

August 1st, 1916

Arab Revolt Recruits Ottoman Defectors



Ottoman Prisoners Recruited for the Arab Revolt

After the initial enthusiasm for the revolt, King Husayn's Bedouin volunteers began to drift away from the campaign, leaving the Hashemites open to imminent defeat, as the Ottoman garrison in Medina remained at full strength.

In London, Cairo and Simla, British and Indian planners decided that sending British regulars to reinforce Husayn would likely inflame Indian Muslim troops against the British for “desecrating” the sacred sites of Islam.

Instead, recruitment efforts among Ottoman prisoners began. Several Iraqi senior officers, among them **Nuri al-Said**, captured in Mesopotamia, joined the cause of Arab independence.

Nuri al-Said led the first detachment of volunteers from Egypt to the Hijaz on **1 August 1916**.

Further efforts among prisoners held in India were to produce several hundred more soldiers as volunteers for the Arab cause.

- Picture of Nuri al-Said as Prime minister of Irak in 1958.
- More information: Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*.



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Le 2 août, 1916

En Attente de la Roumanie



Le Comité de guerre britannique et Salonique

La campagne de la Somme est bien lancée mais les membres du Comité de guerre se confrontent toujours sur les mérites d'impliquer les troupes britanniques ailleurs.

Les progrès de la Russie contre l'Autriche-Hongrie ont amené la Roumanie à ré-évaluer sa neutralité.

Toutefois, elle refuse de combattre si les Alliés ne lancent pas d'abord une offensive contre la Bulgarie. Ceci pourrait être fait de Salonique.

Les Britanniques hésitent à s'y engager parce qu'ils mettent en doute l'attitude des forces roumaines et leur capacité.

Le gouvernement britannique décide donc qu'il n'interviendra qu'après que la Roumanie ait décidé de combattre.

Cette politique est confirmée lorsque Lloyd George, le Secrétaire d'État pour la Guerre, décide, dans les derniers jours de juillet, que les munitions continueront d'être envoyées en priorité en France.

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- Prior, Robin and Trevor Wilson. *The Somme*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
 - Photo: Troupes alliées à Salonique.

August 3rd, 1916

The Irish File



Roger Casement

Execution of Roger Casement

On **3 August 1916**, Roger Casement was hanged in Her Majesty's Pentonville Prison, in Islington, north of London, on a charge of treason.

Casement was a distinguished British diplomat and humanitarian who had exposed human rights abuses in the Belgian Congo and in Peru.

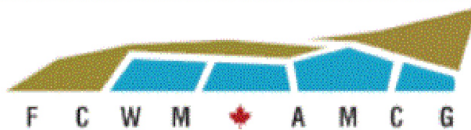
Sir Roger Casement left the Consular Service in 1913 to support Irish independence.

In Berlin he negotiated with Chancellor Bethman-Hollweg and Arthur Zimmerman of the Foreign Office for German military assistance in a rising against Britain.

He attempted to raise a brigade for the Irish rising from Irish prisoners-of-war and also supported German efforts to turn Indian Army prisoners against the Empire. Neither of these plans was successful.

The Germans provided ten thousand rifles for the rising but the ship carrying them was intercepted. Casement was captured soon after being landed from a German submarine.

Further information: H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Trial of Roger Casement*



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August 4, 1916

Foreign Office Not Happy



Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary

Sir Edward Grey and the Special Commissions

After two of the worst disasters in British military history (the Dardanelles campaign and the surrender of Kut in Mesopotamia), public and parliamentary opinion demand investigations of these catastrophes.

The *Special Commissions (Dardanelles and Mesopotamia) Act 1916* was passed to implement these enquiries.

A Special Commission was chosen in preference to a Select Parliamentary Committee as it was considered that a body mainly composed of outsiders, including retired senior military officers, would be less vulnerable to party bias.

On 4 August 1916, Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey expressed his deep concern regarding the forthcoming Commissions. He threatened to resign if too much effort was to be devoted to the Commissions at a time of acute crisis in the war.

In the end, Grey continued as Foreign Secretary until the Asquith coalition government fell, partly because of the prodding of the Commissions.

Further information: Wikipedia, *Special Commissions (Dardanelles and Mesopotamia) Act 1916*



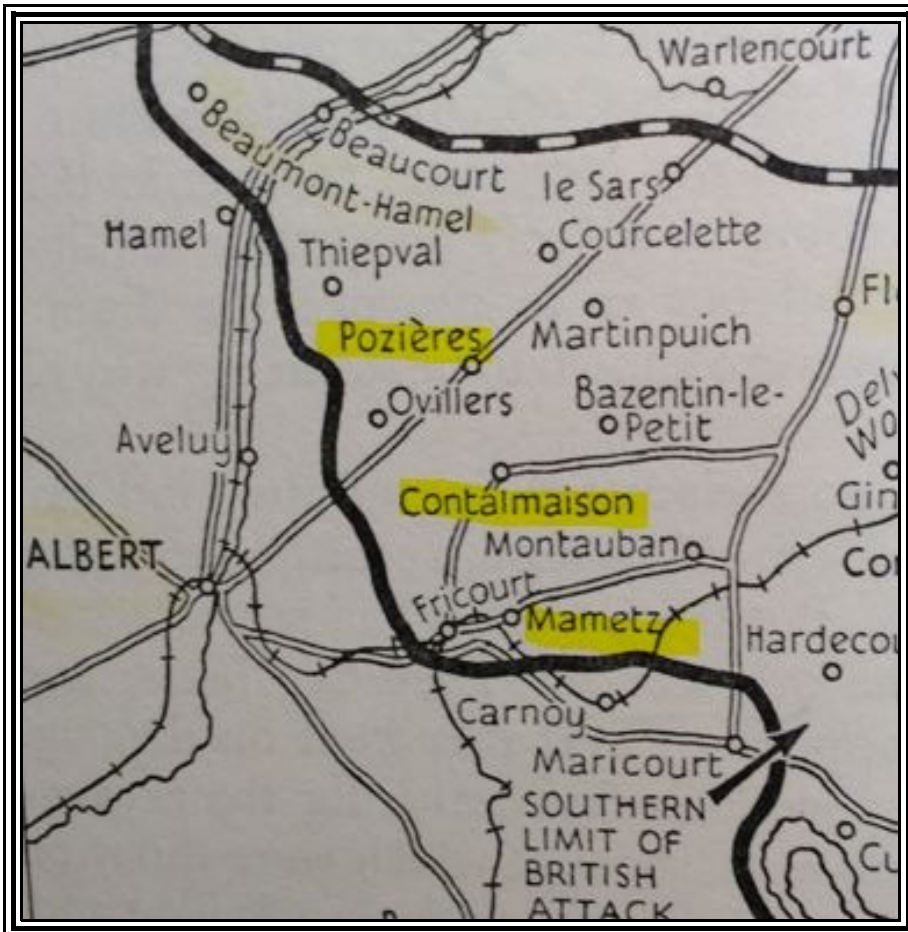
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August 5, 1916

