

October 1st, 1916



October Rain in the Somme

The first two weeks of **October 1916** were marked by rain in the Somme.

The Canadian Corps has now received the task to capture Regina Trench, so as to set a Start Line for Reserve Army, which will be involved in another large three-army British operation on October 12.



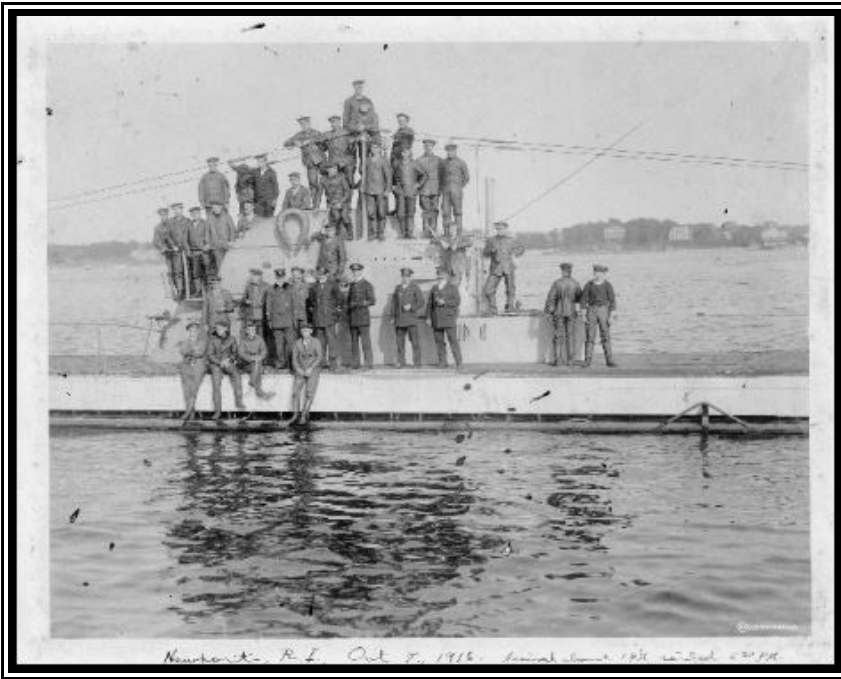
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October 2nd, 1916

Sharking American Shores



German Submarines cross the Atlantic

On 1st October 1916, the German submarine action has sunk 1,62 million tons of shipping in ten months since January 1916, — 877,000 tons of which was British, the rest neutrals' and allied's shipping.

This rate is now erupting with the introduction of the long-range cruiser submarine.

On 2 October 1916, U-53 succeeds in crossing the Atlantic, emerging on the east coast of the United States.

U-53 will pay a surprise visit to the still neutral port of Newport, Rhodes Island, near Nantucket, where Captain

Hans Rose will be received with courtesy.

Soon after U-53 will go on rampage against British merchantmen on the west side of the Atlantic, sinking five in near succession.

U-Boat war has now come to America. This feat changes the complexion of war at sea for Canada. It has to expand its coastal anti-submarine patrols.

●Milner, Canada's Navy, p. 50.



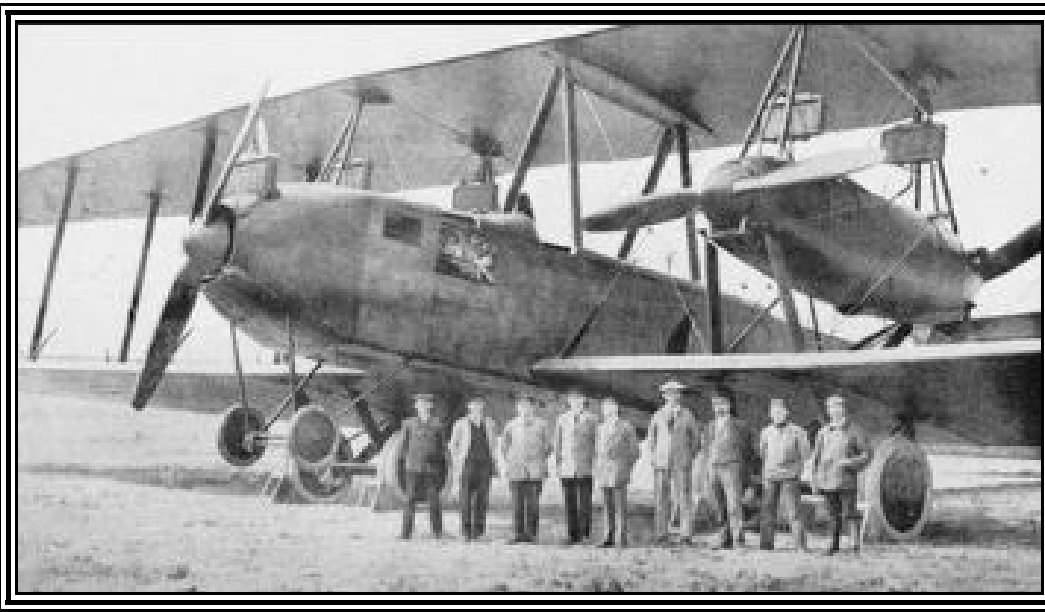
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Le 3 octobre, 1916

Le bombardement aérien tué dans l'oeuf



En octobre 1916, les autorités du service aérien naval britannique proposent que certains de leurs escadres soient consacrés au bombardement.

C'est d'ailleurs le même service qui l'an dernier a proposé que ses avions deviennent des torpilleurs, ce qui fut refusé par les autorités navales. Elles auraient sans doute fait une différence appréciable dans la bataille de

Jutland, en mai dernier.

Cette fois-ci, ce sont les autorités de l'Armée qui refusent un rôle qui est pourtant chaudement supporté par un aviateur français, le Colonel Barrès.

Lorsqu'on lui demande son opinion sur cette question, Douglas Haig répond en effet que toute cette théorie du bombardement aérien lui paraît oiseuse, et ne devrait pas être adoptée en pratique.

