

# Le 1er avril, 1916

## Gabrielle Petit, héroïne belge



### Gabrielle Petit est fusillée

Lorsque la guerre éclate, Gabrielle Petit s'engage à 24 ans comme infirmière auprès de la Croix-Rouge, et son fiancé Maurice Gobert rejoint son régiment. Le jeune homme est rapidement blessé et fait prisonnier, mais il parvient à s'évader. Gabrielle l'aide alors à passer la frontière des Pays-Bas pour qu'il puisse rejoindre l'armée belge, retranchée derrière l'Yser.

Recrutée à Folkestone par un Belge « Monsieur Emile », alias Joseph Ide, elle fonde un réseau de renseignement pour les Britanniques (réseau Edith Cavell).

Chargée d'identifier les troupes allemandes stationnées dans la région de Tournai, elle assure aussi la diffusion de La Libre Belgique clandestine et aide de jeunes volontaires à rejoindre l'armée belge.

Le contre-espionnage allemand lance deux de ses agents contre celle qui se fait appeler « Mademoiselle Legrand ». Arrêtée le 2 février 1916, elle résiste aux interrogatoires, mais est condamnée à mort le 3 mars et exécutée le **1er avril 1916**.

Après sa mort, Gabrielle devient le symbole de la résistance en pays occupé. En 1919, elle a droit à des funérailles nationales.

De nombreuses statues érigées à sa mémoire sont encore visibles aujourd'hui à Tournai ou à Schaerbeek.

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● Sources: <http://www.commemorer14-18.be/index.php?id=11176>

● Pour en savoir plus: <https://histoireparlesfemmes.wordpress.com/2014/05/05/gabrielle-petit-infirmiere-espionne/>



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April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1916

## Another Go at Reaching Friends at Kut



### The Siege of Kut: Third Relief Effort

After the defeat of General Sir Fenton Aylmer's relief force at the Dujaila Redoubt in early March, Aylmer was replaced by Major General Sir George Goringe as commander of the Tigris Column on March 12.

His force has been strengthened by the arrival of the 13<sup>th</sup> (Western) Division from Egypt where it refitted after Gallipoli. It was the only British division in a force composed entirely otherwise of

Indian Army divisions. Relatively fresh, the 13th was the spearhead of Goringe's attack.

On 1 April 1916, the relief force began to move into position for another attempt to lift the siege. Both forces numbered approximately 30,000 men on each side. Muddy ground will hinder the Imperial force's advance, which will begin on the morning of 5 April.

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● Further information: Eugene Rogan, [The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East](#)



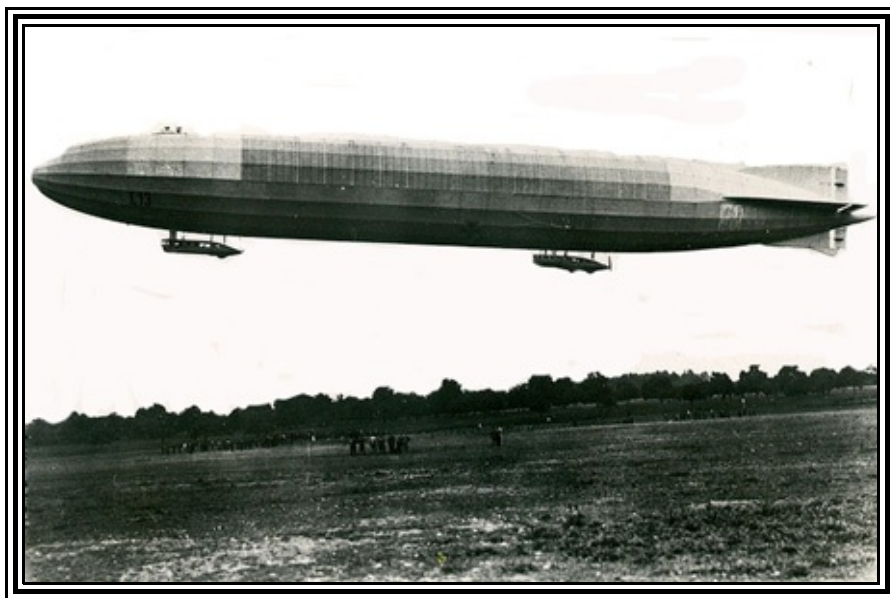
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## Le 3 avril, 1916

### Le Feu du Ciel



### La ville d'Edimbourg en proie aux bombardements de dirigeables

**Dans la nuit du 2 au 3 avril 1916**, le Zeppelin LZ-46 (L-14) commandé par le Kapitänleutnant der Reserve Aloys Böcker, bombarde Edimbourg.

Le quartier de Leith est principalement touché entre 23h30 et 00h15, avec 24 bombes qui pulvérisent notamment le célèbre négoce de Whisky Innes and Gieves.

L'attaque fait 11 tués et 24 blessés. Trois hôtels sont endommagés ainsi que la gare de Princess Street.

Les Zeppelins cessent leurs bombardements à 00h55 et s'éloignent sans rencontrer d'autre opposition que quelques tirs de mitrailleuses désordonnés, provenant des collines au Sud de la Ville.

Au cours du raid, un autre dirigeable le LZ-64 (L-22), commandé par le Kapitänleutnant Martin Dietrich, bombarde également la ville sans défense, vers 23h50. Les dommages sont faibles : quelques fenêtres soufflées et des carreaux brisés.

