

November 1st, 1916

The Ugly Truth of Italian Attrition



A season of attrition in Italy

After the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Battles of the Isonzo, last month, a last Italian push of the season takes place on **1 November 1916** around the Carso plateau to enlarge the Gorizia bridgehead. Only little ground is taken despite massive artillery bombardments.

General Luigi Cadorna's strategy for the autumn battles has cost Italy 75,000 casualties in exchange for 63,000 for the Austrians, including 20,000 prisoners.

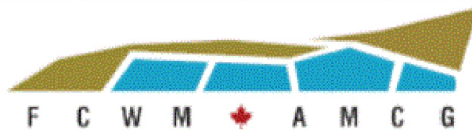
«It is curious that when the tactics of attrition in the First World War are discussed, and those who practiced them are, as is often the case, condemned, Cadorna's name seldom or never comes up. Yet he was the out-and-out attritionist of the war and one who always suffered more from attrition than his foe.»¹

But Cadorna is aware that the Austrians have other commitments in Russia and Rumania and can suffer losses less than he can. His

dogged repetitions against the high-perched Austrian defences in the Alps are not altogether a losing battle.

They just don't look good...

¹ Cyril Falls, The Great War, p. 235-6.



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November 2nd, 1916

The Apotheosis



Verdun – All ground regained

On **2 November 1916**, the efforts of the *Deuxième armée* have finally paid off.

After the re-taking of **Fort Douaumont** last week, the French have now re-taken **Fort Vaux** from the Germans, which sets back the whole battle to its original point.

The French have now re-taken all the ground captured since 21 February 1916.

This is superb news for the French, and General Nivelle, the commander of Second Army, is finally bringing a victorious end to a atrocious French campaign.

General Nivelle will shortly be promoted above all French generals senior to him to replace General Joffre.



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Le 3 novembre, 1916

Un Pion sur l'Échiquier impérial



Le Qatar, carreau stratégique

Les Britanniques ont d'abord considéré le Qatar et le golfe Persique comme une position intermédiaire stratégique pour leurs intérêts coloniaux en Inde, mais la découverte de pétrole et d'hydrocarbures change cette vision.

Le 3 novembre 1916, un an après avoir reconnu le Cheik Abdulah bin Jassin Al Thani comme dirigeant du Qatar, le pouvoir britannique signe un traité de protectorat avec les Qataris, identique à ceux que l'empire colonial a négociés avec les autres pays du golfe Persique.

Les Britanniques offrent ainsi leur protection au Qatar, en échange de quoi, les Qataris renoncent à céder des territoires ou à entamer des négociations sans le consentement des Britanniques.

Il s'agit aussi pour Londres d'occuper et de contrôler les carreaux de l'échiquier qui auraient pu prolonger l'ambitieux chemin de fer allemand-ottoman de «Berlin-Baghdad», dont le but était d'atteindre l'eau salée et ainsi contourner le Canal de Suez vers l'Asie.

Sources : <http://www.lesclesdumoyenorient.fr/Qatar.html>

Pour en savoir plus : <http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/asie/qatar.htm>



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November 4, 1916

A Man Who Can Bang His Fist on the Table



Hindenburg and the «*Hilfsdienstgesetz*»

In November 1916, the German Government is rocked by a strong-arm intervention from the Military Supreme Command.

The forceful enactment of a drastic ***Auxiliary Service Law (Hilfsdienstgesetz)*** gives authority for full conscription of all men from the age of 15 to 61 for the war industries.

This means that the German polity becomes a military structure where all men are liable to be assigned to any part of the industry which supports the War.

This also confirms that the Military Supreme Command under **General Paul Hindenburg**, with the support of Kaiser Wilhelm II, is taking over civil government. Ministers can be dismissed if they do not comply with the all-out martial outlook of the new dictatorship.

The Foreign Secretary, Gottlieb von Jagow, is immediately dismissed for not being a man «who could bang his fist on the table.»

He will be replaced by the not yet infamous Arthur Zimmermann.

This is the beginning of «Total War».

●Gordon A. Craig, Germany 1866-1945, p. 379-81.



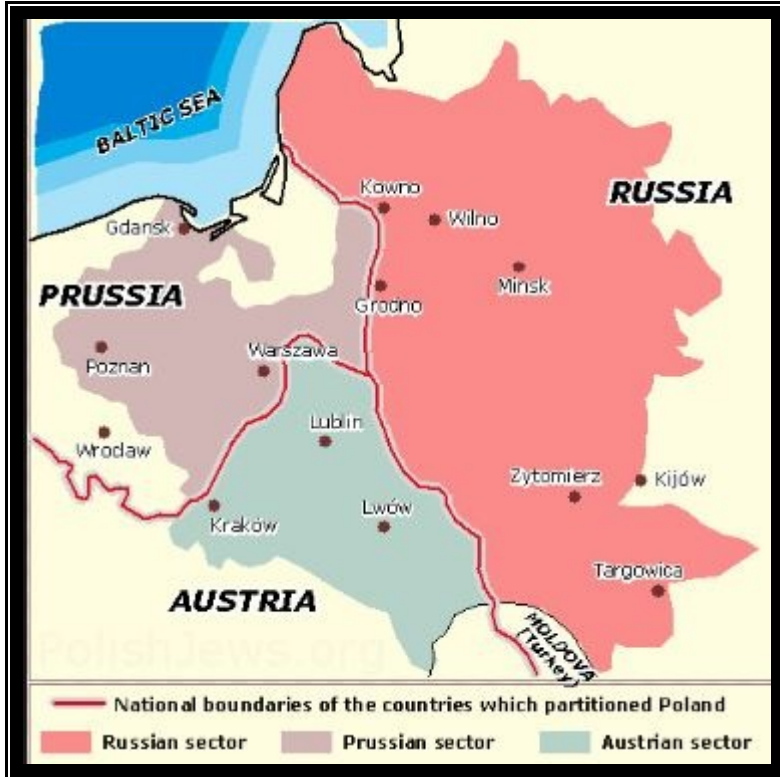
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Le 5 novembre, 1916

Un Espoir pour la Diaspora polonaise



Le 5 novembre 1916, le gouverneur général de Varsovie annonce, au nom de Guillaume II et de François-Joseph d'Autriche-Hongrie, le souhait de permettre la renaissance d'un royaume de Pologne, dissolu par trois partitions entre la Prusse, l'Autriche et la Russie à la fin du XVIIIe siècle (v. carte).