C'est son commentaire qui a tué l'oiseau dans l'oeuf. Le bombardement aérien ne recevra dorénavant que peu d'attention dans les forces de l'Entente pour le reste de la guerre.

Les Allemands entretemps développeront les énormes Gotha, avions géants qui ont remplacé les Zeppelins pour faire des raids aériens au dessus des centres industriels.

On ne peut qu'imaginer ce que des appareils conçus et adaptés spécifiquement aux besoins du bombardement auraient pu infliger dans un rôle d'interdiction.

●Liddle Hart, History of the First World War (Pan Books, 1976), p. 359-60.



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October 4, 1916

A Soft Side of Politics



Balfour's Memorandum on the Possibilities for Peace

Lloyd George's recent interview with the *New York Times* is a direct challenge to the American President and his interest in mediation.

British Prime Minister Asquith, prompted by the interview, asked members of the War Committee of the Cabinet to express their views on the possibility (and desirability) of a negotiated peace settlement with Germany.

Sir Arthur Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty, submits a long memorandum to the Committee, entitled *The Peace Settlement in Europe*.

This is one of several responses and takes a moderate stance, acknowledging that Germany's interests have to be recognized, even if it definitely has to relinquish occupied territory and some colonies.

Others, such as General Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, advocate for Lloyd George's "knock out blow."

This hard stance carries the argument.

Further information: Woodrow Wilson, *Wilson Vol. 5: Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace*



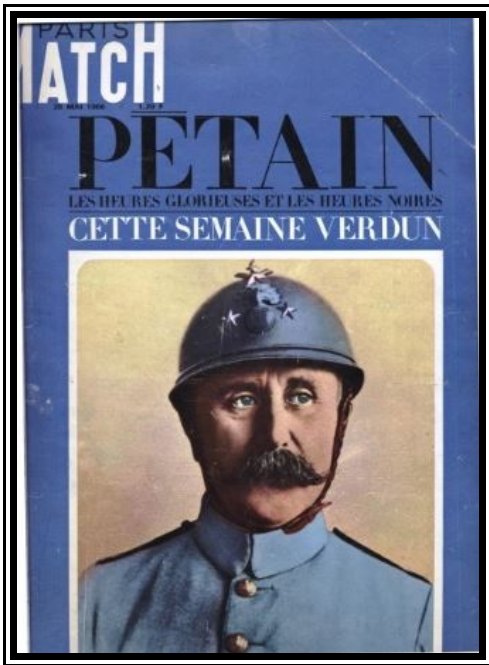
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October 5, 1916

Set Your Watches



Verdun: « *Our hour was about to strike* », by Pétain

General Pétain's very words:

« At Verdun our hour was about to strike. General Nivelle and I had agreed at the beginning of October to proceed to the recapture of the forts in order to restore the Citadel to its pristine strength.

«General Mangin, assigned to the command of the sectors on the right bank, was directing the operation, and actuated by such a leader as he, whose vigor was a by-word in the French army, we counted on a signal success.

«General headquarters had sent two mortars of 400 calibers that I had asked for, and these, in addition to several pieces of 370 caliber which we already had, allowed us to keep up a powerful crushing fire on the earthworks.

«The artillery at our disposition for the attack would amount in all to three hundred field guns and three hundred heavy pieces, [198/201] the smallest number with which we could expect to subdue the two hundred batteries, amounting to eight hundred pieces, located by the Second Army in the involved German sectors on the right bank.

«The assault was to be launched with a first line force of three divisions, which three second line divisions would be prepared to support. That is to say, we would have the same number of major units as the Germans could use against us.

«We were not superior in material strength, but we undoubtedly were in morale and also in training, for the officers and common soldiers alike had followed a thorough course in preparation for the attack.»

Pétain, Verdun, p. 198-201.

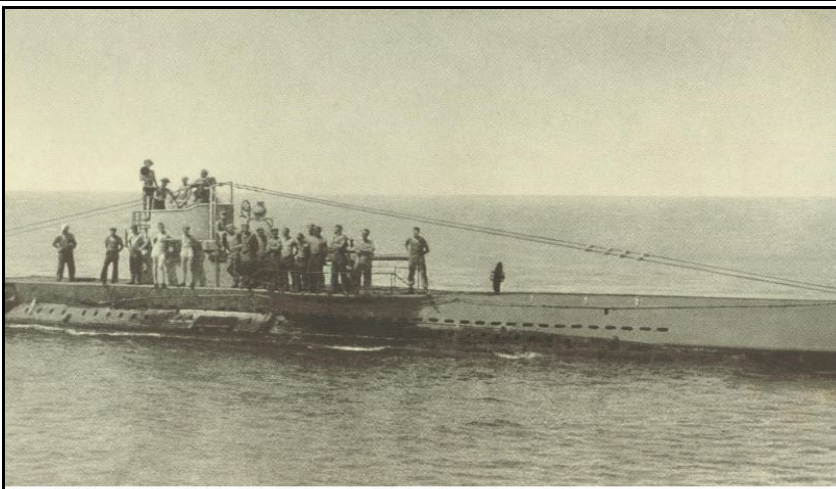


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October 6, 1916
«Restricted» (for now)



Type 19 U-Boat as used in Restricted Submarine Warfare Campaign

Germany Resumes *Restricted* Submarine Warfare

At the end of April, Admiral Scheer switched his North Atlantic U-boats from commerce raiding to military roles in support of the High Seas Fleet.

By September, it had become clear that the fleet had failed in its missions (Jutland et seq.) and the decision was taken to resume submarine attacks on merchant shipping and commerce, in order to blockade the British Isles.

This new campaign of *restricted* submarine warfare is now

to be conducted under the “prize rules,” meaning that ships would be stopped, inspected for war materiel and sunk if contraband was found, but only after passengers and crew were allowed to attain safety in the ship's life boats.