Un troisième aérostat le LZ-59 (L-20), se trouve rapidement à court de carburant lors du trajet de retour. Il dérive et s'échoue près de Stavenger (Norvège).

L'officier commandant fait détruire le dirigeable avant d'être fait prisonnier ainsi que les 15 hommes d'équipage.

• Sources: <http://lzdream.net/dirigeables/zeppelin/ficheszep/46/index.php>

• Pour en savoir plus: [http://lzdream.net/dirigeables/zeppelin/ficheszep/46/rapport\\_fire.php](http://lzdream.net/dirigeables/zeppelin/ficheszep/46/rapport_fire.php)



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## April 4, 1916 Enters Brusilov



### Brusilov Takes Command on the Southwest Front

General-Adjutant (4 star equivalent) **Aleksei Alekseevich Brusilov** has twice led the Russian VIII Army to victory on the Southwest Front, but his successes were undone by the failure of other Russian offensives.

Brusilov, although an aristocratic cavalry officer, has recognized the ineffectiveness of cavalry faced with machine guns and the futility of massive bombardments.

**On 4 April 1916**, he arrives in Berdichev to command the South-Western Front from a modest headquarters (only two sentries) and with a crisp and coherent style of command.

When the Front generals consider possible summer offensives to aid the French and British, none will move without crushing superiority in heavy artillery.

Alone among the generals, Brusilov states that he can conduct an offensive and begins to plan, relying on tactical innovation rather than weight of shell.

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Further information: Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914-1917*



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**April 5, 1916**

## **From Gallipoli to Beaumont Hamel**



### **The Newfoundland Regiment in Fourth Army**

The Newfoundland Regiment has now sailed from Egypt to Marseilles.

The 29 British Division comes under VIII British Corps commanded by Lieutenant General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, a former commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> in Gallipoli, in General Rawlinson's newly created Fourth Army.

After billeting in villages to the west of the line – Louvencourt, Mailly Maillet, Englebelmer, etc, the battalion will enter into the line on Easter Eve, 22 April, being on a front

line for the first time since Gallipoli.

88 Brigade (under Brigadier Cayley) will rotate in and out of the first line near a place called Beaumont Hamel throughout May and June 1916, to fairly quiet time.

All are preparing for the summer offensive.

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●Nicholson, Colonel G.[erald] W.[illiam] L.[ingen], **The Fighting Newfoundlander: A History of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment** (London: Government of Newfoundland, 1964; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, reprint 2006), p. 236-241.



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**April 6, 1916**

## **Russia Captures Trabizond**



### **The Fate of the Armenians of Trabizond**

The Caucasus front was a secondary task for both Russia and the Ottomans, the latter seeking its territories lost in the war of 1877-1878.

The armies see-sawed back and forth with fighting halted by savage winter weather, in which an entire Turkish army was destroyed in 1915.

In January 1916, Russian General Nikolai Yudenich achieved total surprise over the Ottomans with a well executed winter offensive. The key city of Erzurum was taken.

In April, the Russians moved further into Anatolia and north towards the Black Sea, where on **6 April 1916**, the Russians captured the ancient trading port city of **Trabizond**.

Prior to the Caucasus war, the Armenians of Trabizond numbered over 30,000. After the Russians captured the city, only 500 returned.

The Armenian Genocide claimed at least 1.5 million lives.

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Further Information: Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*



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# April 7, 1916

## A Fatefull Decision

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### Asquith authorizes the Somme operation

The British government was fundamentally opposed to large offensive operations being conducted in France during the summer of 1916.

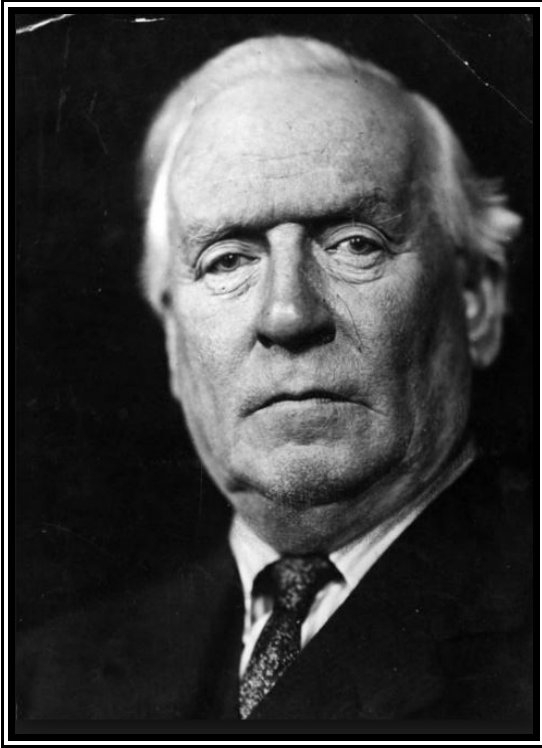
The military and political inter-Allied meetings of December 1915 and subsequent exchanges of views between French and British authorities discussed thoroughly the idea of a large operation with both armies being involved, but the British government did not give its official consent to such an operation.

With the evolution of the battle in Verdun, the French government and General Joffre are now pleading with the British for a diversionary operation to relieve the French Army.

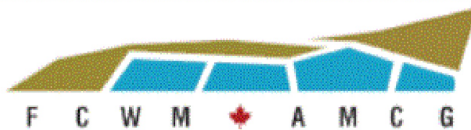
On 5 April, French Prime Minister Aristide Briand and Minister Ribot button-holed Prime Minister Herbert Asquith in Paris, in a desparate plea to authorize General Haig to proceed on with his plans for a summer offensive.