En dépit de l'affirmation, cet acte demeure flou : il fixe un cadre, mais non les termes d'un programme précis de re-création du royaume partiellement repris à la Russie en août 1915.

Après les pertes essuyées par l'armée allemandes sur le front de l'Ouest, les responsables politiques et militaires sont à la recherche de troupes fraîches, estimant les capacités de mobilisation des territoires polonais à près d'un million.

Pour exploiter ces ressources humaines, les responsables allemands estiment que l'apparence d'un nouvel État permet de légaliser une armée polonaise au

service des puissances centrales et de créer un mouvement favorable à l'Alliance germanique dans les nouveaux territoires.

Sources : http://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Acte_du_5_novembre

Pour en savoir plus : http://histoirespolonaises.blogspot.com/2014_11_01_archive.html



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November 6, 1916

Stepping Up to the Plate



Prime Minister Borden confronts Sam Huges

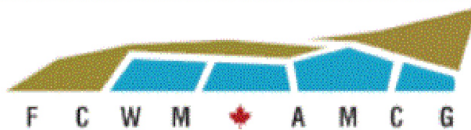
Prime Minister Robert Borden has now had plenty of evidence to see that his Minister of Militia and Defence is disruptive to the stable working of his Government. The time has come to step up to the plate and confront Sam Huges.

On 6 November 1916, Borden writes a letter where he makes it clear that nothing other than apologies and complete submission to Cabinet discipline will do:

“You seem actuated”, he writes, “by a desire [...] to administer your department as if it were a distinct and separate government. [...] The latest of these instances is the establishment of a Militia Sub-Council in Great Britain. All members of the government have full and direct responsibility in respect to the very important matters which the proposed Council would advise upon and direct. You proceeded to disregard my instructions. [...] Such an attitude is wholly inconsistent with and subversive of the principle of joint responsibility upon which constitutional government is based.”

It could not be expected that Sir Sam would reply with contrition.

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- «November 9, 1916», in «Fourth Dimension», Maple Leaf, DND, Nov 5, 2003, Vol. 6 No. 41, page 14 - 15.



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November 7, 1916

A Second Crack at It

Election of 1916



Woodrow Wilson Charles Evan Hughes
Democratic Republican

Electoral votes
277 254

President Woodrow Wilson re-elected

The Presidential Election of **7 November 1916** is important for the United States.

With war raging in Europe and high seas commerce being threatened by a double blockade by the enemies involved, the stance that the United States will take in the next year is crucial to the nation's future.

Democrat **President Woodrow Wilson** campaigned against a divided Republican party. **Former President Theodore Roosevelt**, leader of a defunct splinter «Progressive Party» took a different pro-war stand from the official Republican candidate, **Charles Evan Hughes**.

This created ambiguity among Republicans. Many switched in favor of Wilson's clearer message, bringing him back with a slight edge.

Wilson had definitely been committed to avoid war, using such platform slogans as «*He*

kept us out of the war », and «*Wilson and Peace with Honor? or Hugues and Roosevelt and War?*»

As long as Wilson could go on with a foreign policy based on vague notions of «progressivism» and «Americanism», domestic policy would keep him afloat.

•John M. Blum et al., The National Experience, (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 8th Ed., 1963), p. 605-7.



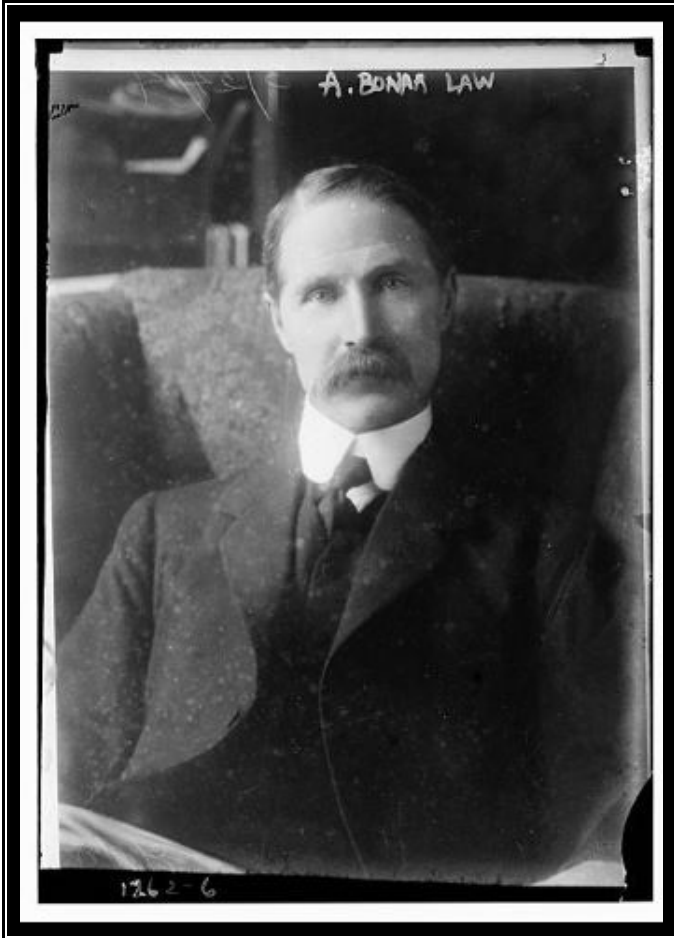
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November 8, 1916

You Could Hear the Crack



A crack in the fabric of the British Government

On 8 November 1916, a seemingly trivial debate in the British House of Commons on the manner of selling assets taken from the enemy in Nigeria erupts into a crisis.