The goal of the restricted campaign is to impose serious losses on Britain's wartime economy without diplomatic complications, ie., with the US over the deaths of American citizens.

Further information: Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*

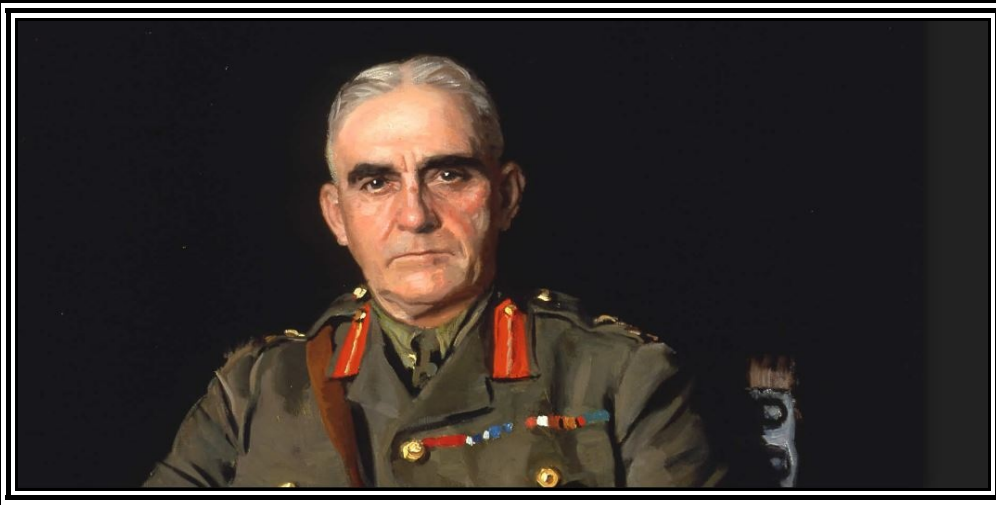


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October 7, 1916 Meeting of Minds



Sam Hughes recalled home

Sam Hughes is in London, tasked by Prime Minister Robert Borden to make recommendations so as to unravel the labyrinthian Canadian arrangements for the overseas organization of the Canadian forces (excluding their actual combat role within the British army).

Hugues sees any change to the structure of what he has set up in London as a challenge to his own central position and the whole network of informal connections that he has established so as to avoid government oversight.

When Borden hears through London newspapers that the Minister of Militia has now established a new «Canadian Militia Subcouncil» in England, without any consultation with Cabinet, and that this Subcouncil has Sam Hughes' own son-in-law as secretary, Borden fires a telegram recalling Hugues to Canada.

On 7 October 2016, Sir Sam arrives in Ottawa. — There's gonna be some explainin' to do!

•Ralph Allen, Ordeal by Fire, Chap 13 - «Exit Sam Hugues—«Tell'em to go like blazes!», p. 108-12.



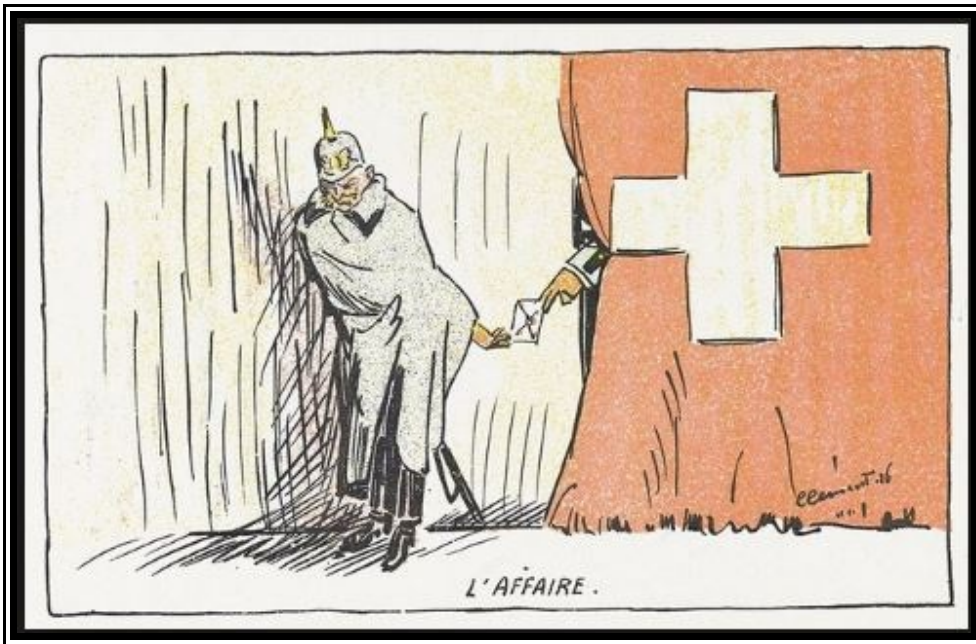
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Le 8 octobre, 1916

Des Espions neutres



L’Affaire Malherbe

Quelques lignes, parues dans le numéro du *Petit Troyen*, le **8 octobre 1916** apprennent à la population l’exécution de Malherbe: Espion fusillé.

Le nommé Malherbe Félix, 41 ans, d’origine suisse, condamné pour espionnage par le Conseil de guerre de la 20^e région, le 12 mai dernier, a été passé par les armes la veille.

Le 4 mai 1915, le service de contrôle de la gare de Troyes l’avait arrêté parce qu’il manquait une signature de la légation helvétique sur son

passport. Lors de la fouille, on a relevé sur son horaire de chemin de fer, des chiffres, des numéros de régiments, et d’autres indications compromettantes.

Incarcéré, accusé d’intelligence avec l’ennemi, Malherbe est **condamné à mort**. L’aumônier militaire protestant et son avocat, pensant que ce serait une erreur de faire disparaître un homme aussi bien documenté, constituent un dossier auprès du Président de la République, sans résultat.

