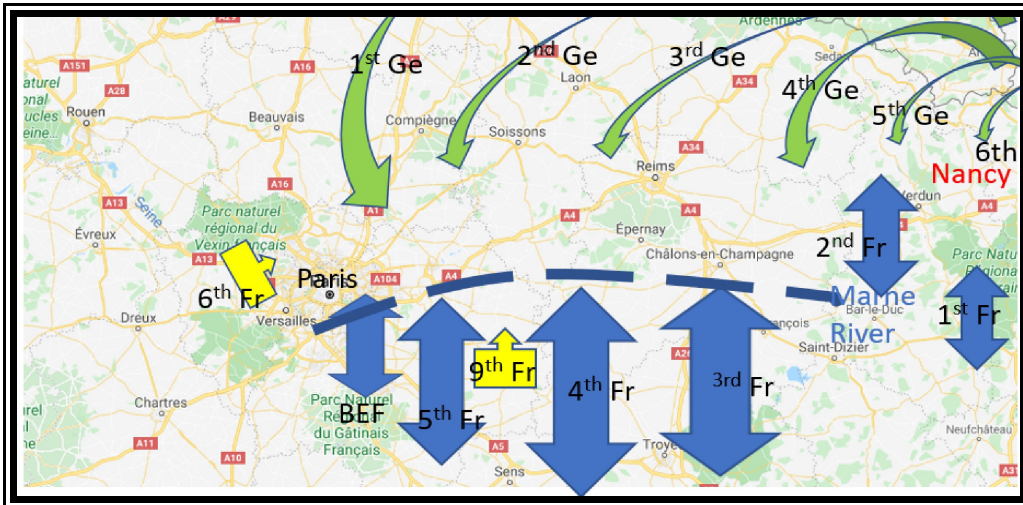
General Joffre is following his armies very closely, monitoring and orchestrating their movements from his Grand Headquarters, near Paris. The German armies are being coordinated from Koblenz, 500 km back, and do not have good radio or telephone communications with their Grand Headquarters, where General Moltke can barely follow what is happening.

— What is happening on the German side is not so good.

•Herwig, Marne 1914, Chap 5: «Squandered Climacterics», p. 159-90.

September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1914

## A Step Backward to Better Jump Forward



### The Crossing of the Marne

The BEF succeeds, on **September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1914**, to cross the Marne southward and go on for twelve more miles to take position at the extreme left of the line of armies that Général Joffre has called for.

Fifth French Army, next in line, is also crossing the Marne today so as to find some rest behind it to

reorganize. Its Commander, Lanzerac, who has led his army valiantly in the battle of Guise, is fired today by Joffre, unhappy with his attitude. One of his brilliant Corps Commanders, Franchet-d'Esperey, takes command.

What is happening on the German side is not yet evident. On their right wing, First German Army under von Kluck has now decided to wheel to the north of Paris rather than go around it by the west, where he was supposed to surround the capital and push the French armies east where they would run into the German left flank, as a hammer to their anvil.

Kluck has taken that decision because he sees that his soldiers are too tired to do the long wheel, and he also believes that the BEF and Fifth French Army that he has fought on the way, are scrambling away, disorganized and vulnerable. He does not know that Joffre has taken hold of them and reorganized, with the creation of a Sixth and Ninth armies, for his upcoming manoeuvre.

The German left is also in trouble. Fifth and Sixth German armies have launched attacks against the Grand Couronné and the Citadel of Nancy, defended by the French Second Army (Castelnau). Castelnau has been able to contain them and inflict heavy casualties.

Papa Joffre is indeed running the show very skilfully. And he now has two aces up his starry sleeve !

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●Herwig, Marne 1914, p. 205-17.



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# Le 4 septembre, 1914

## La Triple Entente s'Entend

### Triple Entente Declaration On No Separate Peace September 4, 1914

The undersigned duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments hereby declare as follows:—

«The British, French, and Russian Governments mutually engage not to conclude peace separately during the present war.

The three Governments agree that when terms of peace come to be discussed, no one of the Allies will demand terms of peace without the previous agreement of each of the other Allies.»

(Signed)

Paul Cambon, Count Benckendorff, Edward Grey

### Le Pacte de Londres

Depuis le début de la Guerre, seul le traité d'appui mutuel de 1891 entre la France et la Russie liait ces deux alliés contre l'Alliance Germanique de l'Allemagne et l'Autriche-Hongrie.

Malgré l'Entente Cordiale avec la France de mai 1903, et l'Entente Anglo-Russe de 1907, la Grande Bretagne n'avait jamais contracté d'alliance de guerre formelle avec l'un ou l'autre.

**Le 4 septembre 1914**, un mois après le début de la guerre, les trois Puissances signent une «**Déclaration contre une Paix Séparée**» par laquelle ils

s'engagent à ne pas considérer de pourparlers de paix sans l'accord des deux autres signataires.

Cette Entente, connue sous le nom de «**Pacte de Londres**», ou «**Traité de Londres**» lie la Grande Bretagne (et automatiquement, tout l'Empire britannique), la France et ses colonies, de même que la Russie, en une alliance formelle qui va être ratifiée pour durer cinq ans après avril 1916. Éventuellement, le Pacte de Londres va être élargi pour accepter d'autres Alliés, notamment l'Italie, en avril 1915.

Ce traité sera brisé par la Révolution russe, en novembre 1917, lorsque les Bolchéviques dénonceront et rejeteront l'engagement pris par le régime Tsariste.

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● Louis L. Snyder., Historic Documents of World War I (London, Toronto: Nostrand, 1958). p. 117, «From Great Britain, Collected Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War (London 1915), p. 264. This document is No. 160 quoted from the French Yellow Book.



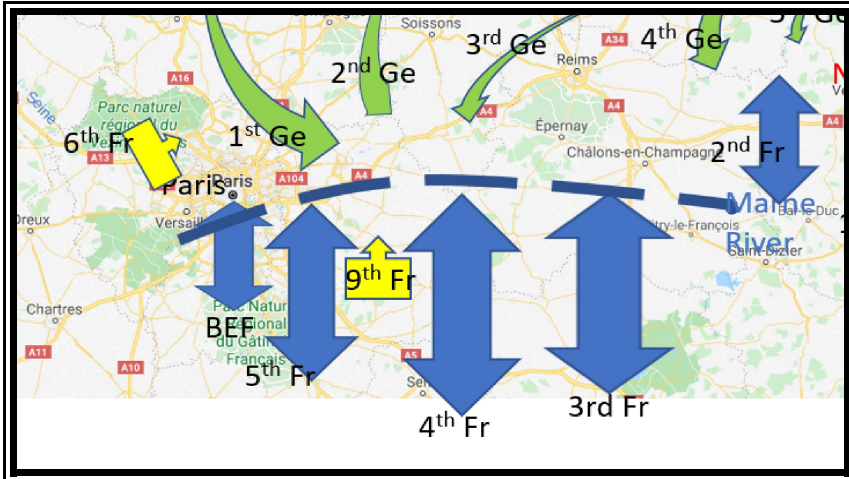
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# September 5, 1914

## «By the Left!»



## The Battle of the Marne 5-11 September 1914

Général Joffre's operation for a counter-offensive from behind the Marne river starts on **September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914**.

The five armies lined up from Paris to Verdun behind three tributaries to the Marne, the Grand Morin, the Petit Morin, and the Ornain, start advancing to push those German elements that have crossed the Marne.