The Liberal Asquith coalition government insists that normal laws of liberal commerce should prevail and that all potential buyers should be considered for the best price. A segment of the Conservative party, in particular the Irish Unionists, want the sale to be restricted to British buyers.

The debate soon goes to the core of the tensions that have been accumulating between the most hard-headed Conservatives and idealistic Liberals. Soon, the whole stand-offish attitude of the Liberal prime minister, exposed by the commissions into the Gallipoli and Mesopotamia campaigns, becomes an obstacle for half the Conservative party.

Andrew Bonar Law, the Canadian-born leader of the Conservative party is himself threatened with a challenge to his leadership and his participation in the coalition government. His association with Henry Asquith is becoming a

liability. This is a big crack in the fabric of the Liberal coalition government. The support of the whole Conservative party under the cold hand of Bonar Law is a weight-bearing pillar.

This tell-tale incident undermines the authority and viability of the Government.

●A.J.P. Taylor, «Politics in the First World War», from the Raleigh lecture on History, given at the British Academy on 4 February 1959 and subsequently published in The Proceedings of the British Academy (1950), in A.J.P. Taylor, From Boer War to Cold War: Essays on Twentieth-Century Europe, Ed. Chris Wrigley, (Copyright Eva Taylor, 1944; Penguin, 1996), p. 213.



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November 9, 1916

The Prescient Theory of Impractical Mobility



Churchill Memorandum on Mechanical Power in the Offensive

Although Churchill is not in Government, the Minister of Munitions asked him to submit a paper on the use of tanks, which, after initial successes, have disappointed to the extent that commanders are no longer requesting their support.

Churchill's Memorandum, 'Mechanical Power in the Offensive', addresses the problems of advancing the infantry to the enemy trenches and beyond without crippling losses.

Winston foresees that a "trackmaker" vehicle rolling over broken terrain and trenches will smooth a path for the infantry.

The attack will be supported by tanks and "caterpillar" (tracked) "tenders" which will advance ammunition and supplies. Artillery will be made more mobile, hauled by "caterpillar" vehicles.

Churchill's vision is prescient in advocating an all mobile division, even if the details are constrained by the immediate realities of the Western Front.

●Winston Churchill, The World Crisis, Vol. 3, 1916-1918, Part 2.



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November 10, 1916

A Prophet of Doom



Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Trade

Looming Crisis in Shipping

In early November 1916, **Walter Runciman**, President of the Board of Trade, re-iterated his warnings of April that the German U-Boats were sinking tonnage at a rate far exceeding Britain's ability to build new ships.

If sinkings were to continue at a rate of 600,000 tons per month, he warned of a “complete breakdown in shipping” by June 1917, putting Britain's ability to sustain the war effort in peril.

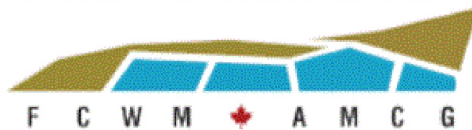
Despite the losses, and sinking only 15 submarines in 1916, the Admiralty refused to consider Lloyd George's suggestion of convoys.

The Navy considered that independent groups of destroyers could defeat the U-Boats and that convoys

would only concentrate targets to the profit of the submarines.

Lloyd George considered shipping as “the most vital and vulnerable point in the issue of victory or defeat.”

Further information: George Cassar, [Lloyd George at War 1916-1918](#).

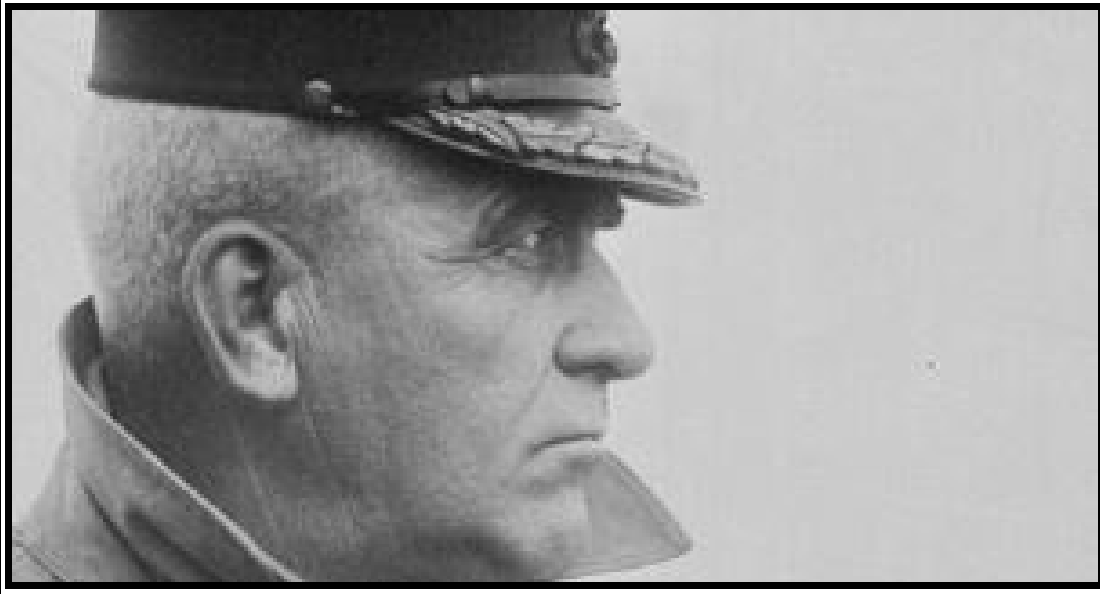


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November 11, 1916 He's Out!



Resignation of Sir Sam Hughes

On 11 November 1916, the English language papers carried the news that Sir Sam Hughes had resigned from the Government.

The ex-minister's friends promised Prime Minister Borden that he would pay for dismissing Hughes.

Borden

immediately pre-empted any such moves by placing the long correspondence between himself and Hughes before Parliament, amply demonstrating that Hughes was insolent and uncontrollable.