L’Affaire Malherbe met à jour un réseau d’espionnage allemand établi en Suisse. Malgré le statut neutre de la Suisse, un aviateur français va bombarder un nid d’espionnage dans Loerrach.

●<http://www.jschweitzer.fr/notre-histoire/espionnage/>

●http://www.laliberte.ch/news/dossiers/histoire-vivante/la-suisse-neutre-cachait-un-nid-d-espions--296919#.V_kNSOpzZYc



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Le 9 octobre, 1916

Fin du Succès russe



Le Tsar Nicolas II ordonne la fin de l'offensive Broussilov

Elle a commencé le 4 juin 1916, sur un front de plus de 300 km, par deux attaques simultanées contre les forces austro-hongroises, dans lesquelles quatre armées (48 divisions) furent engagées.

Des deux côtés, les pertes sont effroyables : un million de pertes russes; 600,000 austro-hongrois (plus 400.000 prisonniers) et 350.000 Allemands.

Cette offensive met les forces austro-hongroises à genoux.

L'Autriche-Hongrie tombe ainsi sous la dépendance totale de l'Allemagne.

Sources: <http://aujourd'hui.over-blog.fr/2016/06/4-juin-1916-offensive-broussilov.html>

Pour en savoir plus: <http://www.commemorer14-18.be/index.php?id=11171>



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October 10, 1916

Isonzo: Try Again



Eight Down, Three to Go

On **10 October 1916**, Italy and Austria-Hungary began fighting each other in the **Eighth Battle of the Isonzo**.

This was a continuation of an extended battle along the Isonzo River in modern-day Slovenia.

The Italians pitted 20 divisions against 14 Austro-Hungarian divisions in an attempt to extend the bridgehead created at the town of Gorizia the previous month during the Sixth Battle of the Isonzo.

The Italian attempts to advance the line failed, largely due to the geographic advantage held by the Austro-Hungarians, who were across a river, and held the high ground along

several ridges.

Despite the Austro-Hungarian advantage, each side sustained approximately 25,000 casualties. The inconclusive nature of the battle ultimately led to the renewed attempts to advance across the river during the Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Battles of the Isonzo.

● John R. Schindler, *Isonzo: The Forgotten Sacrifice of the Great War*.



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October 11, 1916

Tons of Pounds



British Prime Minister Asquith

Statement by PM Asquith on War Finance

On 11 October 1916, British Prime Minister Asquith addressed the British House of Commons seeking a supplementary vote of war finance, in the amount of 300 million Pounds for the period to the end of the 1916-17 financial year, totalling 1,350 million £ for the year.

Asquith noted that Navy spending was constant, the Army's somewhat lower but munitions had increased significantly.

On this, the PM stated: “**considering the enormous part the artillery of the Allies has played, and is playing, I believe everyone will agree that that expenditure is well warranted.**”

The Prime Minister provided a cautiously optimistic outlook regarding the

various theatres of war.

He emphasized the need to prevail, saying that the war “**can not be allowed to end in some patched-up, precarious, dishonouring compromise masquerading under the name of Peace.**”

Full text: *Hansard 11 October 1916* accessed at hansard.millbanksystems.com



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Le 12 octobre, 1916

Cent Quatre Jours



Le Terre-Neuve revient à la Somme

L'île de Terre-Neuve, la plus ancienne colonie de l'Empire britannique, qui compte 250,000 habitants en 1914, participa féroce­ment à la Grande Guerre: le *Newfoundland Regiment* mobilisa plus de 6000 hommes.

Quelques 1200 trouvèrent la mort en Belgique, dans le Nord, la Somme et le Pas-de-Calais.

Le **12 octobre 1916**, cent quatre jours après le désastre de Beaumont Hamel, où le Régiment a été complètement anéanti, quatre

compagnies terre-neuviennes rebâties partent à l'assaut du village de Gueudecourt dans la campagne de la Somme.

Avec le 1^{er} bataillon de l'*Essex Regiment* sur leur gauche, ils s'emparent de la tranchée en première ligne de défense allemande.

Tandis que le bataillon tente de s'emparer d'une autre tranchée, ils sont forcés, suite à une vive contre-attaque ennemie, de se replier hors du village de Gueudecourt.

Malgré ses 239 pertes, dont 120 tués depuis son arrivée dans les tranchées, le 10 octobre, le *Newfoundland Regiment* parvient à défendre la position contre d'autres attaques ennemies et conserve la tranchée «Hilt», un bastion allemand situé à 400 mètres de la ligne de front défendue par les Britanniques.

Sources: <http://www.somme14-18.com/memory-place/memorial-terre-neuvien-gueudecourt>

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/fra/remembrance/memorials/overseas/first-world-war/france/Gueudecourt>



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Le 13 octobre, 1916

Sortir de l'Enfer



Le Corps canadien sort de la Somme

Le Corps canadien a été amené dans le théâtre de la Somme au début de septembre pour prendre part à l'offensive de Flers-Courcelette, le 15 septembre.

Depuis 37 jours les combats ont été vifs avec des avances pénibles au sein de l'Armée de réserve britannique, sur la gauche de la force d'assaut alliée.

Le 8 octobre 1916, le Corps canadien a pris part à sa dernière bataille dans l'assaut de la crête d'Ancre, qui s'est soldé par un échec

à y établir, tel que la mission le demandait, une ligne de départ sécuritaire pour y lancer une autre manoeuvre de groupe d'armées.

Les efforts de l'artillerie, pourtant approvisionnée de munitions beaucoup plus nombreuses, n'ont pas réussi à réduire les tranchées et à déchiqueter les fils barbelés qui les protègent. Les attaques répétées, notamment à la grenade, n'ont pas réussi à déloger les défenseurs.

Les trois divisions canadiennes ont subi 18,000 pertes (40 %) en cinq semaines. Elles sont épuisées.