Top of the Hill



Reaching the top of the Calvary

On 5 August 1916, the British gain a position that they had identified as their main objective for the fatal day of 1 July.

The village of Pozières stands on top of 'Hill 160' crowning the road from Albert to Bapaume.

It is a point where the second line of German defence is dug in. It has been consistently reinforced since the initial fall of the first line in the areas of Mametz and Contalmaison, to the south.

Among the attackers, the Australians were brought in through the Reserve Army on 23 July.

They have been doggedly assaulting uphill since then, 1 Australian and 2 Australian Divisions leaving 12,000 casualties in the process, almost half of their infantry.

Prior & Wilson, 'A Hell of a Time: Pozières and Mouquet Farm, July-August', p. 173-85.



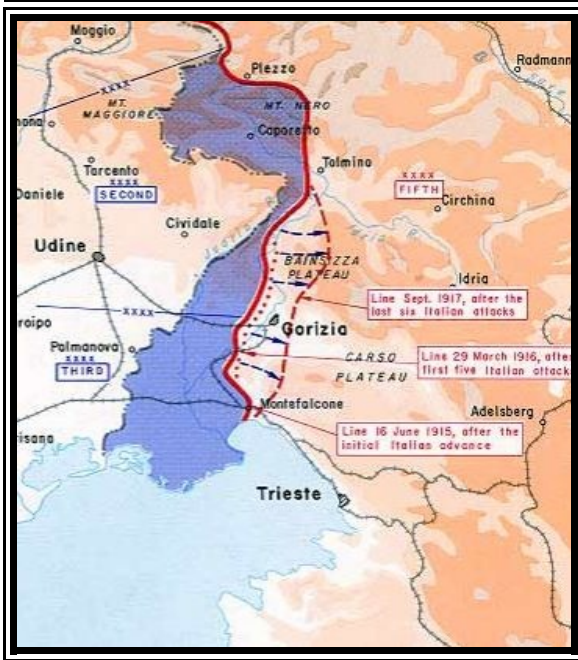
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August 6, 1916

Again and Again in Italy



Sixth Battle of the Isonzo

On 6 August 1916, Italian guns began pounding the Austrian lines in front of Mount San Michele and the town of Gorizia.

The surprised Austrians were stretched thin by redeployments to the Eastern Front to contain Brusilov's offensive.

The Italian gunners, amply provided with shells, smashed key Austrian positions; the Italian infantry surged forward and the sector began to crumble.

By 9 August, the enemy will have been driven back four to six kilometers along a 24 kilometre front, the biggest advance to that date.

Although Marshall Cadorna succeeds, his plan is too conservative and the opportunity to exploit success is missed. The Austrians manage to reinforce the sector.

The Italians moved eastwards only to confront another chain of heights, which will be defended by more well-supplied and battle hardened troops in the year to come.

•Further information: Mark Thompson, *The White War*



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Le 7 août, 1916

Un Nouvel Allié



Le Portugal se joint aux Alliés de l'Entente

Au cours d'une session spéciale des deux chambres de son Parlement, le Portugal se prononce, **le 7 août 1916**, à l'effet qu'il va se joindre aux alliés de l'Entente, avec une allégeance particulière à la Grande Bretagne.

Le Portugal acceptera formellement de participer aux opérations militaires en novembre 1916.

Il enverra des troupes en Afrique pour combattre les troupes coloniales allemandes.

Un premier corps expéditionnaire arrivera en France au début de 1917 et combattra avec vaillance à partir de juin 1917.

L'Allemagne avait déjà déclaré la guerre contre le Portugal, en mars 1916, parce que le gouvernement portugais avait accepté, en février, de saisir les navires de l'Alliance germanique dans ses ports et de les mettre au service de l'Entente.

●Aubrey Fitzgerald Bell, «Portugal», Encyclopaedia Britannica (Twelfth Ed., 1922), XXXII: 129-33.



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August 8, 1916

A Canadian Commission – What For?



THE EMPIRE'S NEED

MEN

MUNITIONS

MONEY

WHICH ARE YOU SUPPLYING!

Recruitment vs Labour

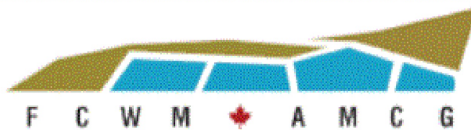
Sam Hugues, bolstered by the commitment by Borden to bring the Canadian forces to half a million by the end of the year, is predicting that Canada will have 8 to ten divisions in the field.