His ministers publicly backed him; almost all papers supported the Prime Minister, noting that the correspondence showed that he had put up with Hughes far beyond what anyone could have expected. Borden's unruffled continuation of the business of war showed his strength as war leader.

The soldiers learned of Hughes' departure with muted satisfaction, with the Somme weighing heavily in their thoughts.

In Canada, the Hughes affair disappeared quickly after publication of the correspondence.

•Further information: Tim Cook, [The Madman and the Butcher](#)



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Le 12 novembre, 1916

Un Martinet à l'Oeuvre



La justice de punition du général Cadorna

Le général Luigi Cadorna exerce un commandement suprême, en Italie, à l'abri de la supervision du gouvernement.

Cadorna impose donc sur l'Armée italienne un régime de 'justice de punition' qu'il croit le moyen le plus efficace pour obtenir l'obéissance des soldats.

Ses instructions, contrairement à tous les Alliés de l'Entente, incluent des ordres aux officiers d'exercer des décimations.

Le 11 novembre 1916, Cadorna incite ainsi:

«Je rappelle que, pour réprimer les délits collectifs, il n'y a pas d'autre moyen si ce n'est celui d'exécuter immédiatement les plus coupables et si il n'est pas possible d'établir l'identité des responsables, les commandants ont le droit et le devoir de tirer au sort parmi les suspects des militaires et de les punir par la peine de mort. Une personne consciente de la nécessité d'une discipline de fer ne peut se soustraire à ce devoir et moi j'en fais une obligation absolue et indéclinable à tous les commandants.»¹

Il en résulte donc, selon des enquêtes menées tout au cours du XXe siècle, que 750 soldats italiens auraient été fusillés après un procès, incluant cours martiales et procès sommaires, et 300 exécutés sans procès.

¹ ●Giorgio Rochat, «Les soldats fusillés en Italie», 14-18, No. 29, Janvier 2006, p. 14-21, cit. p. 19.



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November 13, 1916

Third Battle of the Ancre



Beaumont Hamel – The Final Act

General Haig does not want to close the Somme Offensive without leaving a message of hope to the forlorn Rumanians and Russians.

He also does not want to go to the Allied conference in Chantilly, next week, without being able to point out an encouraging success after a summer of terrible hardship.

He therefore instructs the Commander of the Fifth Army, General Hubert Gough, that the ultimate battle of 1916, the Third battle of the Ancre, must be won.

Now that their rear has been carved up in the last four months, Gough is to take the ominous first-day killing grounds of Thiepval ridge, Saint-Pierre Divion and the no-longer standing Beaumont Hamel, which still dominate the trickling Ancre River

The three-corps attack is launched at 0545 hours, **on 13 November 1916**, with immediate if not complete success.

The 51st Highland Division, in particular, gains **Beaumont Hamel** with a blind mile in the thickest of mud and fog.

With the battle renewed until the 18th, the Fifth Army will bag 6,000 German prisoners, more than their own casualties.



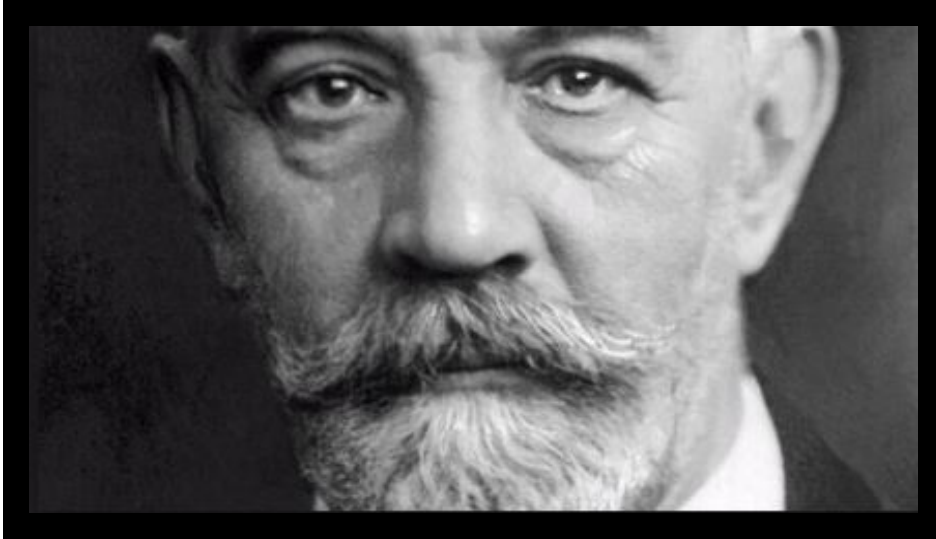
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November 14, 1916

Too Cautious for the New Boss



Bethmann Hollweg's Memorandum on War Aims

Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg is adamant that after the re-election of President Wilson, even more caution should be exercised before resuming unrestricted submarine warfare.

But he comes under yet greater pressure from the military, parliament and industrial interests, when Germany is forced to reconsider its whole war aims, after suggestions of peace talks

come through American diplomatic mediation.

From 4 to 14 November, the Chancellor and Field Marshal Hindenburg exchange views regarding a key memorandum by the Chancellor on political requirements, which outlines the need for such guarantees as Poland under German tutelage, territorial annexation in Lithuania and Courland, frontier adjustments with France, wide control in Belgium and the return of German colonies.

Hindenburg's response reveals broad agreement on substance but the soldiers want a clearer definition while the politicians and diplomats favour a more elastic approach.

The two parties also disagree about communicating these aims to Germany's allies, enemies or to a mediator.

Further information: Fritz Fischer, [Germany's Aims in the First World War](#)



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Le 15 novembre, 1916

Joffre à son dernier Souffle



Réunion à Chantilly

L'an dernier, le **Général Joffre** a convoqué une réunion à son quartier général de Chantilly, en Oise, au début de décembre, afin de créer des plans pour le printemps.

Cette année, il avance la date d'une réunion semblable, **les 15 et 16 novembre 1916**. On y discute de tous les fronts alliés et de la répartition des tâches entre armées.