The operation is marked by two features that have crucial influence on

the outcome. First, the First German Army under General Kluck, tasked with protecting the right flank of the spearhead Second Army, cuts in too far before the Second Army, creating a clash between them. Kluck will have to back out, losing momentum and hurting the morale of his tired troops who have to countermarch. Second, Kluck, in doing so, exposes his flank to the new and unsuspected Sixth French Army (Galliéni) concealed in Paris, which is tasked to attack him tomorrow morning.

Although a first clash takes place today between advanced guard of Sixth and the flank protection of First, the shuffling and slowing down of First German Army will expose it to severe damage and disorganization.

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●Herwig, Marne 1914, Chap. 7: «To the Marne», p. 191-224; ●Tuchman, Guns of August, Chap 21: «Von Kluck's Turn», 395-412; Lloyd George, Memoirs, III, p. 1404; Barnett, The Swordbearers, Chap 4, p. 81-119.



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# September 6, 1914

## The Need of the Moment



### French Military Justice

On the morning of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1914, Général Joffre is throwing the dice for the survival of France as a free country. Sixth French Army is coming out of hiding in Paris and attacking the right flank of First German Army, which is caught at a moment where its position in regard to the Second German Army is being over-corrected.

He is also pushing the five armies across the River Marne to inflict damage on Second and Third German armies. This is an ultimate effort on which everything hinges. Paris, where the Government has now moved to Bordeaux, must be defended.

In the knowledge that soldiers are extremely tired by the last month of fighting and hasty marching in the retreat, Joffre obtains from the Government that local commanders be empowered to adjudicate military justice in a drastic way, so as to prevent any loss of discipline in

the ranks.

The Government agrees that the moment justifies principles of martial law that fly in the face of all French liberal traditions. Officers will be authorized to condemn defaulters to death with executions within 24 hours, without recourse to circumstantial evidence, appeal, or usual standards of proof. The military justice system is thrown out of balance by the requirement for immediate examples. Joffre is adamant:

**«An army which can no longer advance must at all costs keep the ground it has won, and allow itself to be killed on the spot rather than give away. In the present circumstances, no faltering can be tolerated.»<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> ● TIMES History of the War, II: 55. See also: ● Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane, et Jean-Jacques Becker (sous la direction de), Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre, 1914-1918 – Histoire et Culture (Bayard, 2004), p. 301; ● Général André Bach, Fusillés pour l'exemple, 1914-1915, (Paris: Tallandier, 2003); ● André Loez, « Passés par les armes », Histoire, Oct 10, #357, p. 88.



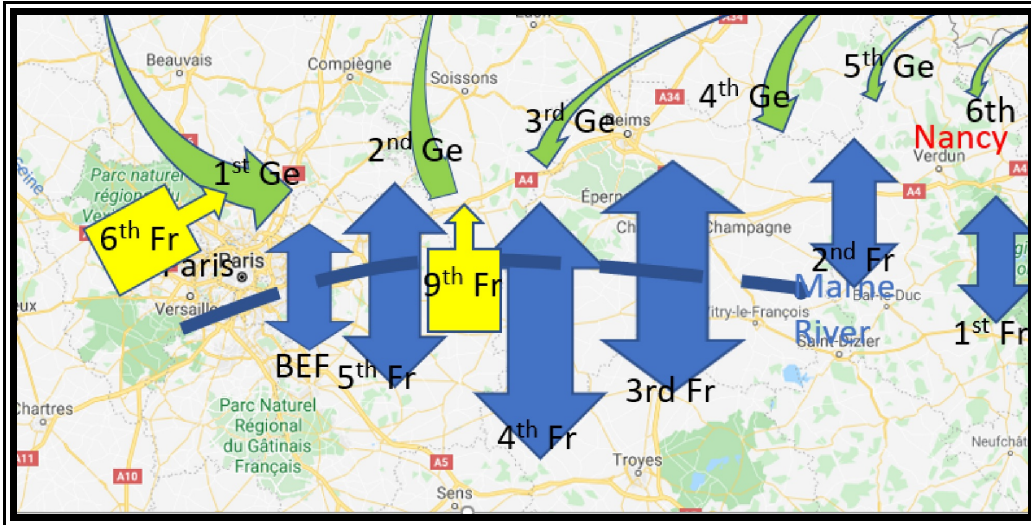
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# September 7, 1914

## Too Much for the Boss



### Moltke's Collapse

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1914, the situation has turned to the favor of the French. Général Manoury's Sixth Army has crossed the Ourcq River and has inflicted such damage on the German First Army that von Kluck had to move the flank defences from his left to the right.

Second German Army has been pushed by Fifth and Ninth Armies so

much that it is retreating, losing touch with First Army.

A wide gap is developing between First and Second German armies. The BEF and Fifth French Army are entering this gap, threatening to round both armies.

In Luxemburg, at the Imperial Headquarters, the Chief of the General Staff, Général Moltke, can only follow the progress hours behind, because of inadequate radio communications. But on this day, he suddenly understands the gravity of the error that was made by his armies. The shock gives him a nervous breakdown. This is the hour where Emperor Wilhelm II, the self-proclaimed «Supreme Warlord» might have stepped in to regain control.

— Wilhelm proves incapable of stabilizing the situation. The German military leadership is now in crisis.

•Herwig, The Marne 1914, p. 249-61; Cowles, The Kaiser, p. 358.



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# September 8, 1914

## Beaucoup d'Appelés



NAC-c- 38116

### Valcartier

The Canadian Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, has taken charge of the formation of a Canadian expeditionary Force since the beginning of the War. His first decision was to scrap all plans for mobilisation that existed for the Canadian Militia. Rather than calling up units, where the numbers of Volunteers for service overseas might be partial, he called Colonels of regiments to prepare Volunteer contingents and send them to Valcartier, near Québec City.

Québec City has the great advantage of being a port near the Atlantic with a good network of railroads, to carry men and

supplies from across the country. The area of Valcartier, near the Jacques-Cartier River, is also linked to the port by rail, so that embarkation can be done smoothly.

**On 8 September 1914**, there are 32,449 military personnel on parade at Valcartier, where a field division with its modest field artillery, engineers and services is being prepared. The departing contingent is to have some 30,000 men.

Although soldiers are to be grouped in new numbered battalions without regimental affiliations, some regiments came with so many of their own that they were able to almost fill units. Many numbered battalions will be recognized as having precise origin from somewhere in Canada. But more than half of the men were born in the British Isles.

—But there is not a French Canadian unit among them. The thousand or so French Canadians were integrated into many units, some of which had distinct English, Scottish or even Irish traditions.

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●Duguid, Colonel A. Fortescue, Official History of The Canadian Forces in The Great War 1914-1919. The Record of Five Years of Active Service. General Series, Volume 1: From the Outbreak of War to the formation of the Canadian Corps, August 1914 to September 1915. (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 1938). Separate book, Chronology, Appendices and Maps (1938).



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# Le 9 septembre, 1914

## *Volte Face!*



### Le Miracle de la Marne

Le 8 septembre 1914, la progression des armées françaises devient évidente et très encourageante pour les fantassins à pied. Ils ont marché des frontières à l'est jusque derrière la Marne à l'ouest, mais la poussée dans la contre-attaque devient ailée lorsque le succès se manifeste. Les armées françaises infligent des pertes énormes et reprennent du terrain perdu. C'est une avance à l'emporte-pièce.