At that very moment, the recruiting curve is showing a slowdown since May. With 250,000 already recruited, still 200,000 are to be obtained. This will not be done.

In the month of August 1916, the Government thinks of establishing a commission to oversee recruitment, but it soon becomes apparent that labour issues are involved in the question and that the field of interest of such a commission should be enlarged so as to encompass various aspects of protection of civilian labour, particularly in war industries.

It becomes more and more evident, from this point, that the country needs a full manpower management system to not only look after recruitment, but protect industry and agriculture.

- Nicholson, CEC, 236-8.
- E. H. Armstrong, 154-5.



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August 9, 1916

Rumania seen to be ruminating



«Meanwhile Falkenhayn is not idle»

Roumania has been ruminating since the beginning of the war. It can go both ways in its allegiance if it chooses to join the fray.

By the middle of August, the Russian offensive started in June, which met with such great success under General Brusilov, has been stabilized by the rush to the east of German and Austrian divisions that were greatly needed in the west.

Falkenhayn is doing a juggler's act of putting the right forces at the right places to patch up defences in Galicia, in Italy, in the Somme and at Verdun.

But Falkenhayn knows that the Rumanians are about to call the big shot and he knows that they will want to take advantage of the recent Russian advance, with an assurance that Transylvania, if taken, will be theirs, with its population of irredentist Rumanians now under Hungarian rule.

He has therefore, among all the recent clever re-arrangements, catered to the buffering of the frontiers of Rumania, and prepared his forces in the East for a sudden announcement from Bucharest, that the Bratiano Government will throw its lot with the Entente.

Indeed Falkenhayn is not idle. But the failure of Verdun, an operation of a special nature that he has himself conceived and run against expert opinion, remains key to his reputation.

In fact, the very idea that Rumania is now assessing that her chances are against the Germans is a black mark on Falkenhayn's renown to be able crush any hopes of «treason» in the Balkans.

This is his final act as the Chief of the General Staff of the Triple Alliance.



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Le 10 août, 1916

La Roumanie dans la balance

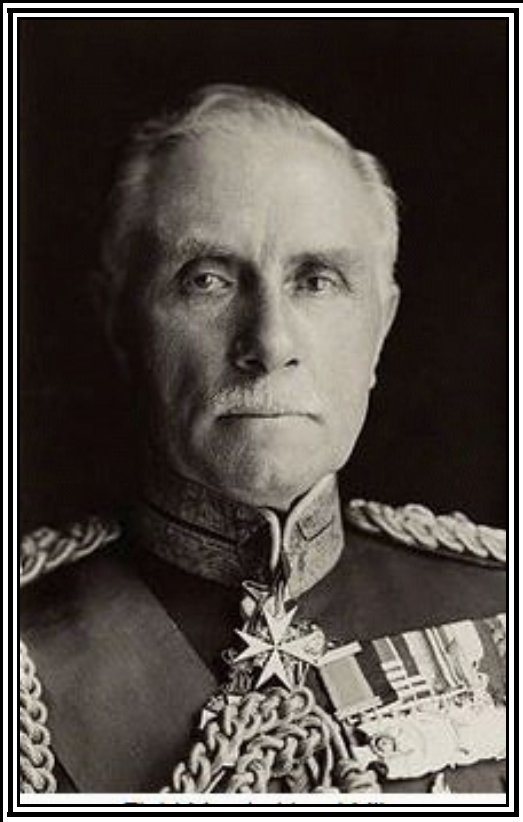
Le général Milne et l'opération de Salonique

En attente que la Roumanie déclare la guerre du côté des alliés de l'Entente, le général Maurice Sarrail, commandant des forces alliées à Salonique, reçoit des instructions de Paris de préparer une offensive pour venir en aide aux Roumains en occupant les Bulgares, de sorte à les empêcher de contre-attaquer immédiatement.

Mais Sarrail est dans une situation précaire. Bien qu'il ait 400,000 hommes sous son commandement, ils proviennent de la France, de la Grande Bretagne, de la Russie, de la Serbie et de l'Italie.

Le commandement est mal intégré et même le **général Francis Milne**, le commandant des forces britannique qui agit comme son adjoint au sein de la force multinationale, reçoit des instructions divergeantes de Londres: le général Robertson, le chef de l'état-major impérial britannique, se refuse de dissiper ses forces ailleurs qu'en France.

Sarrail fait aussi face à des problèmes importants qui allourdissent ses décisions. Le transport n'est pas adéquat, ses flancs sont mal protégés, et ses ressources techniques sont limitées.



Le terrain où il doit avancer est aussi difficile et se prête mal à la manœuvre.

Si la Roumanie attend de l'aide pour se dresser contre les forces conjointes de l'Allemagne, de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Bulgarie, il va falloir qu'elle vienne des Russes...

●Winston Churchill, World Crisis, Vol. III, Partie I, Chap. VIII.



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August 11, 1916

A Transfusion of Canadian Blood



The Canadian Corps moving south

By the second week of August, the French have carried all German third positions south of the Somme.

The British leadership (Haig) is now intent on making a new start with fresh troops to achieve the same.

Rawlinson's Fourth Army is now tasked to prepare to take the lead in this new «push» on the Somme front, and Gough's Reserve Army, now called Fifth Army, is given the task to flank the Fourth on the north side.

The **Canadian Corps** is now being re-assigned south from Second Army, in the Ypres sector, to Gough's Fifth Army in the Somme sector.

General Byng will now get involved in this upcoming Somme offensive under Fifth Army direction.

First Division will move first and go to an area that should be covered by a Corps. 2 Div and 3 Div will then move into combat positions.