Asquith could not but reluctantly pledge his government's support, **on 7 April 1916**, for a full-fledged operation as envisaged by the French High Command—A fateful decision.

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●Hankey, Supreme Command, II: 494-5.



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April 8, 1916

## Maurice Barrès Christens 'La Voie Sacrée'»



### The motored Lifeline in Verdun

Much has been said on the importance of tanks in the winning of the First World War, but the proper recognition has not been given to the lowly truck.

One of the most important decisions of the War, on the French side, was made by General Castelnau and General Pétain, in the early stages of the battle of Verdun.

Recognizing the paucity of railroad networks in the region, –the major lines having been taken by the Germans–, and the need for large-scale supply within the battlefield area, Pétain and Castelnau concluded that a large road had to be constructed so as to allow many lanes of trucks to be driven on

each side without any need to pass onto the incoming lane.

The number of trucks available was increased by a surge in industrial production, and new techniques were found to maintain the pavement without stopping the flow, to repair trucks on the go, and to bring fuel and spare parts to the right places, so as to get an unending and unstopping conveyor belt, with teams of workshift drivers.

The famous road, baptised «**Voie Sacrée**» in **early April 1916**, will allow 6,000 trucks and 25,000 men a day to travel back and forth between Verdun and Bar-le-Duc, 47 kilometers to the south.



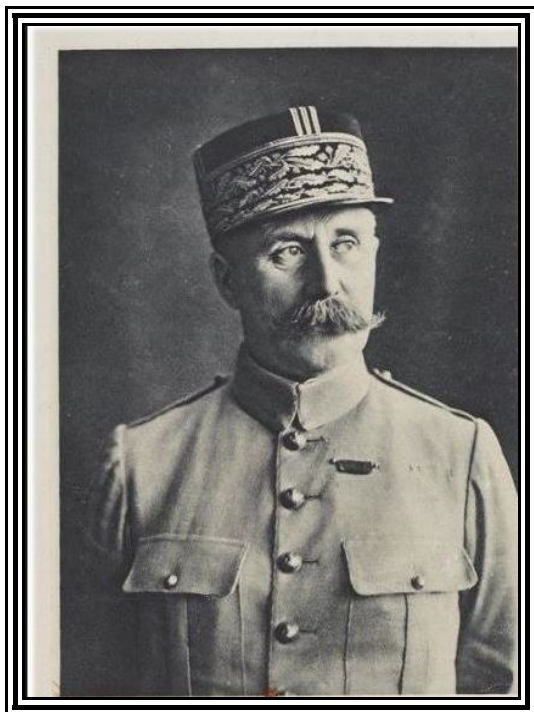
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Le 9 avril, 1916

## L'impatience des autres à Verdun



### Perte de la cote 295 du Mort-Homme (rive gauche)

«En plus des réticences que Joffre témoigne à lui envoyer les troupes fraîches qu'il demande, Pétain doit faire face à l'incompréhension des politiques de l'arrière.

«Le président de la République Mr Poincaré, loin de la réalité de Verdun, ne comprend pas pourquoi les surfaces de terrain reprises à l'ennemi sont si minuscules. Souvent, un seul nom de tranchée reconquise en mentionné dans les communiqués.

«Lorsqu'il regarde la carte du front, le président voit le fort de Douaumont à 400 m des positions françaises les plus avancées. Il lui semble qu'une forte offensive vite mise sur pied et rapidement menée peut facilement reconquérir ces 400 m et reprendre le fort de Douaumont (succès qui aurait un retentissement immense).

«Cependant, lorsqu'il s'entretient avec Pétain, ce dernier émet de grosses réserves pensant à l'inverse que ce n'est pas le bon moment et qu'une contre-offensive doit être préparée très méticuleusement.

«Cette prudence dont il fait preuve n'est pas comprise par les politiciens de Paris, et interprétée comme une certaine passivité.

«Cette situation commence peu à peu à agacer au ministère, et cela conduit finalement à son remplacement futur...»<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lesfrancaisaverdun-1916.fr/histo-verdun-detaille3.htm>