Du côté allemand, le Haut Commandement n'a trouvé rien de mieux que de confier à un lieutenant-colonel de

l'état-major général Renseignement, au GQG de Luxembourg, la mission d'aller rencontrer, en automobile, chacun des commandants d'armée et de leur faire accepter, en plein combat, un plan commun de retrait pour refermer les brèches et solidifier une défense. Ceci mène à une décision hâtive, orchestrée par un officier dont la responsabilité est écrasante.

Le Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Hentsch réussit à faire accepter aux 'Colonels-Généraux' en charge des armées une esquisse de plan pour se retirer en bon ordre derrière la Rivière Aisne, sur la ligne COMPIÈGNE-SOISSONS-REIMS.

Il s'agit là de l'abandon complet de l'espoir du plan Schlieffen pour les Allemands.

— Leur campagne-éclair a échoué.

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●A.J.P. Taylor, *The First World War*, 34; ●Churchill, *World Crisis*, III(1), 200; ●Goerlitz, *History of the German general Staff*, 158-62; ●Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, p. 34; Farrar-Hockley, *Death of an Army*, 24.



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# September 10, 1914

## The Attention Turns to Flanking

### The Race to the Sea

In the pursuit by the French armies after the German armies, in the retreat from the Battle of the River Marne, a new issue rapidly develops. Each side attempts to round the enemy on the north side. Joffre even sends the Second French Army from his Right wing to his Left wing to achieve a successful encirclement to the north of the foremost northerly German army.

This repeated movement, in the successive regions of Picardie, Artois and Flanders, of a race to round the opponent to reach his rear by the empty side, and the counter-movement to block this attempt and try a similar rounding in return, creates what will later be called the «**Race to the Sea**».

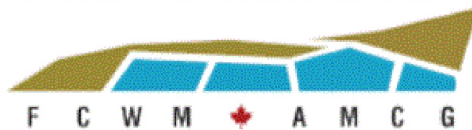
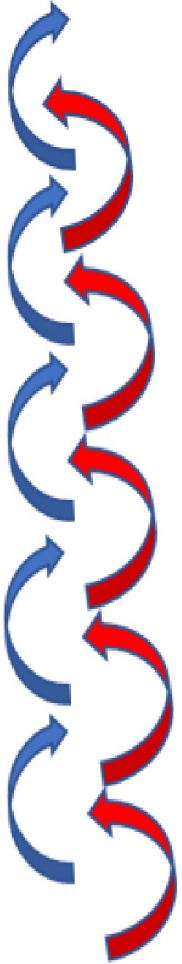
As long as there is still vacant space on the north side of the facing armies, these armies race to make sure that the enemy will not cross a line.

With the stalemate that will develop where the German armies of the Marne will dig in their defensive positions, at the river Aisne, and with the 'race to the Sea' establishing a line of defence to the north as far as the English Channel, the lines of defence will develop, leading to the static trench warfare that will take place for the rest of the war all along that line.

The Belgian army, initially retired to Antwerp, will move to northern France and occupy the ground behind the Belgium frontier.

The story of the next four years is developing at the speed of galloping horses, as the cavalry is repeatedly sent ahead to seize the ground and hold it until the arrival of the marching infantry.

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●Captain C.T. Atkinson, «Artois, the Battles of», Encyclopaedia Britannica, XIIth Ed. (1922), Vol. 30, p. 264-74, see p. 265; ●Keegan, The First World War, p. 131; ●Farrar-Hockley, The Death of an Army, Chap 3: «The Glorious Enterprise», 38-72.



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# September 11, 1914

## France Pulled Out of the Jaws of Defeat



### Papa Joffre Brings a Miracle

On 11 Septembre 1914, Général Joseph Joffre sends out his General Order to the Troops, giving them an account of what was accomplished during the Battle of the Marne. Paris was saved because they had fought beyond exhaustion to repulse the invader.

Within one hour of the publication of the General Order to the troops, all France was rejoicing at the success, after 41 days of intense fear. People in Paris had heard the German guns and were fearful that the history of 1870-1871 was going to be repeated. The news of the victory from Joffre himself prompted the headlines on **The Miracle of the Marne!**

In the words of the TIMES foreign correspondent in Dijon,

« It was the first real success of the war, the first time since its very early days that the French had begun to lose the feeling of apprehension produced in their minds by the steady retreat of the Allied troops from the Belgian frontier, after the battles of Charleroi and Mons. Even the officers at Dijon were affected by it. Up till then, though they spoke confidently enough of eventual success, the subject uppermost in their minds and their conversation was the wonderful perfection of the German organization. That was a nightmare which they had not so far been able to shake off. Now suddenly it was gone. In a day it had become evident that France and England had their organization as well as the common enemy, and that the strategy of the Allied forces was beginning at last to tell.»

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●TIMES History of the War, Vol. 2, Chap XXXII: «The Battles of the Marne», p. 41-80, quote p. 70-1.



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# Le 12 septembre, 1914

## La Menace de nulle Part

### La Milice Canadienne au Pays

Le contingent canadien de 30,000 hommes qui se prépare à Valcartier va inclure quatre brigades, plutôt que les trois brigades prévues dans les tables des effectifs de l'Armée britannique. C'est que le ministre Sam Huges désire inclure dès le départ des troupes de réserve qui pourront remplacer les effectifs au fur et à mesure que les besoins se feront sentir.

Au même moment, 9,000 membres de la Milice canadienne qui ne se sont pas portés volontaires pour le Corps Expéditionnaire ou dont le service a été refusés, sont quand même employés pour la défense du territoire canadien. Il y a en fait des demandes qui parviennent de partout au Canada, qui font état de craintes que des éléments subversifs, supportés par des sources germanophiles, fassent des coups de main pour nuire à la participation canadienne à la guerre. Plusieurs de ces craintes sont toutefois exprimées par des miliciens qui veulent être mobilisés pour un service rémunéré,

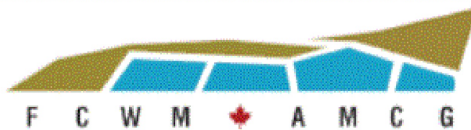
ou des hommes de métiers et contracteurs, qui veulent ainsi profiter de budgets neufs.

Mais le sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires Extérieures, **Sir Joseph Pope**, soumet à la mi-août un rapport au premier ministre à l'effet qu'il faudrait considérer qu'il pourrait y avoir des groupes d'hommes armés, motivés par des affections irlandaises ou allemandes, qui pourraient envahir le Canada des États-Unis et y faire des méfaits.

Le Commissaire en chef de la Police du Dominion ainsi que le Chef de l'état-major de la Milice, s'évertueront à tenter de minimiser ces craintes, fondées sur nulle évidence.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que pendant de longs mois à venir, beaucoup de Canadiens répèteront leurs craintes aux Membres de la Chambre des Communes et aux journaux, et que jusqu'à 16,000 hommes de la Milice canadienne agiront comme gardes auprès des points vitaux et comme troupes d'intervention en cas de raids de malfaiteurs.

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●Granatstein, Broken Promises, p. 51; ●Maurice Pope, Letters from the Front 1914-1919, (Toronto: 1996).



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# September 13, 1914

## Some Place to Hide and Hold



### The Aisne River

A map study of Champagne suggests rapidly that the perfect location for the German armies to withdraw from the Marne River is the north side of the Marne River, at 50 km.