4 Div (just arrived) will remain in reserve, well behind the front.

Now that ten British divisions, three Australian divisions, a South African brigade and an Indian cavalry brigade have been exhausted in recent operations for the Somme, new blood is needed.

•Greenhous & Harris, *Vimy*, 40; •John Buchan, *The History of the Great War*, (1925), 184.



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August 12, 1916

Attrition is a very ugly word



August, month of high attrition

By mid-August 1916, the Germans have been able to reinforce their defences on the Somme from elements transferred from Verdun and elsewhere.

The reorganization of the front has also made their efficiency better. They are able to improve their artillery and trench systems and resist the repeated attacks that

are being made day and night by the British.

Once again, as happened in Verdun for the French, the superiority of defence over offence is reasserted. This is due mainly to the lack of communications and transport, which prevents rapid exploitation of offensive success.

The Allies' options are limited if they want to break through. They keep attacking, hoping that the ratio of casualties will eventually play in their favor.

Attrition is indeed a very ugly word.

« 'August was the month of attrition at its height: continuous, heart-breaking milling at close quarters, minute gains at best, each ending with groups of crumpled corpses strewn about the objectives.'¹ On the Somme, as at Verdun, exponents of the offensive could not overcome the defensive strength of their opponents.»²

●Cyril Falls, The Great War, 1914-1918 (1961), Chap 3, «1916».

●Hunter, FOCH, p. 115.



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Le 13 août, 1916

Foch sur la sellette



Le général Wilson visite le général Foch à Villers-Bretonneux

Hier, **12 août 1916**, le général Henry Wilson, qui est officier de liaison britannique au Grand Quartier général du Général Joffre, a visité le général Foch sur le terrain à Villers-Bretonneux.

Foch lui a raconté comment le Secrétaire d'État britannique à la Guerre, le ministre David Lloyd George, lui avait rendu visite le jour précédent.

Lloyd George a pressé Foch de multiples questions pour en arriver à savoir pourquoi le Corps expéditionnaire britannique, sous le général Haig, avait si peu de succès dans la campagne de la Somme, en comparaison avec les Français.

Comme il sait le faire comme avocat et politicien chevronné, Lloyd George étudie tous les angles pour arriver à tirer parti des expériences françaises et pouvoir influencer les opérations militaires britanniques pour qu'elles aient plus de succès.

Foch se voit ainsi placé dans la position difficile de devoir critiquer son coéquipier de gauche en tant que commandant de groupe d'armées auprès de son gouvernement.

Foch avoue à Wilson qu'il s'est refusé à émettre des commentaires négatifs envers Haig, sachant que leurs relations déjà tendues seraient ruinées s'il l'apprenait.

●Liddell Hart, Man of Orleans, I:234



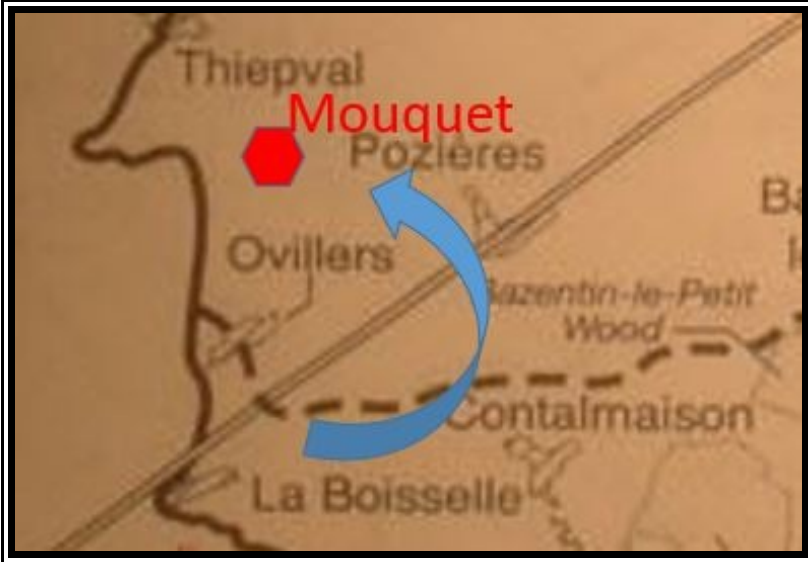
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August 14, 1916

Farm Hands



Australian Fourth Division at Mouquet Farm

Mouquet Farm is a strong point of resistance established by the Germans behind Thiepval.

It is characterized by wide fields of fire where German defences can sweep with fixed lines of machine-gun fire and artillery directed with uncanny precision.

The British forces are now in Pozieres and the next step is to take Thiepval from behind, a height that could not be taken from the west on the first day.

Fourth Australian Division is now trying to approach Mouquet Farm, but the

only manner in which it can be done is through sapping, as in medieval siege warfare.

Trenches are dug to allow the infantry to progress toward the objective. The spade becomes the weapon of choice. But the digging is under constant harassment by artillery and small arms fire.

Losses are such that the Australians will exhaust their fourth division for the Battle of the Somme (including Fromelles).

●Prior and Wilson, Somme, p. 181-2.



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15 August, 1916
High Noon

AUGUST STALEMATE

Division after division took its turn

Each adding to its escutcheon

The name of some captured town or village

Hitherto unheard of

And already unrecognizeable

Or maybe some craggy eyesore of a wood

High Wood

Delville Wood

Mametz Wood, etc.

— Otherwise unknown to history

-- Where imperishable deeds had been performed.»¹

- Hankey, Supreme Command, II: 511 (changed from prose to verse).



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August 16, 1916

War Service Badges

Canada's Service badges

On Tuesday, **August 16, 1916**, Canada's outgoing Governor General, His Excellency, The Duke of Connaught, enacted Order in Council P.C. 1944.