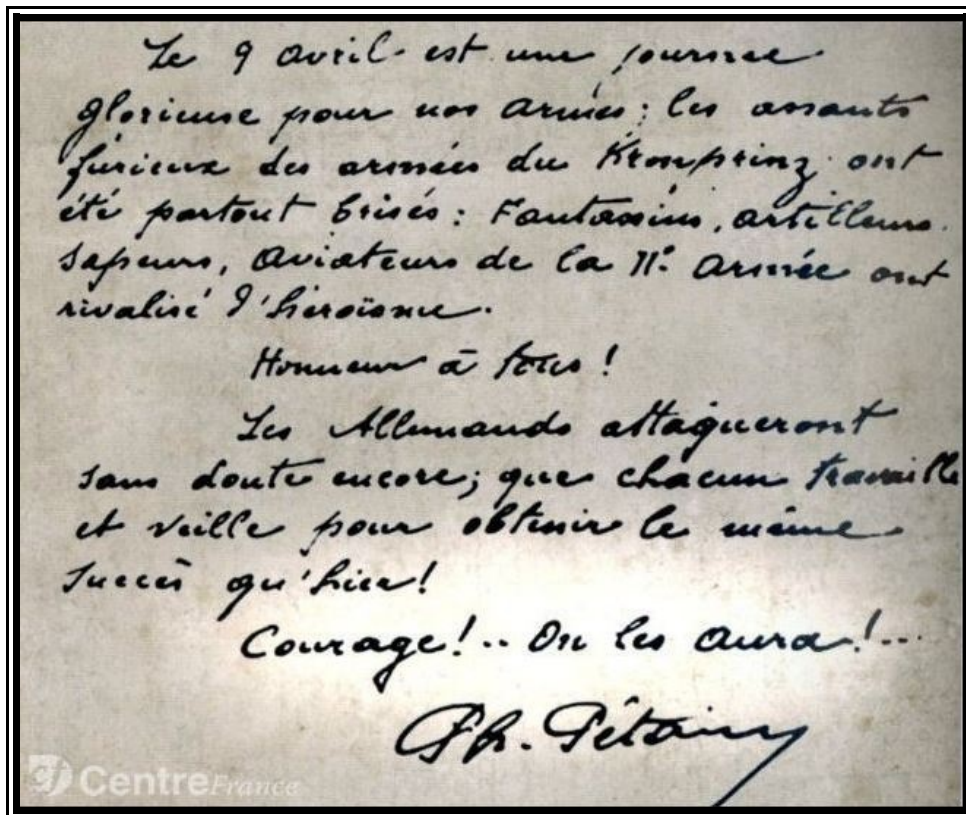


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## Le 10 avril, 1916 Signé Pétain



### Les mots : «**Courage!** **On les aura!**»

C'est l'ordre du jour mythique de Pétain.

Le 10 avril 1916, alors que les troupes françaises subissent les attaques continues des Allemands, Pétain envoie son désormais célèbre ordre du jour se terminant par « **Courage ! On les aura !** »

L'ordre est en fait une félicitation et un encouragement à destination des soldats qui ont repoussé une attaque la veille.

C'est aussi le début de revirement de la stratégie allemande dirigée par Von Falkenhayn.

Le slogan est repris en octobre par l'illustrateur Jules-Abel Faivre sur une affiche, qui appelle

les civils à souscrire à un emprunt pour la défense nationale.

Le mot est aussi tourné en dérision par ceux qui n'ont pas le moral : «*On les aura, mais quand??*», rétorquent-ils.

Pour en savoir plus: <http://www.verdun.fr/Terre-d-Histoire/Verdun-et-la-Grande-Guerre/La-Bataille-de-Verdun>



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## Le 11 avril, 1916 Rien ne les arrête



### Ces démons de Français

Le 11 avril 1916, l'attaque allemande du 9 avril s'est arrêtée après le Mort-Homme. Les Allemands s'en étonnent:

« Qui aurait pu penser que, privés de toute communication ferrée, ces démons de Français, au lieu d'abandonner un secteur condamné, aurait [sic] trouvé le moyen de monter sur une chaussée une double ligne de camions automobiles, immense chaîne sans fin, gigantesque courroie de transmission, qui roulant jour et nuit, comme sur deux poulies, entre Bar-le-Duc et la place, alimenterait

sans relâche et pourvoierait infatigablement de bataillons, d'obus et de bouches à feu ce champ de carnage et d'horreur? »

● Citation d'un rapport d'état-major allemand, sans référence, trouvé dans Bernède, Allain, « Verdun 1916: un choix stratégique, une équation logistique », *Revue Historique des Armées*, #242 (2006). <https://rha.revues.org/4122>



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April 12, 1916

## Canadians get their Trench Hats



### New steel helmets.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1916, the Canadian Corps returned to the Ypres Salient to take over a stretch of line running from the vicinity of St. Eloi to near Hooze on the Menin Road.

As the infantry trudged up to the front they wore for the first time the round, basin-like steel helmets that had just been issued on a scale of fifty per company.»

Initially, some like it and some don't, but under bombardment, all will like to at

least stop the rocks. This British helmet, especially on account of the hardness of the steel, will be the best produced in the war.

- Goodspeed, The Road Past Vimy, 56



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## April 13, 1916

### Bite but Bite Deep



#### Haig's vs Rawlinson's views of Attack

On this day Haig replies to Rawlinson's letter of 3 April on his views on 'bite and hold'.

Haig is convinced that Rawlinson's approach is too cautious. He wants the second German line to be taken in the first sweep. He envisages a deep penetration, with artillery following in stages and cavalry involved.

Once again Haig is obnubilated by his vision of a cavalry breakthrough where after having made a breach in the line by the infantry and artillery, a full Corps of cavalry can gallop to Bapaume and reach the rear of the German army.

Rawlinson as an infantry officer is not so 'dashing.' He has taken in the lessons learned in the battles of 1914 and 1915 where such victorious cavalcades proved so far out of reality.

But Rawlinson owes his job to Haig, who rescued him after Field Marshal French, another cavalryman, had considered him too pedestrian.

Preparations for the Somme offensive are ongoing with fateful decisions being taken every day by the Commander-in-Chief champing at the bit.

Haig agrees with Rawlinson's biting then holding, but he wants him to bite deeper before holding.

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- Liddell Hart, Man of Orleans, I:226-7.
  - Prior & Wilson, Somme, 44-47]



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## April 14, 1916

### Counting His Beans

#### General Foch uneasy with the supply of shells

One of the reassurances that the Generals of both France and Great Britain had obtained from their respective governments in the important conferences of December 1915 was that the industry was in position to provide a much larger volume of shells for 1916.

It is with this assurance in mind that General Joffre conceived his plan for a large summer offensive in France that would break open the German lines through sheer weight of fire.