Historian C.R.M.F. Cruttwell has described well the geographic advantage:

«The Aisne, particularly between Soissons and Berry-au-Bac has been truly described as the great natural bastion of northern France. It is flanked on the north-west by great forests, and on the south-east by the hills of Rheims, which in turn connect with the naked chalk glacis of the Champagne pouilleuse, itself joined on to the tumbled wooded heights of the Argonne. The hills on the north bank not only dominate the country southward, but throw out such a multitude of curving spurs and shoulders towards the river as to dislocate and throw out of direction any general attack on the crest.»

On 13 September 1914, the Germans take full advantage of the long fields of observation and fire to the south to start digging in and hold the River against the French armies and BEF. — They will be there for a long time!

<sup>1</sup> Cruttwell, A History of the Great War, p. 35-6.



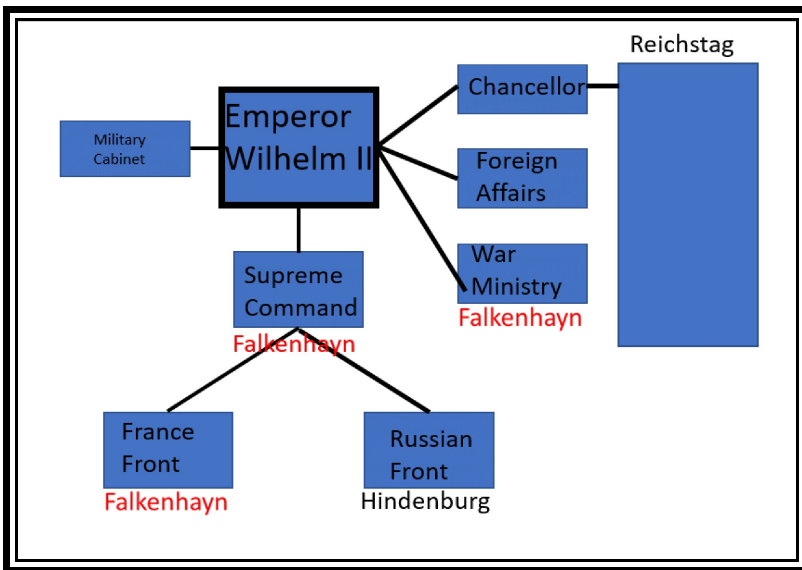
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# September 14, 1914

## A New Broom Goes West



### General Erich von Falkenhayn as Army Chief of Staff

The reverse of the German armies in the Marne has important consequences on the organization of the High Command.

General Moltke's declaration to the Kaiser, in a fit of nerve:

« **Your Majesty, we have lost the war!** », discredited him as the Chief of the German General Staff.

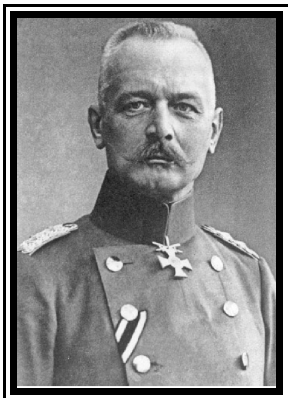
His replacement became an immediate necessity that could not be revealed to the public. **General Erich von Falkenhayn**, the War Minister, was therefore secretly appointed Quarter-

Master General (the CGGS's deputy), cumulating the two functions.

This situation will be fraught with consequences. Falkenhayn immediately resolves to move the Supreme Headquarters from Luxemburg to Charleville and Mézière, to be nearer the France Front.

This makes a reorganization of the German High Command that definitely shifts the weight to the West side, leaving the Russian Front as a secondary matter. Falkenhayn is now *de facto* Minister of War, acting CGGS, and Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front, irremediably orienting the High Command toward the French theatre of operations.

— This will create a sour frustration in Prussia where Hindenburg is dealing with the growing Russian threat, and a pressing need to shift more forces from West to East.



•Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, p. 303; Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff*, p. 113.

# Le 15 septembre, 1914

## L'Abandon de la Stratégie d'Annihilation



### La Guerre des Tranchées

Pour un court moment, il semble que Falkenhayn ait bien eu l'intention de reprendre une guerre de manoeuvre. Il entrevoyait la reprise de l'offensive dans le secteur de CAMBRAI-VERDUN.

Par contre, lorsque l'état-major lui a fait comprendre qu'une telle offensive nécessiterait des replis dans d'autres secteurs du front, il a pris la décision d'ordonner la construction de positions de défense le long de la ligne NOYON-REIMS-VERDUN.

Avec cette décision, toute la théorie de «l'annihilation» (*Vernichtungsstrategie*) à laquelle toute une génération d'officiers allemands avait été rompue, a été abandonnée et la période de la guerre des tranchées a commencé.

Selon les mots de Herbert Rosinski, un des meilleurs penseurs de la stratégie moderne allemande:

**« Si le 9 septembre 1914, le commandement allemand a subi le revers marquant de son plan de campagne, c'est le 15 du mois, le matin que Falkenhayn a décidé contre un retour à la stratégie mobile des premières semaines, qui doit être considéré le vrai point tournant de la guerre. »<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Rosinski, German Army, (Washington, Rev. Ed.1944), p. 91, quoted in Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945 (OUP, 1964), p. 301.



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# September 16, 1914

## A Reserve in Case



### A Sixth Division for the BEF

Recruitment still goes on in Great Britain, and the BEF is getting replacements and additions after the heavy losses incurred in the retreat from the battles of the Frontier, particularly at Mons, Le Cateau, and the Forest of Compiègne, in August, and in the Battle of the Marne, in early September.

The British Expeditionary Force, **on 16 September 1914**, is in the area of Fismes, on the south side of the Aisne River, between the Sixth and Fifth French armies. It is facing the yet to become famous «Chemin des Dames» between Compiègne and Soissons, the

road developed under Louis XV for his daughters to travel from Versailles to the home of one of his mistresses in Vauclair.

The Chemin des Dames marks the line of defence where the German armies are digging in, all along the north high ridge of the Aisne river. Their heavy artillery and machine-gun fire has now convinced Joffre that his main strategy will be not to attack those positions from the front, but to round those defences by the north-west. The BEF for now will stay put where it stands.

A Sixth Division arrives on this day to complete a third two-division corps in the BEF. 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Brigades arrive with 2<sup>nd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Artillery Brigades (18-pounders) and 12<sup>th</sup> Artillery Brigade (Howitzers).

— The British Secretary of State for War is already hard at work to create new armies: The Kitchener's armies.

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● TIMES History of the War, Vol. II, Chap XXXIV: The Battle of the Aisnes», p. 121-72; photo p. 134: «German guns captured by the British». ● Lord Kitchener's Speech on the Military Situation in the House of Lords, 17 Sep 1914, in Le Bas, Kitchener.



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# September 17, 1914

## A Definite Turn in Prospects



### The Race to the Sea (17 Sep - 17 Nov)

The Battle of the Marne, which finished on September 10, continued in what is called the Battle of the Aisne, which covers the retreat of the German armies and their taking of the position behind the Aisne River. The French armies and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) took position to the south of the Aisne River and started artillery bombardments that were matched by the Germans. With their better position and their superior artillery when it came to bombardment, the new German position was unassailable. From Soissons to the Swiss frontier, the front now stabilized.

What came next was the «**Race to the Sea**». Commanders on both sides reorganized their forces so as to free formations to go block the empty space to the west and north of Compiègne and try to round the opponent.

This is a turning point of the War. The line of trenches is being extended and consolidated across France, rush by rush.