La quatrième divisions canadienne, récemment formée, s'amène à son tour, **le 13 octobre 1916**, pour servir dans un corps britannique de relève. Elle sera tout aussi réduite en six semaines.

•Nicholson, Le Corps expéditionnaire canadien,



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October 14, 1916

A Big Nut Cracked



Schwaben Redoubt Falls

Schwaben Redoubt was the ominous dug-in defence place that so murderously dominated the slopes near Thiepval, on 1 July.

On 14 October 1916, after a two-day bombardment, three battalions of 118 British Brigade attack Schwaben Redoubt from behind with a creeping barrage.

The wire has not been cut in all places, enemy shelling is heavy, and some troops lose direction. However, along most of the front the troops stick close to the creeping barrage and move into the German line before the Germans fully realize that an assault is in progress.

While this is happening, the 25th British Division captures the Mounds, giving full view from the heights over the Ancre.

Regina Trench, so battered a few days ago by the Canadian Corps, remains in German hands, but it is now exposed from a new angle.

●Prior & Wilson, The Somme, p. 291.



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October 15, 1916

Back Into the Limelight



T.E Lawrence stays in Rabegh

Captain Thomas Edward Lawrence of the Intelligence staff in Cairo asked a friend, Ronald Storr, Oriental Secretary at the British Agency in Egypt, if he could accompany him in a trip to Jeddah with the staff 'hangers-on' to get a sense of the progress of the recent Arab Revolt in Mecca.

Things are not going particularly well in the Hejaz: the Arabs are complaining that the Allied support is not sufficient to fight the Ottomans on an even keel.

The occasion will be typical of Lawrence, who, it was later said of him, «spent his life backing into the limelight.»

Stoors meets Emir Abdullah, son of King Hussein, and Lawrence is offered to go on further to Rabegh to meet his two brothers, princes Ali and Feisal.

It will not be long before Abdullah realizes that Lawrence, a cultured arabist and abstemious rider of camel, «looks the part» as a British liaison officer with the royal family.

Stoors later wrote of the moment when he left his friend to his own devices:

«I can still see Lawrence on the shore at Rabegh waving grateful hands as we left him there to return ourselves to Egypt. Long before we met again he had already begun to write his page, brilliant as a Persian miniature, in the history of England.»

●Brown and Cave, *A Touch of Genius* (1988), p. 59-60.



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October 16, 1916

Shot at Dawn



Death Sentence of Private Harry Farr

The case of **Private Harry Farr of 1st Battalion, West Yorkshire**, executed for cowardice on **16 October 1916**, is a non-marginal case of a soldier assailed by fears attributed to 'shell shock'.

Although ordered by his Sergeant Major to resume his position, Farr complained of incapacity and remained inactive, asking for sick relief.

The case is a poignant one as it shows a good soldier with a record of incapacitations not being given grace by the succession of commanding officers

up to Haig, who sign the warrant.

On the question of the «Shot At Dawn» pardons in the British Army in WWI, 3080 death sentences were awarded for offenses in active service; 346 were carried out: 266 for desertion in the face of the enemy; 18 for cowardice; 7 for quitting post; 5 for disobedience to a lawful order; 6 for striking a superior; 3 for mutiny; 2 for casting away arms; 2 for sleeping at post; 37 for murder.

« Of the 551 courts martials for cowardice, only 3,3% actually resulted in execution, of which (records differ) only 3.6 % of the total tried paid the supreme penalty. This is a minute fraction of the 5,2M men who went through the British Army in the Great War, of whom 750,000 were killed and 1,5M wounded.»

●Simon Wesseley, «The Life and Death of Private Harry Farr», RUSI Journal, 151:5 (October 2006), 60-4.



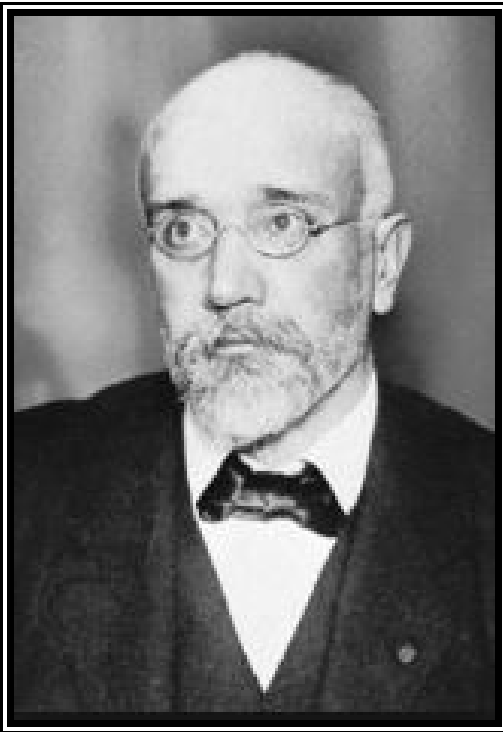
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October 17, 1916

Two Sides to a Greek Tragedy



A Venizelist Provisional government

The Allies have been unhappy about the attitude of the Greek Government in 1916. Although officially neutral in the War, the Hellenic Monarchy has obviously been inclined toward Germany since the start of the war.

A few incidents in the recent operations by the Salonica Allied Expeditionary Force against the Bulgarians have shown that the Greek Army was not only opposed to providing any help to the Allies, but showed favor to the Bulgarians by abandoning Greek territorial positions without attempts to defend.

A few measures of compulsion by the Entente Powers are however, now having their effects.

An Allied naval demonstration and a partial blockade of Greece in the Mediterranean have recently convinced a segment of the population that joining the Allies is a better prospect.

Eleutherios Venizelos, the former Greek Prime Minister who adamantly represented the pro-Allied faction, banned to Crete, is now feeling a surge in popularity in the Greek

electorate. On 9 October he declared a **Provisional Government in exile**, and resolved to move that government to Salonica.

On 17 October 1916, Venizelos and Admiral Condouriotis are in the process of forming a Greek contingent to be joined to the Allies at Salonica.