This established three classes of persons entitled to War Badges.

- Men honourably discharged from the Expeditionary Force.
- Men who offered themselves for active service but were rejected.
- Men who desired to or had offered to enlist who were refused because their services were more valuable in their present employment.



Six months later, on **Tuesday, February 27, 1917**, Canada's Deputy Governor General, C. Fitzpatrick, will approve Order in Council P.C. 275 which will supersede P.C. 1944. This will establish the design of the badges, redefine the classes entitled to them and establish a fourth class.

Three months later, on **Tuesday, May 15, 1917**, Order in Council P.C. 1296 will redefine the classes entitled to War Badges.

•See Veterans Affairs Web Site



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August 17, 1916

Somewhere in Greece



The Battle of Florina (17-27 August 1916)

The Central Powers know that Rumania is about to announce her allegiance to the Entente Powers.

The Chief of the German General Staff, General Falkenhayn, has already taken secret dispositions so as to jump on Rumania as soon as the announcement comes.

Meanwhile, General Mackensen, the overall commander of the Alliance forces in the Balkans, is pre-empting an attack that is being prepared by the Entente forces from their position in Salonica.

On 17 August 1916, the Bulgarian forces attack around Florina, a Greek town, so as to dominate the Struma River. The fighting will last 10 days.

Greece, maintaining its neutral stance, does not oppose the Bulgarian advance. The Serbian army, rescued and returned to Salonica, opposes the Bulgarians. But the move is clever and French General Sarrail, commanding the Allies' Salonica force, does not have satisfactory options to help Rumania in good time.

•Dupuy & Dupuy, Encyclopedia of Military History(1977), 963. •Wikipedia, «The Battle of Florina»



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August 18, 1916

Byng's Ultimatum



The Hughes-Byng Affair

In June, the 3rd Canadian Division was battered during the opening phase of the Battle of Mount Sorrel. The divisional commander was killed.

Minister Sam Hughes immediately demanded his replacement by his son, Garnet Hugues, then a staff officer in Corps Headquarters.

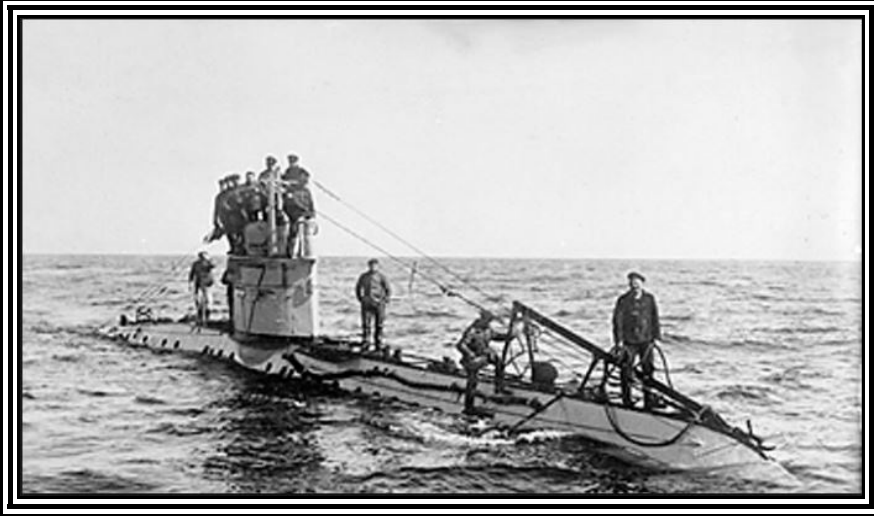
Byng, only recently appointed Corps Commander, refused Hughes' order.

On 16 August 1916 an enraged Sam Hughes met Byng and demanded why Garnet had not been given the 3rd Division. Byng responded that the Canadians deserved the best leaders he could give them. Hughes threatened to fire Byng and stated that he was “never wrong” to which Byng replied “What a damned dull life you must have had, Minister.” Hughes burst into laughter, the tension subsided and from then onwards, Hughes strongly supported Byng, who later became Governor General of Canada.

Further information: Tim Cook, *The Madman and the Butcher*

August 19, 1916

Submarines and Mines



The Grand Fleet kept at Bay

On 19 August 1916, a few raiders came out of the German ports to pepper the British coast as a gesture of defiance. But they were soon hightailing it back when they heard that the British Grand Fleet was after them.

Basil Liddell Hart says that this incident was an important one, unrealized at the time.

The British Grand Fleet did in fact come out, but it did not extend its chase far to the south.

The Commanders of the Royal Navy were short-leashed by the risk of submarines and mines.

«Thus the paralysis of the German fleet henceforth was the result of the Germans' own alternative plan, and not of Jutland. And it did not even leave the British Grand Fleet in possession of the North Sea. For the moral effect of a submarine ambush which marked the German sortie of August 19th was so great, even though it miscarried, that henceforth the Grand Fleet was almost as confined as an old-time debtor in the Fleet Prison, and was definitely debarred from the southern half of the North Sea.»¹

¹ Liddell Hart, First World War, p. 214-5.