Mais Joffre ne tient pas compte de développements imminents qui vont rendre impossible quelque prévision

qui puisse sortir de Chantilly.

Fin 1916, les bilans humains catastrophiques de Verdun et de la Somme achèvent de décevoir l'opinion. Le héros de la Marne est loin. Côté politique, le premier ministre Briand et le ministre de la Guerre, le général Gallieni, veulent anéantir ce qu'ils appellent «le pouvoir de Chantilly»: ils ne supportent plus ce militaire qui se mêle de politique et que l'on a déjà tenté d'écarter du champs de bataille sans succès.

Joffre ne sait pas encore qu'il ne sera plus là en décembre, que son QG sera défait et déplacé, et qu'un nouveau chef des armées françaises arrivera avec un nouveau plan, sans égard pour ce qui est discuté aujourd'hui à Chantilly — Il en est à son dernier souffle.

Sources : <http://www.ville-chantilly.fr/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Laissez-vous-conter-Joffre-%C3%A0-Chantilly.pdf>



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November 16, 1916

A Marquess Puts Heart to Paper



The Marquess of Lansdowne's Peace Move

The venerable **5th Marquess of Lansdowne**, former Governor General of Canada (1883-1888), Viceroy of India (1888-1894), Secretary for War (1895-1900) and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Salisbury and Balfour Governments (1900-1905), and now member without portfolio in the Asquith Cabinet, presents a Memorandum to the Prime Minister, on **16 November 1916**, advising a peace offer.

The stately document outlines that the war so far has been devastating in life and treasure for Allies and enemies perhaps equally. Why not, when it is still time, settle for «twenty shillings in the pound»?

Lansdowne is the first statesman to dare to speak of a diplomatic settlement with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

The suggestion comes days after David Lloyd George has vowed publicly to fight to the 'knock out blow».

The idea surges at a moment when the pain of the summer is vivid and so many see the war as a runaway tragedy for all engaged.

Many others are also thinking along the same lines, including a pacifist President just re-elected.

•David Lloyd George, Memoirs, II: Chap 31: «The Lansdowne Peace Move», p. 861-97.



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November 17, 1916

What Happens in Paris Stays in Paris



The Aftermath of the Paris Conference

While Joffre's Conference was taking place in Chantilly for the Allied military leadership, a separate conference was taking place in Paris for the representatives of Allied civilian governments. They were joined in final session.

Once again this year, there was a clash of views between the 'Westerners' and the proponents of the «sideshows».

Quite a bit of tension ensued for the British

government.

The Secretary for War, Lloyd George, wanted General Robertson, the Chief of the General Staff in London, to go to Russia so as to organize the Russian Front. Too much material sent to the Russians by the North Sea was not properly transported where it was needed. Brusilov did not make full use of it, and the Russian army is now stuck in defence, incapable to come to the help of the Rumanians.

But Robertson, who adamantly believes, like Haig, that the war will be won nowhere else than in France, refuses to go.

Prime Minister Asquith agrees with Robertson, leaving Lloyd George a very unhappy minister of War.

●Rosskill, Hankey, p. 318-22.



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November 18, 1916

An End to Somme of It



The End of the Somme Offensive

(1 July to 18 November 1916)

The weather does not permit to plan further operations with any degree of confidence any more. With the return of General Haig from the Chantilly and Paris conferences, the high season of fighting comes to an end for 1916.

Meanwhile, General Gough has been continuing revolving attacks in Fifth Army, using all divisions in turn to push forward in the mud. 32, 37, 19, 18 British Divisions and 4 Canadian Division have all lost thousands of men to futile advances.

Officers writing to the official historian relate the following:

«This was the only occasion in which I saw men dead from exhaustion from their efforts to get out of the mud. At Passchendaele I saw men mud bound but they could be dragged out, but at the Ancre at this time, we were pitchforked into the quagmire in the dark and there was no possibility of a man helping the one next to him.... It was the very worst instance I came across of what appeared to be a cruel useless sacrifice of life and the climatic conditions alone made it clear... to the very stupidest brain that no success could possibly result.»¹

¹ Prior & Wilson, Somme, 298.



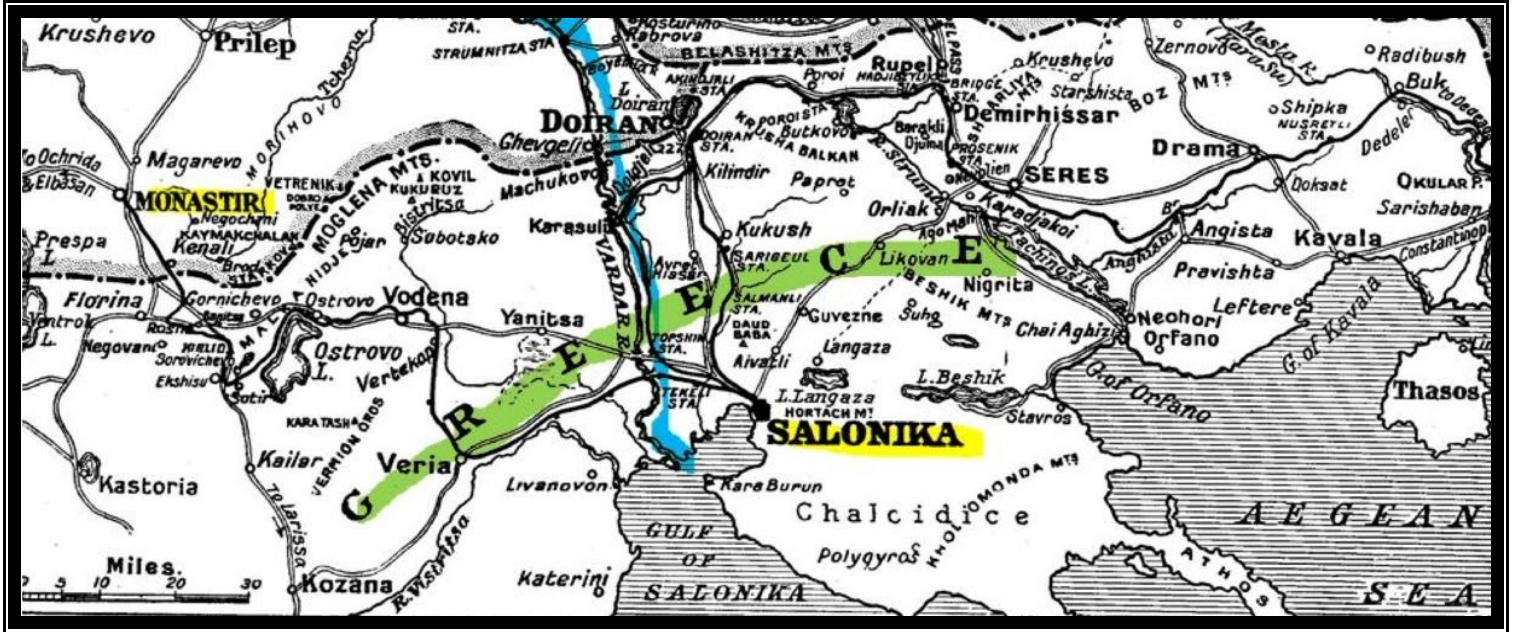
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November 19, 1916