But **General Foch** who is charged, as Commander of the French Army Group of the North, with the French preparations for the Somme offensive, is getting concerned that the shift of munitions that has been made to defend in Verdun is depleting his upcoming operation. Much of the stockpiling going on for the June offensive is being slowed down by hasty diversions to the south.

Foch is also seeing formations that had been tagged for his Army Group being sent to Verdun, where reserves are being committed in succession in a bottomless pit.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the French to look after their end of the deal in the Somme, but a diversion for Verdun is also getting more crucial.

—Something will have to give.

•Liddell Hart, Man of Orléans, I: 227.



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April 15, 1916

## The Logistic Tail in the Air



### Desperation in Kut: Air Supply

By mid-April, food supplies in Kut are rapidly running out, as the Turks have successfully defeated every relief effort.

For the first time in aviation history, a major effort is mounted to supply a military operation by dropping air supplies.

From **15 April 1916**, Number 30 squadron of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) makes 140 supply drops, totalling about 19,000 pounds of food, with the largest amount on the 15<sup>th</sup>, approximately 3350.

Drops are made from small fighter/observation aircraft such as the Be2.c which can lift about 225 pounds. Dropping from 6000 feet, accuracy is problematic, with some sacks going into the Tigris and others to the Turks.

Air supply proves inadequate as a minimum of 5,000 lbs. are needed each day

to sustain the garrison.

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Further information: Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*



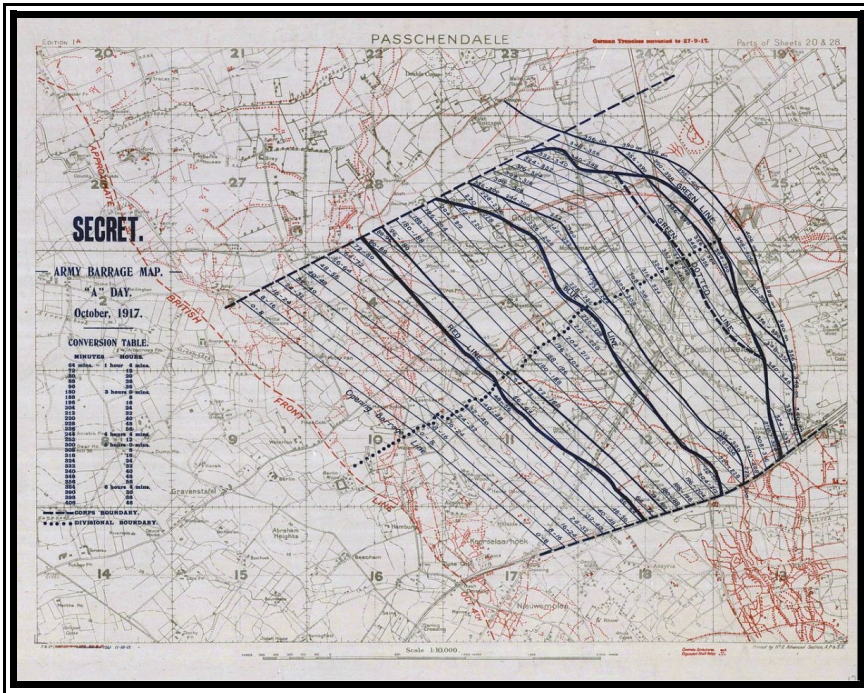
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# April 16, 1916

## An Idea Born in Pain



### Rawlinson and the creeping barrage

Rawlinson in a meeting with his Corps commanders mentions that he would like the artillery to move progressively so as to give cover and enough time to the advancing infantry from position to position.

This is just a thought that he does not wish to formally impose on the Artillery Corps.

But the idea first expressed at this meeting, and later made more explicit in his 'Tactical Notes', will be studied, tried and retried in the coming campaign.

It is one of the brilliant children born in the pains of 1916.

●Prior & Wilson, Somme, 60-1.



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## April 17, 1916

### Five Million and Counting



### British Empire Manpower

On 17 April 1916, a Memo of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) states that 3,769,659 men volunteered for war.

In addition, 697,000 are yet to be called up from various married classes and starred positions, for a grand total of 4,667,000 men as the full British Voluntary force.

This is exclusive of the contingents from the Dominions and India, which bring the sum to well over 5 million.

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Lloyd George, Memoirs, II: p. 737.



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**Le 18 avril, 1916**

## **Un avertissement américain très sérieux**



### **L'Ultimatum pour le *Sussex***

Le torpillage du vapeur *Sussex*, dans la Manche, le 24 mars 1916, qui fait 80 morts non-combattants de tous âges, incluant des citoyens américains, amène les États-Unis et l'Allemagne au seuil de la guerre.

Le Secrétaire d'État Lansing fait en effet parvenir, **le 18 avril 1916**, un ultimatum à l'Allemagne à l'effet que les États-Unis devront couper les relations diplomatiques avec l'Allemagne si les méthodes employées dans la chasse sous-marine de la Marine de guerre allemande contre les navires marchands et de passagers ne sont pas radicalement changées.

Les États-Unis considèrent le torpillage sans avertissements des navires de commerce, —un acte qui a été répété plusieurs fois, notamment contre le Lusitania et l'Arabic en 1915, un mépris des lois internationales et des pratiques humanitaires universelles.

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● Arthur S. Link & William M. Leary (eds), The Diplomacy of World Power: United States 1889-1920 (Great Britain: Edward Arnold, 1970), p. 127-31.