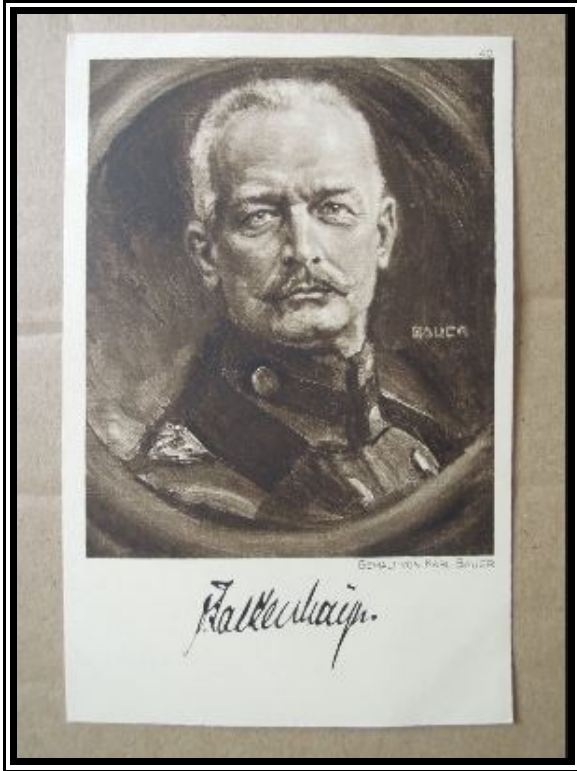
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Le 20 août, 1916

Le chant du cygne de Falkenhayn



Falkenhayn reste en défense

Les dernières directives de von Falkenhayn, [en août 1916], étaient de rester strictement sur la défensive, afin de ménager les forces en vue d'un état d'urgence.

Mieux que personne, il se rendait compte que l'Allemagne était dangereusement à court de soldats formés.

‘Sous la très lourde pression qui pèse sur nous, écrivait-il le 21 août, nous ne disposons d’aucun excédent de puissance. Tout déplacement d’effectif dans une direction amène tôt ou tard un dangereux affaiblissement en un autre endroit, qui peut provoquer notre perte advenant la moindre erreur de calcul dans la prévision des mesures auxquelles on peut s’attendre de la part de l’ennemi.’¹

Les décisions que les Alliés ont prises à Chantilly semblent porter fruit.²

¹ Citation tirée de l'Histoire officielle allemande, *Reichsarchiv, De Weltkrieg 1914-1918* (Berlin 1925-1944), p. 675-6.

² Nicholson, *Le Corps Expéditionnaire canadien*, p. 179.



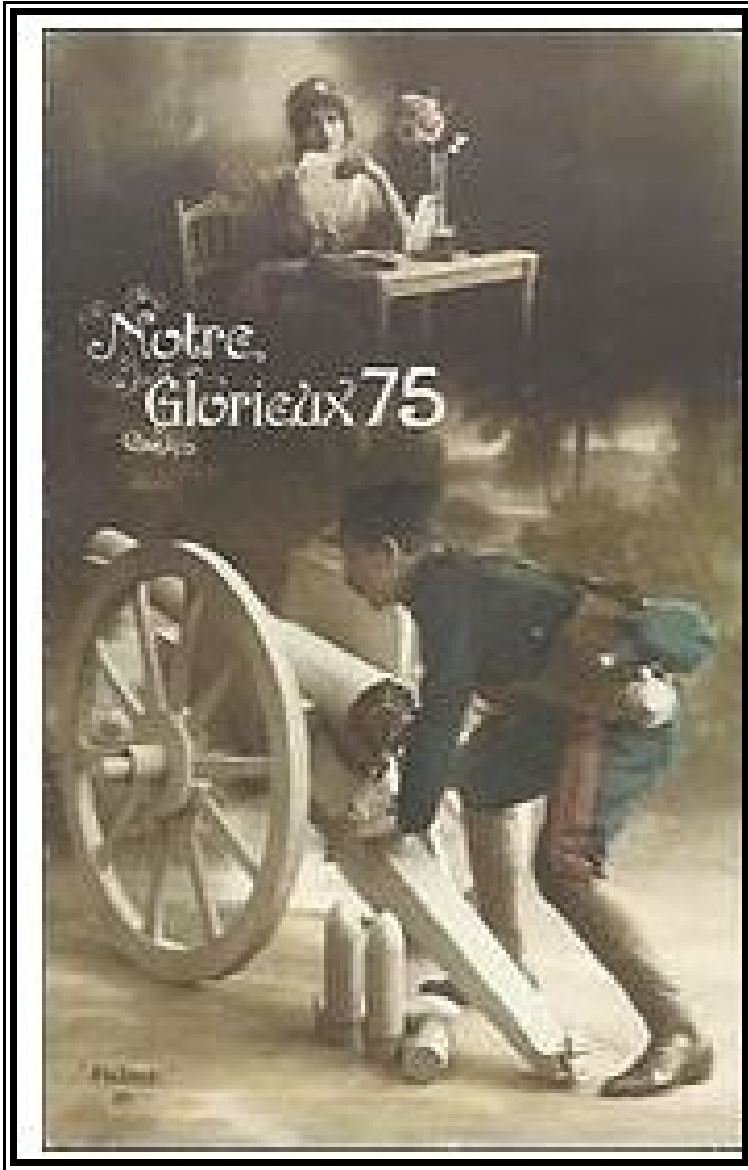
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●August 21, 1916

Le Canon de '75' – Ubiquitous



The French “75”

The model 1897 75mm gun was the most prolific French artillery piece during WW1, with about 12,000 manufactured.

It was designed as an anti-personnel weapon using shrapnel against advancing infantry. The 75 could deliver 15 rounds per minute on a flat trajectory to a range of 8,500m.

The 75 also utilized high explosive shells to cut corridors through German barbed wire and from 1916, it became the primary French delivery system for poison gas, mainly mustard and phosgene.

Delivery of gas was most effective when a cloud was emitted from gas cylinders from the forward trench but fickle winds could disperse the gas cloud or even blow it back.

Artillery was less effective but the French, like other combatants including Canada, developed complex tactics using gas mixed with high explosive as an element of surprise on specific targets.

Further information: Wikipedia, *canon de 75*



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August 22nd, 1916 War at the Movies



The Battle of the Somme on film

1916 is the year when the camera entered the battlefield. A film crew was brought forward by Max Aitken to seize images of Canadian soldiers in the trenches of Ypres in the early summer of 1916.