The Long Road Up



Entering Monastir

Since September 12th, General Sarrail has been leading a joint operation from Salonika to push back and occupy the Bulgarians in the hope of aiding the Rumanians in their fight for survival.

The expedition takes his French, Serbian, British and Russian formations through terrible valleys, and high mountain peaks.

«Blow after blow was struck by the Serbians, each success [239/240] being followed by a Bulgarian withdrawal. By November the snow came and was driven almost horizontally by howling winds. The troops, poorly supplied, suffered grievously, and losses from sickness were added to heavy battle casualties. Yet the pressure was kept up. The Bulgarians were fought nearly to a finish. [...] On November 19 French and Serbian cavalry entered Monastir. [...] The Bulgarians had all but cracked, and would have but for German aid. Unhappily, the well-timed Bulgarian advance on the flanks had delayed the start and the Rumanian front was never seriously affected by the Battle of Monastir.»

●Cyril Falls, *The Great War*, 239-40.



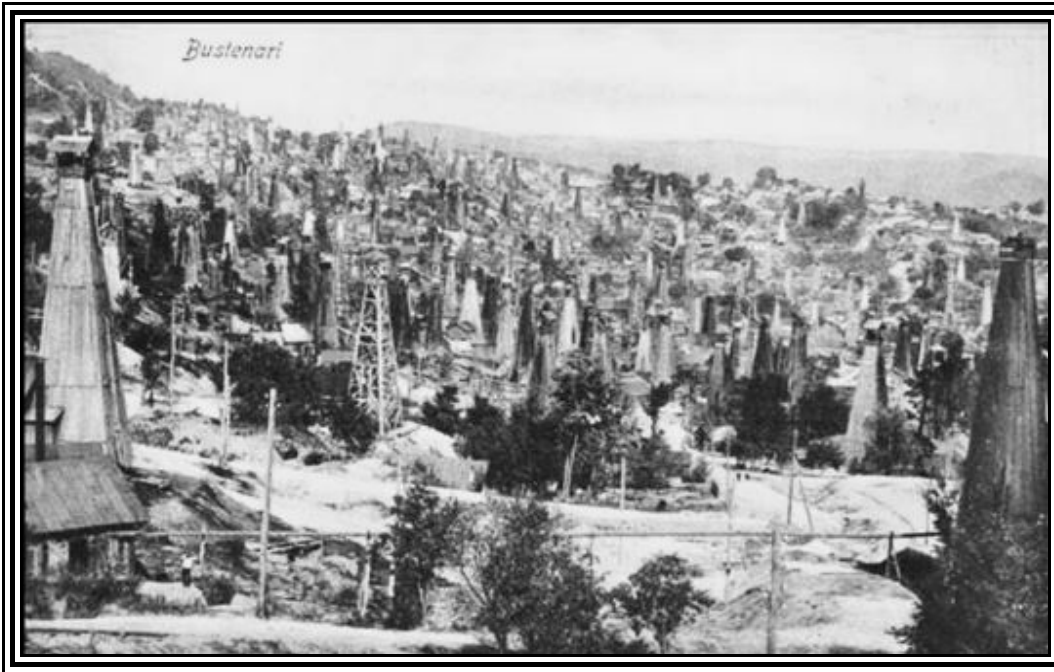
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November 20, 1916

Burning Rumanian Gold



Destruction of Rumanian oil wells

The conquest of Roumania brings many advantages to the Central powers, including food and resources. But the greatest potential is oil.

In November 1916, the British High Command convinces the Roumanian government to destroy its oil resources so that they will not fall in

German hands.

Maurice Hankey, the Secretary of the War Committee, was instrumental in seeding this tough option. A British expert was even sent to Roumania to help in the matter.

Fields of ripe grains were also burned, knowing full well that this would mean deprivation for the Rumanians themselves in the coming winter.

The oil wells were destroyed so efficiently that they could not be used in the war.

Hankey quotes Ludendorff confirming this.

●Hankey, Supreme Command, II: 535.