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April 19, 1916

## The Deadly Business of Commercial Blockade



### The tightening of blockade

The number of British ships that have been sunk by the enemy so far in the war is 423, for a total of 1,4 million tons.

This month alone, up to the **19 April 1916**, 43 British ships of 140,000 tons were sunk – 37 by submarine and 6 by mine.

But the interesting aspect of the statistics is that shipping is being replaced at the approximate rate of loss, which means that the Central powers are in fact not making headway with their submarine and mine warfare.

Meanwhile, the blockade of Germany has been improved following the

creation of a separate British ministry for the Blockade, in February, which was given powers to stiffen economic pressure on enemy ports, curtailing more trade under the international provisions of ‘absolute contraband’, according to which shipping, including neutral shipping, can be diverted in time of war.

The deadly business of strangling the Central powers’ economies is slowly being ratcheted up.

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●Hankey, Supreme Command, II: 489.



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April 20, 1916

## Carried by Mesopotamia water



### German Field Marshal and military theorist Colmar von der Goltz dies in Baghdad

On April 19<sup>th</sup> 1916, Colmar, Freiherr von der Goltz died of disputed cause (likely typhus) while serving as an Ottoman commander.

Having advised the Ottomans before the war, and subsequently having served as military governor of German-occupied Belgium (where he brutally crushed local resistance through collective punishment), von der Goltz became a military adviser to the Ottoman Sultan in 1915, before receiving his field command with the Turks in Mesopotamia.

In addition to performing effectively at Ctesiphon and Kut, while in Mesopotamia, he initially approved, as a military necessity, and subsequently objected to, and delayed, the Ottoman's mass 'deportations' later known as the Armenian Genocide.

Widely read as a military theorist and historian in his own time and today, von der Goltz formulated the idea of 'the nation in arms,' an early conceptualization of 'total war.'

His theory will be fully realized in his own lifetime as a result of WW1's massive industrial and manpower mobilizations.

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- 'Colmar, Baron von der Goltz,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, <<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Colmar-baron-von-der-Goltz>>
  - Isabelle V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (2005), p. 276-287.
  - Colmar Goltz, *The Nation in Arms* (1906)



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## April 20, 1916

### A Boatload of Revolution



#### German Arms for Irish Patriots

On 20 April 1916, the freighter *SS Libau*, disguised as a Norwegian ship, the *SS Aud*, arrived in Tralee Bay to offload a shipment from Germany of weapons and ammunition destined for Irish Volunteers in a rising against British rule.

The architect of the delivery, Sir Roger Casement, a British diplomat turned Irish patriot, was landed earlier from submarine *U-19*.

The Royal Navy captured the *Aud*; Casement was taken a few days later.

Casement had won German interest in a rebellion in Ireland as part of Germany's strategy to destabilize the British Empire. When he failed to form an "Irish Brigade" among the Irish POWs, the

Germans lost interest. Casement knew the weapons were a token.

The Easter Rising went ahead without German assistance and was crushed by the British.

Casement was executed for treason.

• Fritz Fischer, *Germany's War Aims*, p. 132.

• Alvin Jackson, *Ireland: 1798-1998: Politics and War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 142ff.



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# Le 20 avril, 1916

## La France russophile



### Arrivée de la brigade russe en France

Le 21 avril 1916, le *Latouche-Treville*, navire amiral du corps expéditionnaire russe, mouille dans le port de Marseille après un périple de quarante-cinq jours.

Débarquant à la tête de ses troupes, le général Lokhvitsky reçoit les honneurs militaires des autorités civiles et militaires de Marseille, venues accueillir le chef de la première brigade russe.

Acclamant les troupes russes, la population de Marseille assiste au défilé de ces dernières sur les avenues de la cité. Conduits au camp Mirabeau, où ils assistent à leur première

Pâques russe en territoire français, les Russes prennent quelques jours de repos avant de rejoindre le front.

Dans un premier temps, cantonnée au camp de Mailly où elle reçoit une instruction militaire française, la brigade russe rejoint le front de Champagne. Durant l'été 1916, elle s'illustre face aux nombreuses attaques menées par la 242<sup>e</sup> division d'infanterie allemande. Relevée le 15 octobre 1916 du secteur d'Auberive, cette brigade connaît d'autres engagements féroces.

Dissoute du fait de la Révolution d'Octobre de 1917 et de la signature par la Russie du traité de paix de Brest-Litovsk en mars 1918, elle est rattachée à la 1<sup>re</sup> division Marocaine et envoyée sur le front en mars 1918.

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Sources: <http://www.ecpad.fr/les-soldats-russes-a-marseille/>

Pour en savoir plus: [http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-reims/memoire/lieux/IGM\\_CA/cimetieres/russes/saint\\_hilaire.htm](http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-reims/memoire/lieux/IGM_CA/cimetieres/russes/saint_hilaire.htm)



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# Le 22 avril, 1916

## Les Tourquennois déportés



## Camps de travail en France

Quatre mille cent soixante-seize (4176) Tourquennois (de Tourcoing) dont 755 femmes sont déportés entre le 23 et 30 avril 1916.

C'est que les Allemands décident d'envoyer dans les Ardennes des jeunes de plus de 15 ans, filles et garçons sans travail, pour les faire oeuvrer dans les champs dans des conditions très difficiles.

Pour effectuer divers travaux, l'armée allemande déplace des civils sur de petites ou grandes distances. On parle souvent de déportations pour ces

déplacements forcés.