The next two months will be occupied by the great challenge of providing troops to run ahead and defend the towns and cities that will become so familiar in the next years, where so much fighting will take place, in particular for the British, whose armies will occupy most of the north, as they will develop in size and numbers.

The Race to the Sea is a less popular period of the First World War as the action is difficult to follow from day to day. — However, it is no less dramatic and no less important.

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● TIMES History of the War, II, Chap XLI: «The French Offensive from the Aisne to Ypres», p. 477-508. ● Captain C.T. Atkinson, «Artois, the Battles of», Encyclopaedia Britannica, XIIth Ed. (1922), Vol. 30, p. 264-74; Farrar-Hockley, Death of an Army, «A Difficult situation», p. 25-37.



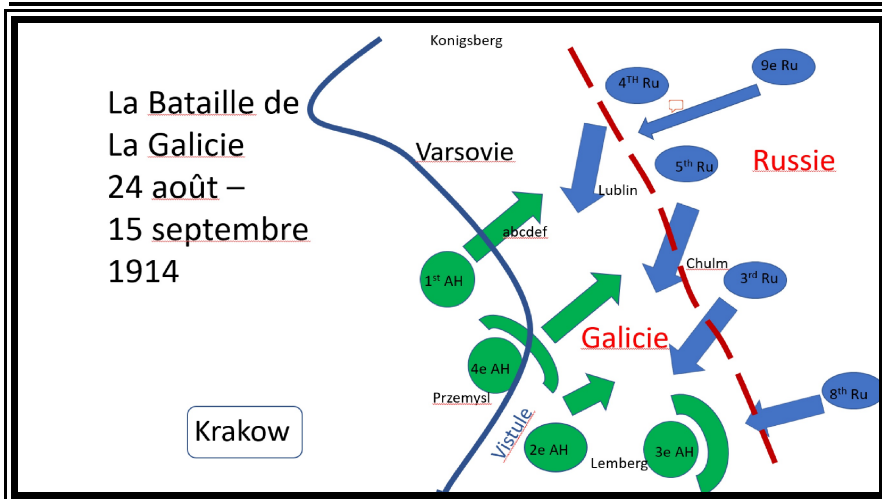
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# Le 18 septembre, 1914

## Défaite des Austro-Hongrois



### La bataille de la Galicie

(24 août - 18 septembre)

Pendant que se déroulent les batailles de la Marne, en France, de la Serbie, et de la Prusse orientale, la province de Galicie, à l'extrême Est de l'Autriche-Hongrie (en Pologne et Ukraine modernes), est aussi un lieu de «Bataille de Frontières» le long des frontières russes.

Tel qu'il s'est produit sur le Front Nord-Ouest, contre la Prusse orientale, le Front Sud Ouest russe

a aussi lancé cinq armées contre l'Autriche-Hongrie, pour retenir les armées de L'Alliance germanique du théâtre de guerre en France.

Le but des armées russes est de saisir Lemberg, la capitale de la Galicie, et de là, repousser les armées de l'Autriche-Hongrie vers Krakow, de sorte à les distancer de la force allemande de Prusse orientale, au nord du fleuve Vistule, à Königsberg.

Le général Conrad, de l'Autriche-Hongrie, n'entend pourtant pas défendre. Il passe à l'attaque dans l'intention de prendre Lublin et Chulm, à l'intérieur du territoire russe, et joindre la Huitième Armée allemande dans le nord.

Une bataille de trois semaines se termine le **18 septembre 1914**, où se sont opposées neuf armées en mouvement. Des combats terribles, où l'Autriche-Hongrie a perdu 350,000 hommes, résultent en la perte de Lemberg et en une retraite jusqu'à la Forteresse de Przemysl, derrière la Vistule.

— Il s'agit d'un coup terrible pour les Autrichiens-Hongrois, dont la bataille de Serbie a aussi mal tourné.

- Hew Strachan, The First World War, Vol I: To Arms, Chap 4: «The Eastern Front», p. 281-373, map 11, 12 and 13;
- Keegan, WW1, map p. 143.



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# September 19, 1914

## A Small Man Standing Tall



### David Lloyd George's Speech at Queen's Hall

The Chancellor of the Exchequer of the British Government, David Lloyd George, addresses the people of the British Isles, and the world, from a rostrum in the beautiful Queen's Hall of London, built in 1893 and destroyed by incendiary bombs in 1941.

Although looking after finances, the 51 years old Welsh minister of the Crown is the best orator in Britain at the time. His speech on **19 September 1914** is a rousing statement on why the British Government is right in having declared

war to Germany and to have stood on the side of France and Russia.

The main part of that speech is why Great Britain has insisted in holding to the sanctity of the 1837 Treaty, now called « a scrap of paper » by the Germans, giving Belgium its independence from any major Power in Europe. That treaty, he reveals, was the very reason why the Prussians did not allow the French to withdraw into Belgium when they were cornered in Sedan, in 1870, and why the French had not forced their way in, despite the fact that it was their last resort for not losing the war. The German armies have now burned their path through Belgium to bear war to France.

The great orator also goes into other aspects of German policy that do not make sense, and are motivated by a culture of militarism that the Kaiser has developed as a trait of his personality, with a « Philosophy of Blood and Iron » that men that he has himself placed in high office have chosen to adopt as a faith.

— This is a superb example of a small man standing tall, and soaring above the crowd with the power of his words.

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See full speech at • <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015062996643&view=1up&seq=12>



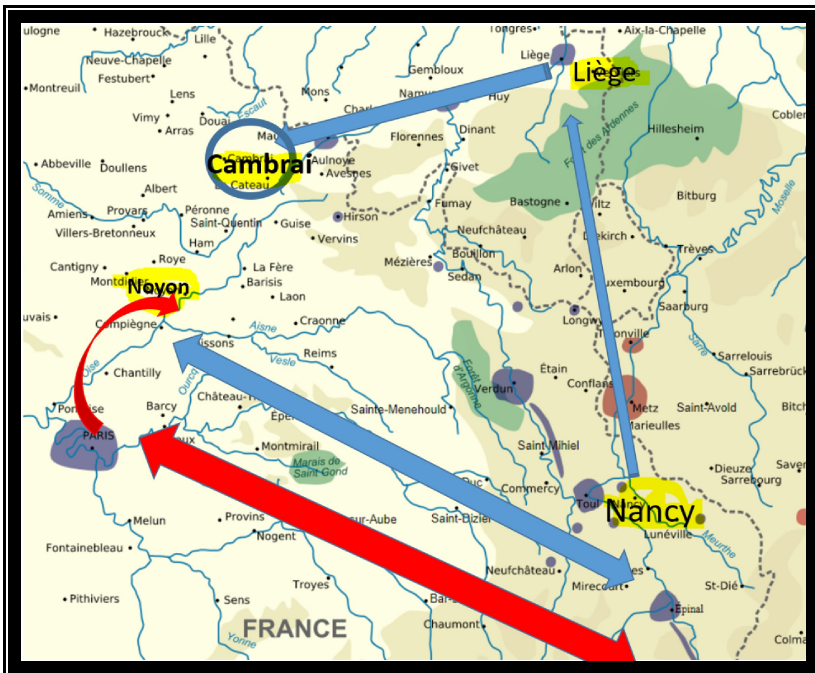
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**September 20, 1914**

*Flanc Gauche! – Rechte Flanke!*



## The Armies of the Flanks

In their advance, the Germans did not have good lines of communications to go further to their right than the path followed by Von Kluck's First Army when it emerged from Belgium. Kluck marched from Mons to Saint-Quentin to Compiègne, then turned left before Paris to reach the Marne.