British cinematographers quickly followed with their own footage. A film prepared for the battle of the Somme by Geoffrey Malins and John MacDowell, with reels brought back on 9 July, is released on **20 August 1916**.

This film will be seen by 1 million people in London in one week, and by 19 million people throughout Great Britain in six weeks.

This success was followed with regular contributions to be seen weekly throughout the Empire as 'newsreel' between popular shows.

After Aitken became Chairman of the British-Canadian Cinematograph Committee, in the summer of 1916, two eight-minute films were produced each week under War Office oversight. They came to be seen by 20 million viewers a week.

● Travers, Tim, «Canadian Film and the First World War», in The First World War and Popular Cinema: 1914 to the Present, Ed. Michel Paris (New Brunswick, New Hersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999), p. 96-114.

● Cook, Tim, «Canada's Great War on Film», CMH, 14:3 (Summer 2005), pp. 5-20.



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August 23rd, 1916

Wings of Albatros



The German Albatros Fighters

In **August 1916**, the Albatros D.I entered service with the new fighter squadrons of the German air force.

The D.I was the first of a highly successful series of fighter aircraft, with over 4600 built.

The Albatros fighters will be the most numerous fighters in German and Austrian service during the last two years of the war.

Highly maneuverable and with a high rate of climb, they were flown by all the

top German fighter pilots and dominated allied fighters until Autumn 1917 with many serving to the end.

All Albatros fighters were built with an advanced semi-monocoque plywood fuselage and powered by inline six cylinder water-cooled engines.

The D.III and D.V models continued the success of the first models but suffered from wing structural problems which were never entirely resolved.

Further information: Wikipedia articles, *Albatros D.1*, *D.II*, *D.III*, *D.V*



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August 24, 1916 Second Division, Quick March!



Second Canadian Division on the move

Second Canadian Division is now on the move toward the Somme.

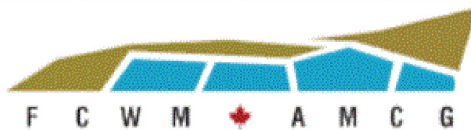
On 24 August 1916, the Division turns its present sector over to the Fourth Canadian Division and starts a four day road march which will take it to the 2nd Army training area at Zouafques, where it will remain until September 5th.

Four days later it will be at Brickfields, on the outskirts of Albert, the center of the British Somme battle front.

During the next few days the division will advance, first to the reserve trenches in Sausage Valley, near La Boisselle, and then, on the 14th September, to assembly positions in the front line near Pozières.

It will be right there, ready to go, on the 15th of September for the advance on Courcellette.

●Henry W. McBride, *A Rifleman went to War* (1935), p. 236.



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August 25, 1916

Something Wanting



Haig's ambivalence

During the month of August 1916, in which the method of «attrition» makes its unavoidable comeback in the Somme from its former abodes in Verdun, **General Douglas Haig** is faced with having to give direction to troops that are being sacrificed in a manner so as to be Pound-wise rather than Penny-wise.

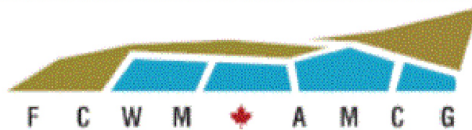
But such directions are not easy to give. Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson say, in «Something wanting in the Method Employed,»¹ that his instructions are seen as «such a contradiction and muddle that it must have been difficult for Rawlinson and Gough to appreciate what was required of them.»

«So to summarize, Haig was asking for careful and methodical operations to be conducted in haste: to concentrate on the right flank but to attack on the left as well; to use as few troops as possible but in sufficient numbers to succeed; and to economize in munitions which would result, as Western Front fighting had demonstrated over the course of two years, in a prodigality of casualties.»²

The instructions are written seemingly so that Haig can refer to them to reprimand a commander for any unsuccessful manner of doing things, having emphasized everything...

¹ Prior & Wilson, Somme, Chap 15 – ‘Something wanting in the Method Employed’: 1 August - 12 September», 157-72.

² Ibid, 160.



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August 26, 1916

Little Willie Fires Big Knobelsdorf

Verdun - Settling the Accounts

In Verdun the Germans have now had to go without reinforcements for two months. Divisions were sent from there to the Bapaume command and to the eastern front, where Brusilov created an emergency.

The German Army of Verdun, their Fifth Army, is now pitted against Nivelle's *Deuxième Armée*, the other «*Armée de Verdun* », which also has to do without.

Fifth German Army is commanded by the **Prince Crown of Prussia, Prince Wilhelm**, son of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

As a thirty-year old man, *Prinz Wilhelm* was instructed by his father to let the Chief of staff of the army, **General Konstantin Schmidt von Knobelsdorf**, take the decisions. The Prince is in fact there to learn the ropes and represent the Crown among the soldiers.

But after a year and a half of war, and having presided over the German side of the Battle of Verdun since the beginning, «Little Willie» has developed some views of his own on the tactics that are being implemented by the General Staff.

He is now adamant that Falkenhayn's decisions are wrong and that Knobelsdorf, who implements the views of his chief, must go.

This is one more blow to Falkenhayn's reputation.