●Hankey Supreme Command, II: 537-41.



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Le 18 octobre, 1916

SOMME, 1916

Les honneurs de bataille canadiens de la Somme



Les honneurs de bataille suivants ont été accordés aux unités canadiennes qui ont participé à la campagne de la SOMME en 1916 :

«**ALBERT, 1916**» 1-13 juil.

(incl. Montauban, Mametz, Fricourt, Contalmaison, la Boisselle)

«**CRÊTE DE BAZENTIN**», 14-17 juil.

«**Fromelles**», 19 juil.

«**Haut-Bois**», 20-26 juil.

«**CRÊTE DE POZIÈRES**», 1-3 sept.

(incl. ferme de Mouquet)

«**GUILLEMONT**», 3-6 sept.

«**FLERS-COURCELETTE**», 15-22 sept.

«**CRÊTE DE THIEPVAL**» 26-29 sept.

«**CRÊTE DE LE TRANSLOY**», 1-18 oct.

(incl. D'Eaucourt-l'Abbaye)

«**HAUTEURS D'ANCRE**», 1 oct. - 11 nov.

(incl. Tranchée Regina)

«**L'ANCRE, 1916**», 13-18 nov.

(incl. Beaumont-Hamel)

Ref: Nicholson, App F



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October 19, 1916

Unglorious Toil



War Horse in the Somme

With October the weather in the Somme has become wet and cold. The ground has been so churned by the artillery that mud is becoming the main problem on both sides.

This, of course, makes transportation of material difficult. The transfer of heavy loads from railhead to the front line is done by horses.

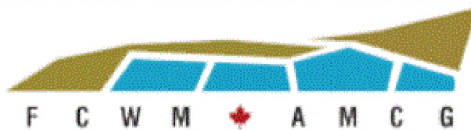
This work is so hard that the number of horses that die of exhaustion is getting higher than the number of human casualties.

Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson say in their Somme that horses involved in such work would lose three shoes in a day, «sucked off by the mud».

In addition to local breeding in Europe, 1000 horses were shipped from the United States every day of the war.

●Prior and Wilson, The Somme, p. 272-3.

●<http://www.history.co.uk/shows/the-real-war-horse/articles/history-of-horses-during-wwi>



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Le 20 octobre, 1916

Corps Expéditionnaire Portugais



Engagement du Portugal dans le théâtre de France

Le 20 octobre 1916, le protocole de la conférence inter-alliés de Boulogne conclut les pourparlers franco-britanniques sur la question du Corps expéditionnaire portugais et assigne son rattachement à l'armée britannique.

L'Angleterre entend ainsi préserver une position que pourrait entamer une participation militaire portugaise aux côtés de l'armée française.

La participation portugaise au groupe d'armées

britanniques atteindra deux divisions. Toutefois la coopération militaire (aviation et aéronautique maritime, installation d'une base d'hydravions à Aveiro) vont permettre à la France de renforcer ses positions et son influence au Portugal.

Sur près 56,500 hommes mobilisés, le Portugal devra déplorer en 1918 environ 2100 morts, 5200 blessés et 7000 prisonniers.

Le cimetière militaire portugais de Richebourg demeure le symbole de l'engagement du Portugal dans la Première Guerre mondiale.

● Sources: http://www.horizon14-18.eu/wa_files/portugal_201916-18.pdf

● Pour en savoir plus: <http://www.cheminsdememoire-nordpasdecalais.fr/lhistoire/nations-en-guerre/les-portugais-dans-la-grande-guerre.html>



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October 21st, 1916

Higher Learning



Ghent University

In August 1914, the Germans burnt the university of Louvain (Leuven) in Belgium, the oldest university in Europe, in their frustration of seeing the Belgian population not collaborating to their war effort.

Burning Louvain was a stroke against the French-speaking population of Belgium, which showed sympathy with France.

The burning of Louvain was however a terrible mistake for the reputation of the German occupying forces in Belgium.

It was used world-wide by allied propaganda to bring ridicule on the notion of German *Kultur*, on which not only enemy governments, but neutrals poured scorn and derision.

On 21 October 1916, the Germans re-open the university of Ghent, a university that has developed Flemish academic presence in Belgium over the last century.

The Germans mean secretly to encourage division among the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking segments of the Belgian population in view of gaining the sympathy of Flemish activist organizations such as the Flemish National Action Group.

'Divide and Conquer' is at the heart of a German Flemish policy for a nationalist project.

- Fischer, *Germany's Aims*, p. 268-71.
- http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/university_of_ghent



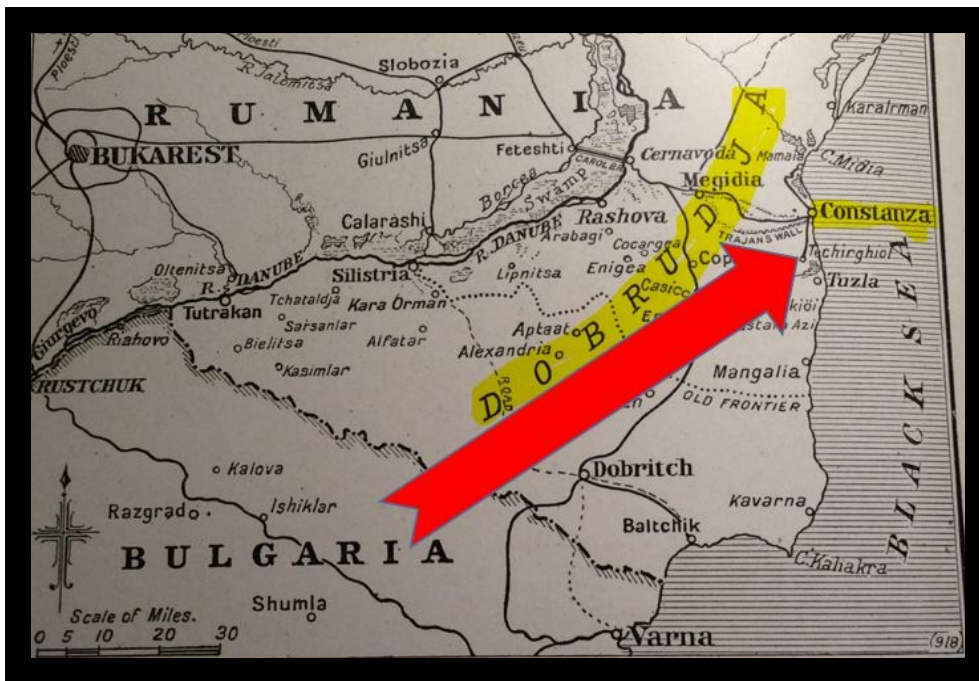
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October 22nd, 1916