This allowed a great void in Picardie, Artois and Flanders, that the French covered only with the bare minimum of local militias.

However, Joffre now wants to use that void to round the Germans by the north and destroy their right wing. Conversely, Falkenhayn wants to use the long railroad via Liège to Cambrai to

outflank the French and complete the task of surrounding Paris, which was not achieved in the first attempt.

On **20 September 1914**, Joffre has called upon Général Castelnau, the commander of the Second French Army, which fought so hard to prevent the advance of the army of Bavarian Prince Rupprecht against the city of Nancy, in the south. The Castelnau's army is being reconstructed on the left of the French line and tasked to move north along the Oise River to Noyon, to attack the German line along the Aisne.

Meanwhile, the Germans are thinking on the same lines. They have ordered Sixth Army under Prince Rupprecht to move by train as fast as possible from Nancy to Liège then to Cambrai, so as to round the French by the north.

— Castelnau and Rupprecht will meet again on the flanks. Again, it will not be pretty.

-----  
●Major-General Sir John Humphrey Davidson, KCMG, CB, DSO, MP, and Captain C.T. Atkinson, « Artois, The Battles in», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition (1922), Vol. 30, pp. 264-81, see Part A- «First Battle of Arras (Sep 30-Oct 8, 1914,» p.264-8.



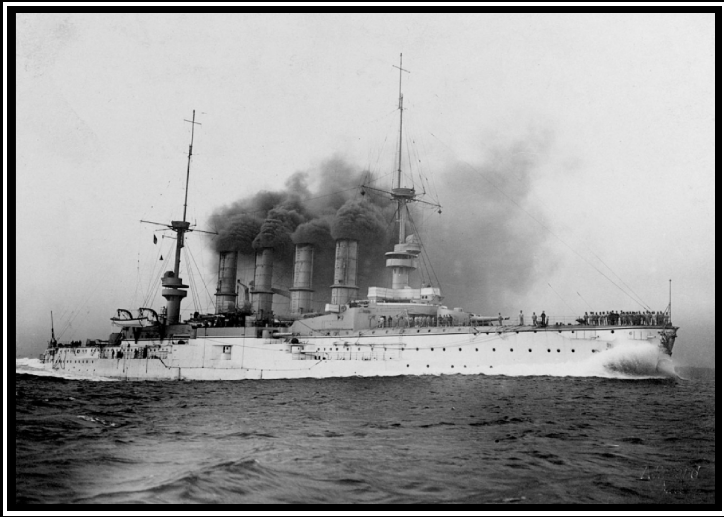
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**September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1914**

## **Lost in the Fog of War with No Horn**



### ***Scharnhorst and Gneisenau***

When the war started, at the end of July, the German East Asia Squadron was attached to the Chinese port of Tsingtao. Its main battleships were *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Emden*, *Nürnberg*, and *Leipzig*.

Due to the threat from Royal Navy ships in the Pacific, the Squadron under Vice Admiral Maximilian von Spee left port to disappear among the small Pacific islands. The squadron's orders were to disrupt allied naval operations and commercial shipping wherever possible, giving Admiral Spee full freedom to run operations as he saw fit.

Von Spee knows that there is at least one enemy battleship in the area which is capable of sinking his whole squadron signehandedly. The battle-cruiser *Australia*, with 12-inch guns, is looking for him. The British and French China fleet have closed the usual home ports of China, cutting the usual supply points. The Japanese have also joined the war on the British side, in August. They will open fire on sight.

Von Spree is now caught in a cat-and-mouse chase in the Pacific. He is determined to do as much damage as possible to enemy outposts and coaling stations. His communications with Germany are very bad.

**On 21 September 1914**, the squadron attacks Papete, the capital of the French Polynesian islands, in view of taking coal. In the battle, they sink the French gunboat *Zélee*, but cannot succeed in coaling as the port is blocked by mines.

— Admiral von Spee is faced with a very difficult situation. He is navigating in the Fog of War with no horn...

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●Cruttwell, *Great War*, Chap VII: «The Fortunes of Admiral Von Spee», p. 115-36; Wikipedia, «SMS Scharnhorst».



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# Le 22 septembre, 1914

## Troisième Dimension Navale



### Une première altercation sousmarine

La Marine britannique possède des renseignements sur les sous-marins allemands et la menace qu'ils posent pour le trafic maritime de la Manche. Des patrouilles cherchent à repérer leurs mouvements et poser des mines aux endroits les plus susceptibles de les intercepter.

Au début de la guerre, le danger des vaisseaux de surface est toutefois considéré plus grave, particulièrement de la part des *destroyers*, ces vaisseaux torpilleurs rapides qui cherchent à frapper

les gros cuirassiers et croiseurs.

Les champs de mines sont toutefois encore insuffisants et le potentiel des submersibles se révèle le **22 septembre 1914** lorsque le U-9, commandé par le téméraire *Käpitanleutnant* Otto Weddigen, attaque une flottille de croiseurs armés britanniques qui se sont aventurés en Mer du Nord, trop près des côtes allemandes. Le U-9 coûte trois navires en quelques minutes, le *Aboukir*, *Hogue* et *Cressy*, causant la perte de 1,459 vies.

Un enquête de l'Amirauté révèle que les patrouilleurs s'étaient trop exposés en ne suivant pas la consigne de zig-zag dans leur progression, et que deux navires avaient été torpillés pendant qu'ils procédaient au sauvetage du *Aboukir*.

Cette première altercation navale crée un frisson d'effroi envers la menace sousmarine. À un moment où plusieurs nations considèrent encore leur alliance, la Royal Navy perd de sa prédominance.

— La Troisième Dimension devient soudainement un facteur gaudiose dans la guerre navale.

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●Wikipedia, 'Action of the 22 September 1914' ; Strachan, *The First World War*, Vol. 1, p. 419.



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# September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1914

## Quebec City



### The Embarkation of the CEF

On **September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1914**, the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) starts to embark on the ships to go overseas. The Force assembled in Valcartier, near Québec City, is being transported by trains to the port on the St. Lawrence, and loaded on troop transports gathered for the task.

The Main Convoy will, in the end, comprise 1,547 officers and 29,070 men, an increase of 6,000 over the plan proposed to the Minister of Militia, Sam Huges, just five days before.

The shipment also includes 7,679 horses, 70 guns, 110 motor vehicles, 705 horse-drawn vehicles and 82 bicycles.

On the same day, in Ottawa, a Motor Machine Gun Brigade, raised by private donors, and commanded by Major Raymond Brutinel, is being saluted before its departure to board ship from Montreal to join the convoy.

An Advanced Party consisting of Minister Sam Huges, Colonel John Carson, the Commanding Officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Grenadier Guards, and a retinue of Aide-de-camps for the newly named British commander for the First Canadian Division, General Alderson, as well as soldiers in civilian dress, will depart on a faster passenger ship from New York.

— The First Canadian Division will arrive in the Salisbury Plains training camp, in England, in October.

-----  
●Duguid, Colonel A. Fortescue, Official History of The Canadian Forces in The Great War 1914-1919. The Record of Five Yeas of Active Service. General Series, Volume 1: From the Outbreak of War to the formation of the Canadian Corps, August 1914 to September 1915. (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 1938).●Crawford, Salisbury Plains, p. 27.