Début 1916, Roubaix connaît ainsi des émeutes liées à la crise du ravitaillement. En réponse, les autorités allemandes envoient en avril des ouvriers du Nord dans la Somme, l'Aisne ou les Ardennes pour les travaux des champs.

Devant les critiques internationales, cette déportation est interrompue précocement. L'opération est par ailleurs un échec: les 25,000 ouvriers envoyés sont ignorants du monde agricole.

Ils rentrent chez eux fin 1916.

Sources: <http://www.nordeclair.fr/info-locale/avril-1916-la-deportation-des-tourquennois-dans-les-ia51b12892n651586>

Pour en savoir plus: <http://www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecals.fr/lhistoire/le-nord-et-le-bassin-minier-sous-loccupation/travail-force-otages-et-deportation.html>



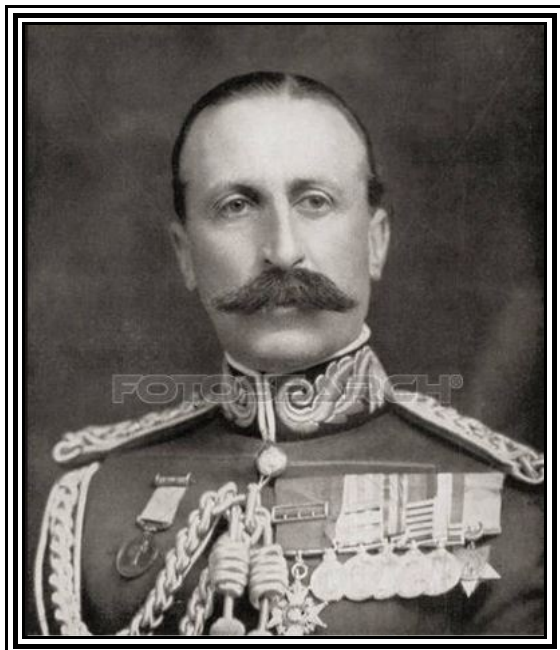
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April 23, 1916

For not being able to suffer fools gladly



## Alderson's head to roll

On this day, **23 April 1916**, Max Aitken meets General Haig at his Headquarters. Aitken represents the Canadian Government in asking Haig to replace the Commander of the Canadian Corps, **Lieutenant-General Alfred Hervey Alderson**.

Aitken who is acting as the agent of the Canadian Government in London, is now seeking another officer to command the Canadian Corps, since the Minister of Militia, Sam Hugues, has expressed his lack of confidence in Alderson.

Prime Minister Borden is in a difficult position. He cannot contradict his minister without it being taken as a lack of confidence in his judgment.

But Borden knows well that the minister's rage against the British General is due to his voicing criticism over decisions taken by Hugues, in particular in the Ross rifle affair, in the Turner affair, but also in multifarious ministerial directives that were

dismissed as outlandish and unacceptable by Alderson, who was often right,

Max Aitken finds himself the bearer of a message with which he is not fully in agreement, but the embroilment between Minister and General has become counterproductive. Aitken foresaw that Alderson's head would roll, but not that he would wield the axe.

Haig agrees that Alderson can be replaced, but not by a Canadian officer.

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●Sandra Gwyn, Tapestry of War, Chap 16: «The Destruction of General Alderson», pp. 272-94, in part.: 281.



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**April 24, 1916**

## **Easter Monday is Rising Early**



### **The taking of the General Post Office in Dublin**

The Irish nationalists do not agree that Ireland should take part in the British Empire wars; they do not agree that their parliament should be in London; they do not agree that six Ulster counties that are largely Protestants and pro-British, should be considered separate from Ireland proper, and they do not agree that Ireland should continue as a half-country within the United Kingdom.

The Irish «Home Rule» debates in Parliament and in the streets have never ceased since the mid-19th century, but no solutions have been found to a political problem of enormous complexity.

A few days ago, a shipment of arms was landed with German assistance for the separatists, but the British authorities are quick on the trail to find the agitators. They are forced to take action immediately.

**On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916**, a group of half-improvised revolutionaries attack the Grand Post Office on O'Connell street in Dublin. They stage an armed resistance in the building.

But there are 20,000 British soldiers in Ireland, the same number of Irishmen who have agreed to join the British Army in the war. Their revolution is smothered in a week.

The siege was doomed from the start, but it becomes a great symbol and creates martyrs for the cause.

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● Alvin Jackson, Ireland 1798-1998 (Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 142ff.



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## Le 25 avril, 1916

### Les déplaisirs de la table



### La loi du 25 avril 1916 crée le «Pain national»

Cette loi française remplace toutes les autres loi sur le pain, mettant fin à la domination du pain blanc de froment, en le remplaçant obligatoirement par le «pain gris complet», en mélangeant les blés et en exigeant un taux de blutage (présence de son) plus élevé, 80% et plus tard 85%.

Avec 100 kg de blé, on fait ainsi 77 kg de farine, au lieu de 74 kg précédemment, ce qui signifie que la farine contient plus d'enveloppes de blé.

La guerre perturbe en effet la production à tous les niveaux: les champs de blés sont devenus des champs de bataille, une partie de la production française a en effet été anéantie, effacée par la ligne de front et les obus, ou part pour l'Allemagne.

Il reste certes en France de nombreuses terres à blé, mais elles ne sont plus labourées. Là où il y a des champs, il n'y a plus de paysans, massivement devenus soldats.