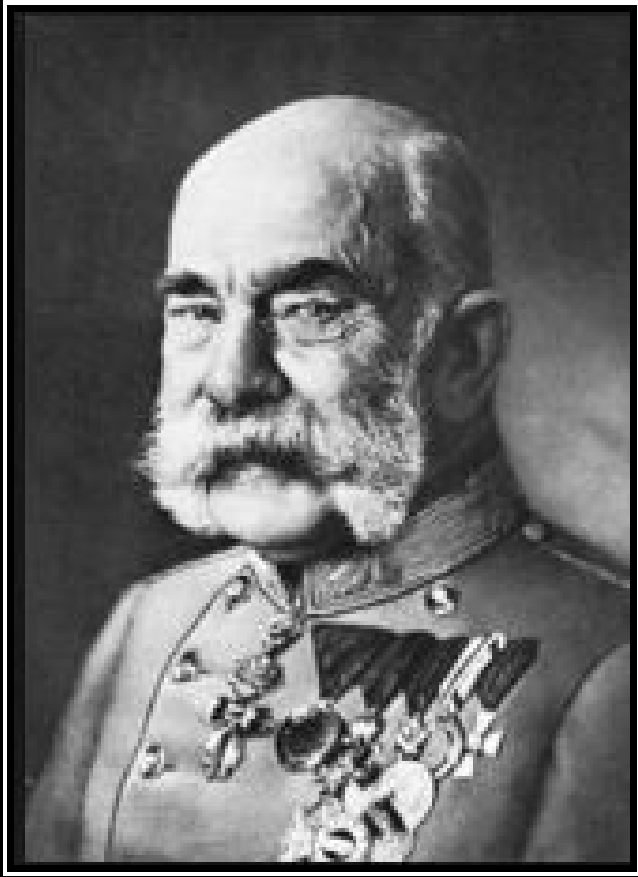
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Le 21 novembre, 1916

Un Habsbourg Impérial



Décès de l'Empereur François-Joseph d'Autriche-Hongrie

Le 21 novembre 1916, s'éteint François-Joseph 1er, empereur d'Autriche et roi de Hongrie. Il a 86 ans.

Monté sur le trône après les révolutions libérales de 1848, il a rénové le vieil empire et l'a transformé en une double monarchie austro-hongroise.

Mais il a l'amertume de ne pouvoir empêcher le déclenchement de la Première Guerre mondiale qui va avoir raison de son empire et de sa dynastie. Un mois après le drame de Sarajevo, il signe la déclaration de guerre à la Serbie, conscient de l'engrenage des alliances qui va plonger l'Europe dans un conflit général.

Le 9 octobre 1915, il délègue son petit-neveu et héritier, l'archiduc Charles, auprès du Kaiser allemand Guillaume II.

Ce dernier n'est pas prêt le moins du monde à arrêter les hostilités.

Le double monarque impérial laisse un Empire habsbourgeois prestigieux qui éclate de toutes ses failles.

Sources : https://www.herodote.net/21_novembre_1916-evenement-19161121.php

Pour en savoir plus : https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois-Joseph_1er_d%27Autriche



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November 22nd, 1916

Heir to a Crown of Thorns



Emperor Karl of Austria

Accession of Emperor Charles I of Austria-Hungary

With the death of old Emperor Franz Josef, his nephew Karl Franz Josef becomes **Charles the First, Emperor of Austria, and Charles IV, King of Hungary.**

With his accession, Austrian views on the war and the possibility of peace begin to change.

Karl served as a *Generalfeldmarschall* in command of XX Corps on the Italian front.

He believes that after two years of inconclusive war, peace is the logical conclusion to a war which has brought economic privation, internal stresses, some defeats and some victories of dubious political value.

From discussions with Germany on war aims earlier in the month, it is clear that Bethmann Hollweg's aspirations in the West will not be given up for the sake of a peace which would mollify Austria.

The new Austrian Foreign Minister, Czernin, is of like mind with Karl on the necessity of peace for the stability of Austria-Hungary,— if necessary, a separate peace.

●Further information: Z.A. Zeman, [A Diplomatic History of the First World War](#)



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November 23rd, 1916

A Provisional Government with Dare



Greece – Venizelos Declares War to Germany

Since the beginning of the War, the Greek Government has been torn by a choice of allies.

The King of Greece, King Constantine, is pro-German, but the Parliament has been divided and fickle in view of the turning tides.

Former Prime Minister Eleftheros Venizelos, a stalwart supporter of the Entente, left Athens to form a separate rogue government in Crete. He then moved his headquarters to Salonica days ago.

Totally separated from the King of Greece, Venizelos creates a second Greek Government

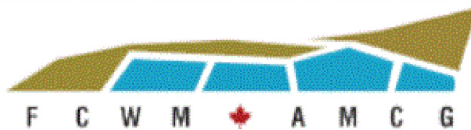
(Provisional) siding with the Entente Allies, and bent on supporting the Salonika offensive. The Venizelist troops take their place beside the Allies in Salonika in early November.

On 23 November 1916, Venizelos cuts all his bridges with Athens and declares war to Germany and Bulgaria.

This is not a civil war. Royal Greece has not sided with the other side, and Venizelos is not taking arms against the Hellenic people. At least for now.

●Hankey, Supreme Command, II: 538.

●Roskill, Hankey, I, 310.



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November 24, 1916

An Automatic Legacy



Death of Hiram Maxim (1840-1916)

Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim was the prolific inventor best known for the Maxim machine gun.

After an early career as a fecund inventor in the US, he moved to London where he invented his machine-gun in 1884.

This automatic gun had fully satisfactory recoil from pressured gasses of the barrel, pushing back both barrel and breach, ejecting the spent casing and loading a new shell in the chamber in the same cycle.

Maxim also created the

smokeless cordite for its ammunition. The Maxim gun was immediately adopted by all armies.

Maxim collected hundreds of copyrights for various other machines and accessories in various fields. His own Maxim Gun Company was absorbed into Vickers Ltd, of which he became the director. He was knighted in 1901. The water-cooled Maxims and Vickers of World War I were all from his designs. Their use in the First World War tipped the balance to the defence in a dramatic way.

The much less successful gas-operated, air-cooled, French Hotchkiss worked on a different design, with a piston.

●Jac Weller, «Small Arms», Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Ed., Vol. 16, p. 894-904.



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November 25, 1916

Canadian Woodsmen Do Their Thing



The Canadian Forestry Battalions in Britain and France

In February 1916, the British Colonial Secretary asked the Governor General of Canada if lumbermen could be sent to England so as to reduce shipping for Canadian wood. Great Britain imports 92% of 11.5 mt of timber.

The first battalion, **224th Canadian Forestry Battalion**, comprising 1,600 men of experience (700 fellers, 450 sawyers and assistants; 250 carters and hauliers, 100 enginemen and other tradesmen) and their equipment (\$250,000) was sent, and operations began on 13 May.