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# September 24, 1914

## Apostle of the machine-Gun

### A Man by the name of Brutinel

With the departure of the Canadian Expeditionary Force for overseas, a strange organization joined it, with the assent of Minister of Militia, Sam Huges. Huges had met Sir Clifford Sifton, a powerful politician from the west, as early as August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Sifton had recommended a new type of machine-gun unit mounted on trucks, that could move at high speed on the battlefield and provide machine-gun fire from the vehicles. The idea had pleased the minister, especially after he had read a paper presented by the commander of this 'Brigade,' Raymond Brutinel, which described the vehicles as much more than armored cars. In fact Huges was so impressed by the paper that he decided to increase the number of machine-guns allotted to the infantry.

Brutinel was quite unknown in the Canadian Militia. He was a citizen of France who had moved to Canada in 1905, and interested himself in various spheres related to mining. He ended up in Edmonton where he connected with Sir Clifford, a former minister under both the Laurier Liberals and Borden Conservatives. His innovative ideas about the mobile use of machine-guns came from his service in the French army (where this was never seen), and while reading conjectural musings of

forward-thinking dreamers.

Brutinel established links with companies in United States that produced the Colt machine-guns and trucks that could be modified with steel plating so as to stop bullets. The most advanced idea that would emerge from the project was the notion of indirect MG fire, that is, a high descending cone of bullets from multiple guns under cover that could be directed by an observer of the target with a telephone, as was done in the artillery.

— Brutinel will spend the whole war with the CEF, never ceasing to develop MG techniques to great credit.

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●Pulsifer, Cameron, "Canada's First Armoured Unit: Raymond Brutinel and the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigades of the First World War", Canadian Military History, 10:1 (Winter 2001), pp. 44-57. Available at ScholarsCommons@Laurier.ca: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh/vol10/iss1/5>



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September 25, 1914

## A British General for the Canadian division



### Major-General E.A.H. Alderson

The Governor General of Canada, the Duke of Connaught, has informed the Government of Canada that the Imperial Minister of War, Field Marshal Horatio Kitchener, has appointed Major General E[dwin] A[lfred] H[ervey] Alderson to be the Commander of the First Canadian Division from the moment when the Division will arrive in England.

Major General Alderson has commanded Canadians in the Boer War and is known to Canadians who were there and are being sent with the Division. The Minister of Militia and Defence, Sam Huges, was himself in the Boer War as a Colonel and has known Alderson when he was there.

The Government of Canada recognizes that there are not officers in the Canadian Militia who have the necessary experience to command a division within the British Army. All agree that in time, the Canadian division may be commanded by a Canadian, but not now.

Sam Huges is not in full agreement with this principle. He knows one Canadian Colonel who served with zest, if not with recognized distinction, in the Boer War, who could take this job, and that man is himself. Huges has always said that his service in South Africa was deserving of not one, but two Victoria Crosses (!), and that the British military establishment had always proved incompetent with their traditions and aristocratic caste. Huges is therefore very decided that once in England, he will shield the Canadian Division from the haughty authority of the Imperials.

Alderson is very respected and generally recognized as a good egg for introducing the unexperienced Canadians into the British system. An army brat, but not an aristocrat, he knows the business of training men into able formations.

— Alderson will have the shock of his life when not the 30,000 men of the division, but the Minister of the Crown, will prove his most difficult trainee.

.....  
●Canadian Encyclopedia, «EAH Alderson».●Leppart, Tom, «Sir Edwin Alderson: Gentleman Soldier», in Colonel Bernd Horn, and Craig L. Mantle, *From the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute's Research Files*, Volume II: **Neither Art, Nor Science: Selected Canadian Military Leadership Profiles** (Canadian Defence Academy, 2007), p. 1-20.



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# Le 26 septembre, 1914

## Deux Incidents Significatifs



### Dardanelles et Bassorah

Le 26 septembre 1914, deux incidents se produisent qui vont avoir des conséquences importantes sur la Guerre.

À Istanbul, un officier supérieur allemand a ordonné la fermeture du **Détroit des Dardanelles**, lorsque des navires britanniques se sont approchés de torpilleurs qui s’y trouvaient. Le gouvernement turc nie avoir intervenu dans cette affaire. Des marins allemands, portant le fez pour tromper les curieux, travaillent sur les navires de guerre *Goeben* et *Breslau* qui se sont réfugiés à l’intérieur du bassin du Bosphore. Ceci signifie que les mariners de la Mer Noire y sont maintenant enfermés, incluant la Marine russe, qui n’a plus accès à la Méditerranée.

Il s’agit là d’un *casus belli* aux termes de la loi internationale.

Par ailleurs, à Londres, le Secrétaire du India Office propose qu’un coup de main soit monté contre les champs oléifères de Abadan, et que la **ville de Bassorah**, ainsi que son port de Fao, soient saisis afin d’assurer le contrôle du pétrole pour l’Empire britannique. Avec l’accord des secrétaires du Foreign Office et du War Office, une division de l’Armée de l’Inde sera chargée de l’opération contre les Turcs qui s’y trouvent.

Ceci, également, est un geste de guerre aux conséquences graves. La Turquie se voit ainsi poussée irrémédiablement vers l’Alliance germanique, alors qu’elle voulait garder ses distances des deux côtés.

— Les noms de «Dardanelles» et de «Mésopotamie» sont encore peu connus du public occidental: Pas pour longtemps!

•Moorehead, Dardanelles, 29-31; •Lawrence James, Raj, 85.



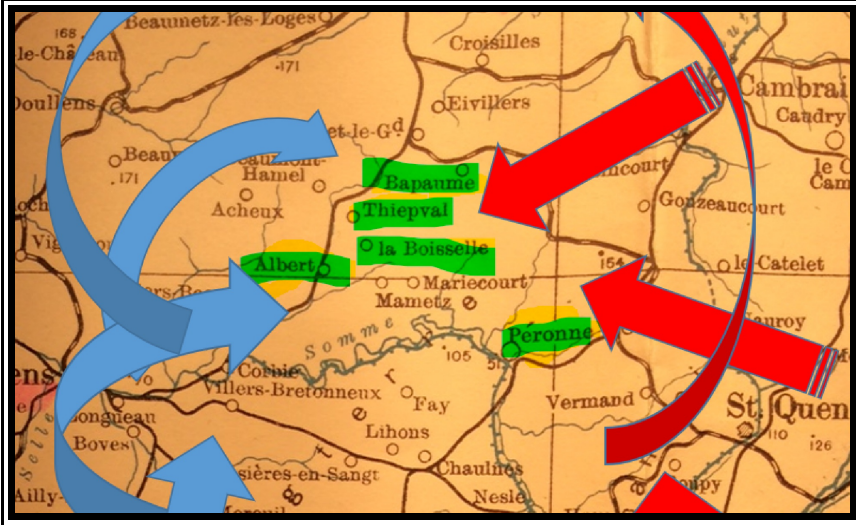
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# September 27, 1914

## The Race to the Sea



## The First Battle for the Somme

In their attempt to secure their right flank, the Germans extend their defences on a long line from the Vosges, in the south, to Péronne, in the Somme région. This marks the start of the 'Race to the Sea' which is still, at this date, unconscious.

The movement to the north of Castelnau's *Deuxième armée* along the Oise R. has triggered a movement of troops on the German side, with concentrations around St. Quentin and

Cambrai.