Mackensen in Rumania



The taking of the port of Constanza

The Battle of Rumania is not going well for the Rumanians.

In the north, Falkenhayn has been able to repress all Rumanian invading forces in the Transylvania.

In the south, Mackensen has now advanced through the Dobrudja from the frontier of Bulgaria with German, Bulgarian and Turk forces.

On 22 October 1916, the port of Constanza, on the Black Sea, falls into the hands of the Germanic side.

This means that the Russians are now cut off from the major port on the west side of the Black Sea. This lifeline for the Rumanians is now sealed, which means that they are on their own.

The action in the west, where the Salonica Allied forces are trying to disrupt the Bulgarians, is having almost no effect.

This spells disaster.



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October 23rd, 1916

Running the Trains on Time in France



The Railway Operating Division

Since October 1914, the Royal Engineers (RE) have produced a growing number of Railway Repair companies (including Canadian ones) to liaise and work under the French railway system to support the BEF.

In January 1915, the RE created its own **Railway Operating Division (ROD)** to take over segments of the railway system in the area of Ypres. But in May 1916, Maréchal Joffre warned the British that the French railway system was so overworked that the BEF would have to take over railway management in northern France and provide for its own 23,500-wagon fleet. The civilian British railway system would have to pitch in.

In August 1916, **Sir Eric Geddes** became the **Director General of Military Railways** in France, bringing under the BEF the management of the operations, repair and construction of northern France wide-gauge (4ft-8½in) railways and their connected smaller gauge lines.

On 23 October 1916, the BEF has its own railroads staffs with twenty railroad companies looking after one 40-wagon train resupplying each division every second day.

Running on time is a challenge!

●William A.T. Aves, R-O-D: The Railway Operating Division on the Western Front – The Royal Engineers in France and Belgium 1915-1919 (Lincolnshire, Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2009), p. 18-24.



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October 24, 1916

In the Ashes of Verdun



Fort Douaumont retaken

Fort Douaumont was the keystone of the network of integrated forts which constituted the Verdun defense system against German invasion.

When the fort was taken, shortly after the German onslaught of February 1916, the battle of Verdun became the focus of the whole French Army. Verdun was a door toward Paris and became a furnace of artillery concentrations.

The occupation of the fort by the Germans was terribly difficult. Millions of

shells chiselled the stone of this citadel, and in May, a fire inside killed nearly 700 soldiers in minutes.

On 24 October 1916, Second French Army Commander General Nivelle aimed two super-heavy long-range 16-inch railroad guns at the fortress after having rained shells at the far side, creating a sea of mud to prevent evacuation or reinforcement.

Three divisions under Corps Commander Mangin, «The Butcher» attacked the fort at the moment when the Germans were attempting evacuation. The operation was well calculated and precise, with superb infantry-artillery cooperation.

The symbol of the recapture of Douaumont was a shot in the arm for French morale.

●Wikipedia, «Fort Douaumont». ●Cruttwell, The Great War, p. 252.



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October 25, 1916

Bloody Regina Trench



A «Day of Death» for the 44 Battalion

The 4th Canadian Division is in the Somme, as part of the Fifth Army. The long and difficult REGINA Trench is the enemy obstacle that has so far given a great deal of trouble to Fifth Army.

Two days ago, 11th Brigade has made a satisfying attack against the left part of the REGINA Trench, with the help of the Canadian Corps artillery, left behind when 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions went back to Artois .

On 25 October 1916, 44 Battalion of 10th Brigade is given the task to attack alone on the right side of the enemy trench.

However, a problem occurs. During the night, the artillery has received the order to move. In the morning, the guns are not in place and the mud is making everything messy.

When 44 Bn goes on the assault, at 0700 hours, the artillery support that was expected is not there. The Germans see the attack coming, and the Winnipeg unit is caught by cross machine-gun fire and effective protective artillery.

This will be the worse day of the war for this battalion, losing 200 men in one rush. Survivors find their way back to the unit by crawling from shell hole to shell hole, some in the following night, carried by brave stretcher bearers plodding in the mud.

●Nicholson, CEF, Chap 6.



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October 26, 1916

Reckoning Day



Showdown in British High Strategy

The Secretary of State for War in the British Cabinet, David Lloyd George, has been critical of the Somme strategy adopted by General Haig over the summer.

Lloyd George is appalled at the hundreds of thousands of casualties for so little gain. He is adamant that Haig's view, —that frontal attacks in France are the only way to defeat the Germans,- is wrongheaded.

LG decides, at the end of October, that he will lead a strong confrontation against the British military command to change the strategy and use other fronts to defeat the Germans in 1917.

His first step is to ask General William Robertson, the Chief of the General Staff in London, to submit a memorandum outlining the prospects of the present strategy as followed by Haig.

On 26 October 1916, Robertson submits the requested memorandum to the minister, supporting Haig's outlook.

This is the first step of a Cabinet dogfight that will topple the Asquith government in six weeks.

●David Lloyd George, Memoirs, Chap 32 - «Military position at the end of the 1916 campaign», p. 889-963.