The results were such that 'more, more, more' were requested.

By the end of November 1916, three more battalions have been raised (238th, 242nd, and 230th) and an appeal is being made to men of the CEF with forestry experience already overseas, to apply to be transferred to the Forestry Corps.

*Canadian Forestry Corps Personnel Loading
Timber Source: Canada. Dept. of National
Defence / Library and Archives Canada / PA-
003399*

Companies of men with their own sawmills, their own rail wagons, and specialists' materiel and stores are dispersed in forests of England and Scotland, and some are being prepared to be sent to France. They produce timber chiefly for mining, tunnelling, railroads and construction. —The demand is unending.

•C.W. Bird, The Canadian Forestry Corps (London, 1919), p. 6-9.



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November 26, 1916

Sortir Enfin!



La 4^{ème} Division sort de la Somme

Après avoir été sur la ligne de front dans le secteur de la Somme pour les sept dernières semaines, la 4^{ème} Division canadienne en sort réduite et fatiguée.

Mais elle a pris dans les dernières batailles de la rivière Ancre une expérience qui en fait maintenant une division aguerrie.

Elle laisse la Cinquième Armée britannique du Général Gough pour se joindre au Corps canadien qui est maintenant dans la Première Armée britannique dans le secteur de Lens.

Le Corps canadien, arrivé dans la Somme avec trois divisions au début de septembre et sorti le 17 octobre, ainsi que la 4^{ème} Division qui l'a remplacé, ont perdu au total 24,000 hommes, tués, blessés, faits prisonniers et disparus.

Il s'agit de l'équivalent de presque deux divisions, remplacées partiellement par des renforts au cours de ces trois mois d'effort.

Le Corps canadien a maintenant un hiver pour se reconstruire et se préparer pour les campagnes de 1917.

•Nicholson, Le Corps Expéditionnaire canadien, p. 214.



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November 27, 1916

The C.O.'s Burden



Colonel Hadow leaves the Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur L. Hadow who gave members of the Newfoundland Regiment the order to go over the top at Beaumont-Hamel, on July 1, 1916, is invalidated home on **27 November 1916**, in a badly run-down condition.

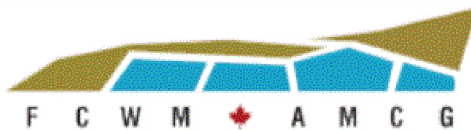
A British officer who took command of the unit in Gallipoli, Hadow had rebuilt the unit after Beaumont Hamel and seen it hard hit

again at Gueudecourt on 12 October, 100 days later.

Brigadier-General Douglas Edward Cayley wrote to Newfoundland Governor Sir Walter Davidson: "... it is largely owing to his care and careful training that the extremely efficient state of the Regiment is due".

Now that the campaign of the Somme is over, Hadow is worn out. He will be absent from the Regiment until early in May 1917.

●Nicholson, G.W.L., The Fighting Newfoundlander : A History of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, (Government of Newfoundland, 1964), page 321-322.



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November 28, 1916

A Brainstorm highly needed



General Byng wants answers

The Commander of the Canadian Corps is just coming out of the Somme operations after having lost 24,000 men in barely three months.

He is not particularly happy with these results and has asked for a survey to be made of the views of members of the Corps at all levels, including NCOs, on the reasons why the attacks are not as successful as they should be, when the troops are so energetic and dedicated.

Byng is convinced that there is a key factor that has to be changed to ensure that when a unit goes out over the top, it does not get stopped by the uncut barbed wire and mowed by defensive machine gun and artillery fire.

He wants a brainstorm among his officers to try to define what would be a game-changer in this war, so that defence does not get to be so overwhelming against the attacker.

One of his officers takes this challenge quite seriously. Arthur Currie, the commander of 1st Canadian Division, also believes that something can be done. Currie will be relentless in studying all the suggestions for improvement. He will search high and wide, including from the French experience in

Verdun, for a solution.

Byng and Currie want the 1917 campaign to be different.

●Williams, Byng, 141.



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November 29, 1916

Yanked Out



Jellicoe recalled to the Admiralty

The submarine crisis seems without solution and the Admiralty is perceived in Parliament and in the War Committee as lacking a sense of urgency.

Change has to come from outside Admiralty House where The First Lord of the Admiralty,

Arthur Balfour, and the First Sea Lord, Admiral Henry Jackson, are simply too compatible for good brainstorming.

Admiral John Jellicoe, Commander of the Grand Fleet, is disturbed by the growing losses due to German submarine and has offered to come to the Admiralty to concentrate on anti-submarine warfare.

Prime Minister Asquith finally decides that change is necessary: Jellicoe is instructed to move to London to take up the position of First Sea Lord.

On 29 November 1916, Jellicoe unceremoniously falls out of formation signaling «GOOD LUCK» to the Grand Fleet.

The official announcement of his replacement by Admiral David Beattie will be made on December 3rd. At this point, arming merchant vessels is seen as the answer.

—Providing guns is his top priority.

•Hankey, The Supreme Command, II, 554.



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November 30, 1916

Second First Prize

Major General Richard Turner appointed to England

With the reorganization that Prime Minister Borden has ordered for the Canadian Forces overseas in England, the new Minister *cum* High Commissioner, George H. Perley, needs a superior officer to be in charge of everything Canadian in the British Isles.

That officer has to put back into shape what was mishapen from the start by the good offices of the former minister of Militia and Defence, Sir Sam Huges.

Major General Richard E. W. Turner, VC, is a division commander in the Canadian Corps in France. He is the senior first-ranking Canadian General in Europe, with a VC from the Boer War.

He has also been involved in an incident in which his reputation as a field commander has been criticized, which eventually cost his British Corps Commander his job.

Turner will be the right man to bring order to the rear area activities and make efficient the reinforcement system for the Canadian Corps.

But his chances to become the first Canadian to command a Canadian Army Corps have just slipped from his hands.



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