Castelnau would like to outflank the Germans so as to reach Armentières and Le Cateau, and cut the railroads from Liège that feed the German right flank at Cambrai, but the Germans react so as to protect their lifeline.

The Sixth German Army's advance, on **27-28 September 1914**, will delineate the lines for the Battle of the Somme, two years later.

While the Germans do not succeed to go as far as Albert, in their rush from Pozières and Bapaume, they take such places as Courcellette, Thiepval, Ovillers, and La Boisselle, until they are stopped at the Ancre River at Miraumont and Grandcourt.

— Little do they know yet of what these names will mean.

• Sheldon, *The Germans at Beaumont Hamel*, p. 18-20; • *TIMES History of the War*, Vol II, Chap 46, «The French Offensive from the Aisne to Ypres», p. 477-508.



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# September 28, 1914

## A Vision for Mitteleuropa

### The German September Program

The victories in the East by Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and the advance of the German forces in France, in the first month of war, convinced many German politicians, industrialists and strategists, that the war would be short and that Germany better be prepared for a new post-war European order.

Although no such considerations had been formally made before the war, thoughts were now given to establishing Germany's War Aims in order to guide Berlin on the exigencies that it should enforce on neighbouring nations after a victorious end to the War.

The «**September program**» came from a series of documents prepared by strategists to delineate the notion of *Mitteleuropa*, which Germany would dominate from central Europe. **German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg** adopted this 'September Program' on **28 September 1914** as a roadmap for foreign policy, which would orchestrate the unification and domination of central Europe in order to generate capital, industrial resources and manpower to a

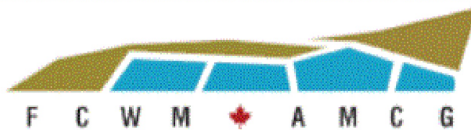
centralized 'economic unit', managing the European continent.

This program is no less than a plan for the complete domination of the whole European continent, giving a view of the extent to which Germany intended to drain resources to feed its lust for world power.

German historian Fritz Fischer, in his Germany's Aims in the First World War (1961) follows the influence of the September program on German policy to the end of the Great War.

— It is hard not to see the Second World War as the continuation of the September program by other means.

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●Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, (Dusseldorf (1961); Tr (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967) with an Introduction by Hajo Holborn and James Joll, pp. 98-110, 257-71.



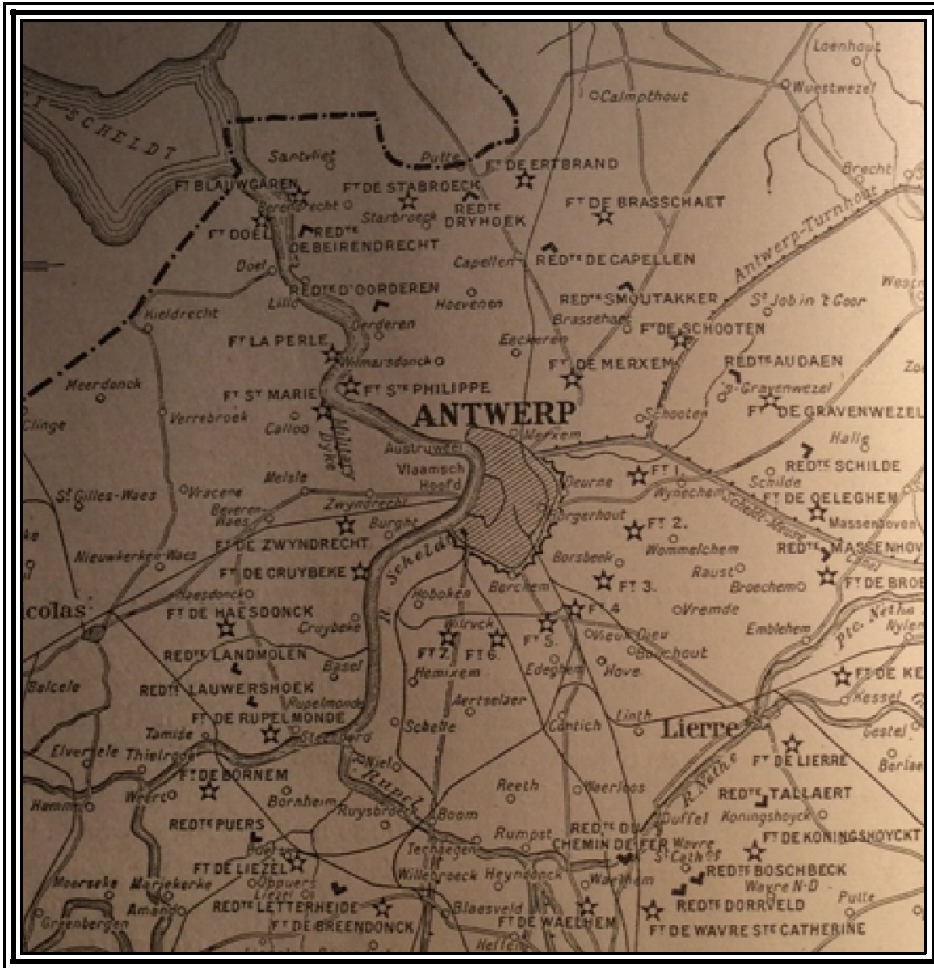
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September 29, 1914

## Holding to Channel Ports for Dear Life



### The Siege of Antwerp

On 28 September 1914, General von Beseler, Commander of III German Reserve Corps began the siege of Antwerp. Although he has only five weak divisions, II Reserve Corps has now received 173 heavy guns to pound the port city into surrender.

The city is the refuge of the last Belgian elements of defence, including a field army under the control of the Governor of the city.

The fall of the city is only a matter of time, but time is of the essence. French General Joffre is asking the Belgians to hold the city for as long as possible so as to retain the German forces while he attempts to round the German right wing around Cambrai and protect the Channel ports.

The retention of the Channel ports is of utmost importance. This is where British help is being provided.

If Antwerp is now discounted, Zeebrugge, Ostend, Dunkirk, Boulogne, and Calais are still to be retained.

• Strachan, *The First World War*, I, p. 270-1.



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# September 30, 1914

## Another 100,000!



### Kitchener's Armies

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1914, Great Britain has already recruited 761,000 men for service in the armed forces.

For the only major power that did not have any kind of compulsory military service before the war, the effort is extreme.

Soldiers must be given uniforms, personal equipment, a rifle, and their units must be given the wherewithall to shelter, feed, transport, and train men with no previous acquaintance with military life.

There is also only a small body of trained officers and NCOs who can give training to these new units. Retired former officers and soldiers are recalled to assist in the training. Retired captains become battalion commanders and former NCOs their adjutants. Only very basic drills are studied in addition to elementary service knowledge.

The Secretary for War, **Field Marshal Lord Horatio Kitchener** is front and center in this drive for more men. He has already addressed the House of Lords, two weeks ago, to inform the country on how he intends to form armies of 100,000 men for service

overseas in the War.

On this day, he is calling for another 100,000 men to enroll and form units based on counties, cities, town, even villages, bearing their names. These are not the names of the great regiments that have gained glories in past centuries.

– But the tales of the BEF in Le Cateau in the newspapers are enough to fire a lad's enthusiasm.

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●Le Bas, Sir Hedley (Ed.), The Lord Kitchener Memorial Book (Published on Behalf of the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1917), see «Speech on the Military Situation», 17 September 1914, House of Lords.



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