Mais bien sûr, aucune comparaison avec la situation des Allemands, qui subissent une véritable pénurie alimentaire. Ils sont obligés au début de bluter la farine à 90%, mais ça ne suffit pas, ils sont contraints alors de faire ce pain, le *Kartoffel Kriegsbrot*, composé de 60 % de farine de blé blutée à 90 %, de 30 % de seigle blutée à 95%, et de 10% de farine de pommes de terre.

Source: <http://www.franceinfo.fr/emission/france-info-y-etait/2013-2014/25-avril-1916-du-pain-gris-dans-les-boulangeries-01-12-2014-12-15>



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## April 26, 1916

### All Means All



### The married men's turn

In the wake of the crisis in Dublin, and in view of the lack of manpower for the army, the British Government calls for a secret session of the House of Commons and goes to the floor to argue in favour of the second part of the *Military Service Act* that came out in January.

This time, the categories of married men are on the block.

This completes an engagement made by the Prime Minister that married men would be called up only after all categories of unmarried men had been called up and processed.

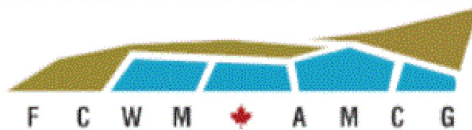
But now the time is up. The Government is calling for a full measure of conscription, including all men to 41 years of age. This debate is not an easy one. Members of Parliament are reluctant to send fathers who do not want to serve.

But the recent events in Ireland show that not many more men will be drawn from there, and there is no question of imposing conscription in Ireland.

The secret session is not a quiet one. The best orators parade in turn to voice their opinions.

This is a momentous decision that will affect the Dominions.

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●Lloyd George, Memoirs, I, 730-3; ●Hankey, Supreme Command, II: 476; ●Taylor, English History, 55-8.



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## Le 27 avril 1916 Un vent d'âcreté



### La 16ème Division irlandaise se fait gazer à Hulluch

Du 27 au 29 avril 1916, la bataille d'Hulluch est connue par le volume de gaz toxique qui y fut utilisés.

Elle oppose la 16ème Division irlandaise aux troupes allemandes qui, pour troubler les Irlandais, placardèrent en face de leurs tranchées des affiches évoquant les « Pâques sanglantes » du 24 avril.

Le Royal Inniskillin Fusiliers subit, dans la nuit du 27 avril, une importante attaque au gaz moutarde près du village d'Hulluch, tenu par les Allemands, à deux kilomètres au nord de Loos. Ce jour-là, sur les 1,980

victimes, on compta 570 tués et de nombreux blessés qui moururent plus tard, suite à des problèmes respiratoires.

D'autres unités de la 16ème Division, comprenant les Royal Irish Rifles, les Royal Munster Fusiliers et The Royal Dublin Fusiliers, furent appelés pour parer l'attaque allemande.

Le 29 avril, les Allemands enverront à nouveau des gaz, mais cette fois-ci le vent soufflera vers eux, rabattant les gaz sur leurs tranchées, et paralysant un grand nombre d'entre eux.

Sources: <http://memoire.pas-de-calais.com/index.php/fr/premiere-guerre-mondiale/ils-sont-venus-du-monde-entier/irlandais.html>

Pour en savoir plus: [http://blog.photographies-naturelles.fr/wiki-Bataille\\_d'Hulluch.html](http://blog.photographies-naturelles.fr/wiki-Bataille_d'Hulluch.html)



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April 29, 1916

## The Eyewitness gets to see the Records



### Max Aitken and the War Records Office in London

After a year of work as the Canadian Government's Eyewitness in London, **Max Aitken** is becoming a powerhouse with the War Office as the Head of Canadian War Records.

After having obtained the authority to hold the war records of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in his Lombard Street office, Aitken has succeeded in getting the reluctant acceptance by the War Office for a Canadian official photographer (Captain H.E. Knobel, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion) to visit the battlefield to capture the action and feed information to Canada.

Aitken's account of the Second Battle of Ypres, with its strong Canadian content, has not only sold extremely well in Canada, but has made the envy of the British publishers.

The ever-moving Aitken is in fact discovering his genius for popular journalism and uses his political clout with the British Conservatives to, in his word, turn situations to account.

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●Sandra Gwyn, Tapestry of War: A Private View of Canadians in the Great War (Harper Collins, 1992), 239, 260, 271.

●Tim Cook, «Documenting War & Forging Reputations: Sir Max Aitken, the Canadian Records Office in the First World War», paper presented at the Conference of the Western Front Association, 22 Sep 2001, Published in War in History, 10:3, pp. 265-95.



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April 30, 1916

## A Shocking defeat in Mesopotamia



### Surrender of Kut

On 29 April 1916, General Townshend surrenders the city of Kut to the Ottomans. If not as momentous as General Cornwallis' capitulation at Yorktown in 1781, it is a shocking defeat.

Over 13,000 British and Indian troops and Indian labourers are taken prisoners.

The officers are reasonably well treated, the Indian officers especially so, as the Turks and Germans hope to recruit them to their cause.

However, two-thirds of the British troops and over a quarter of the Indian personnel will die in captivity.

Lord Curzon, the highly influential former Viceroy of India, is recorded to have said that:

**‘...a more shocking exposure of official blundering and incompetence has not, in my opinion, been made, at any rate, since the Crimean War.’»**

Until the 1942 surrender of 80,000 British and Imperial forces at Singapore, his judgment stood unchallenged.

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Further information: Eugene Rogan, [The Fall of the Ottomans](#)



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