●Pétain, *Verdun*, p. 195. ●Farrar-Hockley, *Somme*, 203



Konstantin Schmidt von Knobelsdorf



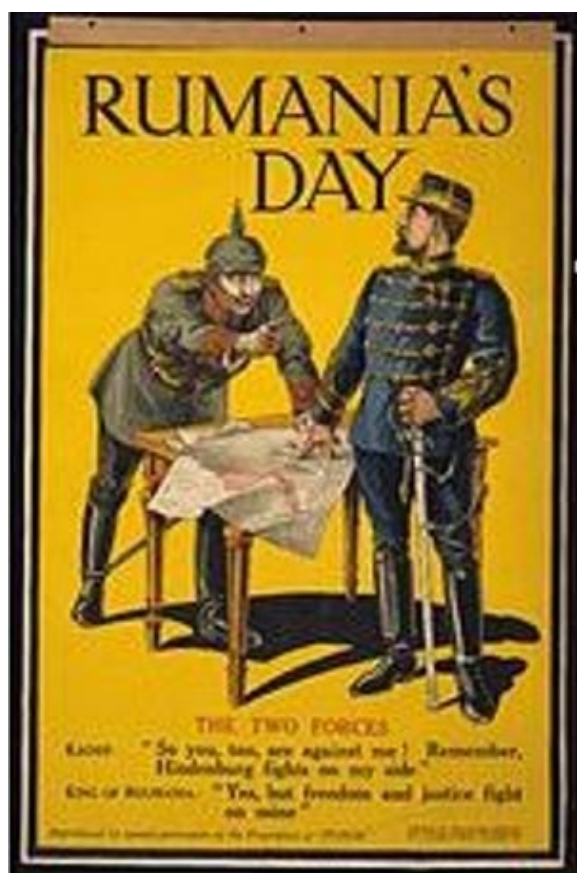
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August 27, 1916

Making the Jump



Rumania Enters the War

At the outset of the war, King Carol wanted to honour Rumania's secret 1883 commitment to the Triple Alliance but his successor, King Ferdinand, as well as public and political opinion favoured joining the Entente powers.

In talks with the allies, Rumania set its conditions as the Austro-Hungarian province of Transylvania, heavily populated by Rumanians, and several other pieces of traditionally Rumanian territory.

On 17 August, Romania signed the Treaty of Bucharest with France, Britain, Italy and Russia. The Treaty covered political conditions (the territorial claims) as well as a pact outlining military assistance.

On 27 August 1916, Romania declared war on Austria-Hungary and attacked Transylvania.

The Rumanian army (650,000) was large but lacked modern equipment and training.

Despite these handicaps, the Central Powers were caught by surprise and the offensive got off to a good start.

Further information: John Keegan, *The First World War*



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August 28, 1916

Italy Also Makes the Jump



Italy Declares War on the German Empire

Prior to the war, Italy was allied to Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Triple Alliance.

However, **Foreign Minister Sidney Costantino Sonnino** came to believe that this combination would not deliver Italy's territorial ambitions which would have to be conceded by Austria.

Quiet contacts had already begun with Britain and France regarding Italy's war role and possible territorial acquisitions.

At the outset of the war, Italy declined to intervene, under the pretext that the Triple Alliance was a defensive pact and Austria had acted as an aggressor.

After a political crisis, Italy signed the secret Treaty of London with Britain, France and Russia in April 1915, joining the Triple Entente; war was declared on Austria on 23 May.

Italy fully committed itself to the Entente on **28 August 1916**, formally declaring war against Imperial Germany.

Further information: ●Wikipedia, *Military History of Italy During WW1*



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August 29, 1916

German High Command



La conférence d'État allemande de Pless

Le Gouvernement de l'Allemagne doit faire face à l'entrée successive de la Roumanie et le l'Italie en guerre en tant qu'ennemies.

Une conférence d'État est donc convoquée à Pless, en Silésie, pour déterminer la haute stratégie pour les mois qui vont suivre.

Les ministres civils y sont présents de même que le Haut Commandement militaire, sous la présidence du Kaiser.

Le Chef de l'État-major impérial, le général Falkenhayn maintient que le temps est venu d'avoir recours à la guerre sousmarine illimitée de sorte à isoler l'Angleterre avant que les États-Unis puissent

intervenir. Il voit le temps avant les élections américaines de novembre comme une dernière chance.

Les civils objectent que ceci ne peut pas se produire, et que des mises en garde diplomatiques ont déjà laissé entendre que les Américains interviendraient si leur commerce était interrompu.

Il ressort de cette conférence que les généraux Hindenburg et Ludendorff vont maintenant remplacer Falkenhayn. Ils promettent de redresser la situation de l'armée de terre sans intervention sousmarine immédiate.

Il s'agit ni plus ni moins que de l'établissement d'un régime militaire.

Pour plus d'information, Fisher, [Germany's Aims in the First World War](#), p. 290-3; Wikipedia.



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Le 30 août 1916 Tous Comptes Facts



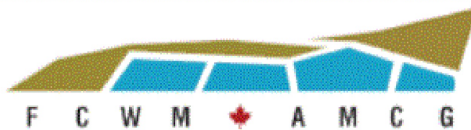
Un demi-million

À la fin du mois d'août 1916, le nombre des hommes morts, disparus, ou qui ont dû être évacués des combats de la Bataille de la Somme depuis le 1er juillet arrive au demi-million:

Britanniques: 200,000

Allemands: 200,000

Français: 70,000



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August 31st, 1916

Robertson whispers secrets



Chief of the Imperial General Staff Questions War Aims

On 31 August 1916, Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, submitted a very secret memorandum to the British war council in response to a request on high strategy from Prime Minister Asquith.

Robertson feared that France had more fully developed its war aims and would thus have an advantage over Britain in the peace process.

He believed that the real long-term threats to Britain were from a combination of France and Russia (as they had been prior to 1900).

The CIGS considered that Germany might sue for peace at any moment and that it was in Britain's interest to preserve Germany as a major power to block Russian influence in the future.

At the time and despite the war situation, Robertson's views reflected the continuing influence of Britain's traditional European strategy.

Further information: David French, *British Strategy and War Aims 1914-1916*



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