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October 27, 1916

Between Four Eyes



The McNaughton-Papineau conversations

At the end of 1916, **Andrew McNaughton** is working hard at a technique that will make him famous: sound-ranging for counter-battery bombardment. As an artillery officer with a strong scientific background, McNaughton is developing sound analysis to pinpoint positions of enemy artillery batteries with trigonometry. But the resistance of old-school artillerymen is making Andy McNaughton earnest.

In his contacts with other Canadian Corps Headquarters staff officers, McNaughton runs into **Captain Talbot Papineau**, an original PPCLI decorated with the Military Cross who was sent to Headquarters for a temporary staff assignment. Papineau is well-known for the letters that he sent to *Le Devoir*, trying to convert nationalist leader Henri Bourassa to the cause of the Empire.



In the course of their conversations Papineau, a Canadian with a strong sense of nationhood, expounds on his conviction that «the acid test» of sovereignty is the control of the armed forces. To him, there is a need for greater independence from British command in the CEF.

When he will become the Commander of the Canadian Forces overseas, in the Second World War, McNaughton will recall those First World War conversations with his friend, who will be killed at Passchendaele.

●Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government*, p. 210.



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October 28, 1916

Another Ace Falls



Oswald BOELCKE, Père de la chasse aérienne allemande

Oswald Boelcke, détenteur *Pour le Mérite*, s'écrase près de Bapaume le **28 octobre 1916**. À 25 ans il compte quarante victoires à son actif.

Un des premiers as de l'aviation allemande, il enseigne les rudiments à la première génération, incluant Manfred von Richtofen. Il est maintenant commandant de l'escadron *Jasta 2*.

Lors d'un engagement contre des avions britanniques, il attaque un ennemi sans voir qu'un de ses collègues, Erwin Böhme, attaque lui aussi le même avion. Ils s'accrochent et s'écrasent tous les deux. Böhme en réchappe, mais Boelcke qui ne portait jamais de casque et qui n'avait pas attaché ses sangles meurt.

À l'annonce de sa mort le Royal Flying Corps largue une couronne de fleurs sur le lieu de l'accident. «A la mémoire du Capitaine Boelcke, brave et chevaleresque ennemi».

Boelcke est l'auteur du *Dicta Boelcke*, une liste de 8 règles fondamentales applicables en combat aérien.

Sources: http://luc.petitjean.free.fr/aerodrome_militaire.htm

Pour en savoir plus: <http://www.raafsquad.com/cliffs/fighterschool/dictaboelcke.htm>

Alfred Hermida, "Tell Everyone: Why We Share and Why It Matters", Doubleday Canada, October 2014



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Le 29 octobre, 1916 Indian Support Fire



L'artillerie divisionnaire de Lahore avec le Corps Expéditionnaire Canadien

Le quartier général du Corps canadien avec ses 1^{ère}, 2^e et 3^e divisions canadiennes est retourné plus au nord, en Artois, après avoir passé deux mois dans la bataille de la Somme.

La 4^e Division canadienne, nouvellement arrivée en France, est restée dans la Somme au sein d'un Corps britannique.

Les artilleries divisionnaires des trois divisions sont toutefois demeurées dans la Somme avec la 4^e Division.

Lorsqu'il arrive en Artois, le Corps canadien prend place le long de la ligne de front, juste au nord d'Arras, et se voit

supporté par l'artillerie du XVII^e Corps britannique, notamment par son artillerie divisionnaire du Corps Indien, reparti de France au début de l'année, dont l'artillerie est demeurée.

L'artillerie divisionnaire de Lahore n'est pas inconnue des Canadiens. Elle a supporté la 3^e Division canadienne lorsqu'elle est arrivée en France, avant que sa propre artillerie canadienne puisse la rejoindre près de Ypres.

●Anthony Clayton, The British Officer – Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present (Pearson-Longman, 2006), p. 253.



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October 30, 1916

Perley's Mission in London

The Creation of the Ministry of Overseas Forces (Argyll House)

Prime Minister Borden has finally decided on **30 October 1916**, that the organisation of the Canadian forces in Great Britain would be reshaped completely so as to bring cohesion to the unworkably complex mess now in existence.

Everything will heretofore come under **Sir George Perley**, the acting **High Commissioner to Great Britain** who also becomes unpaid **Minister of Overseas Military Forces of Canada (OMFC)**.

This means that the responsibilities of the Minister of Militia will be limited to the territory of Canada.

Perley will prove a skilful administrator and diplomat, rearranging the plumbing chart of the various commands and support agencies into a smooth running and efficient pyramid, and continuing as the foremost diplomat in London.

This, of course will make Sam Huges blow his top sky-high. His abusive letters of protest to the prime minister will bring his own demise within a few days.

This is a great turning point in the War. Despite the fact that the Corps Commander in France will see his independence diminished, all agree that Sir Sam had given all he was capable of, for Canada, and then a little bit more...

●Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics* and *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, «Perley, Sir George Halsey». ●Hyatt, *Currie*, p. 61-2.



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Le 31 octobre, 1916

Les canonnonniers marchands



La protection des navires marchands

À la fin d'octobre 1916 la protection des navires marchands a pris une telle importance que le cabinet britannique décide d'interrompre la production de canons moyens pour l'Armée de sorte à créer des modèles de même calibres adaptés au besoin des navires marchands pour leur protection.

Les sous-marins allemands se sont eux-même dotés

de plus gros canons, qu'il devient impossible de menacer avec ceux qui sont déjà montés à bord de certains navires civils.

La production de canons de 4 pouces et plus, montés sur des affûts navals, devient donc une priorité pour armer tous les navires impliqués dans les convois en haute mer.

Il s'agira d'une initiative qui hâtera l'adoption, par l'Allemagne, d'une politique de guerre sous-marine «sans restrictions», permettant aux capitaines de chasse d'ouvrir le feu sans avertissement.

●David Lloyd George, Memoirs, p. 1200-2.



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