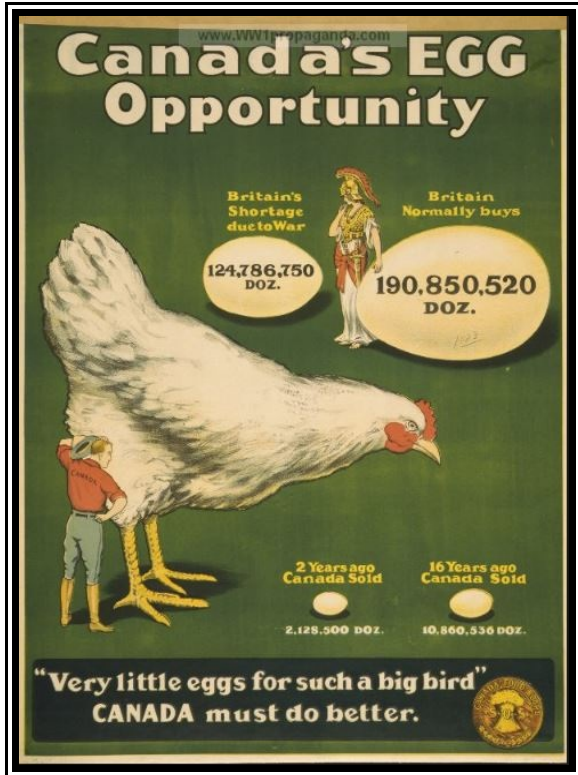


January 1st, 1918

Food Is Good Again!



The battle over Food is being won

With the new year 1918, it appears that one battle has turned for the better for the Allies.

The scare of unlimited submarine warfare and the likely starvation of Britain, at the start of 1917, have now been pushed back significantly.

Sea transport has been greatly improved by the adoption of convoys, and shipbuilding is gaining in stride so that the challenge now is to fill the available ships.

From the start of 1918, Canada sees the challenges in food production. With the availability of more transport, there is room for much more food to be sent to Europe.

The Federal government is involved in boosting agriculture in many ways, including directing city workers to farms in other provinces, and trying to overcome manpower shortages with women and students.

Rationing in Great Britain has improved the distribution of food throughout the population, rich or poor. Better farming techniques and organization has also improved local production. People are now eating soberly, but with confidence.

— 1918 does not look like a happy year ahead, but at least Food is not longer a vital weapon.

●A.J.P. Taylor, The First World War (Penguin, 1976), p. 211; ●Djebabla-Brun, Combattre avec les Vivres (Septentrion), p. 66.



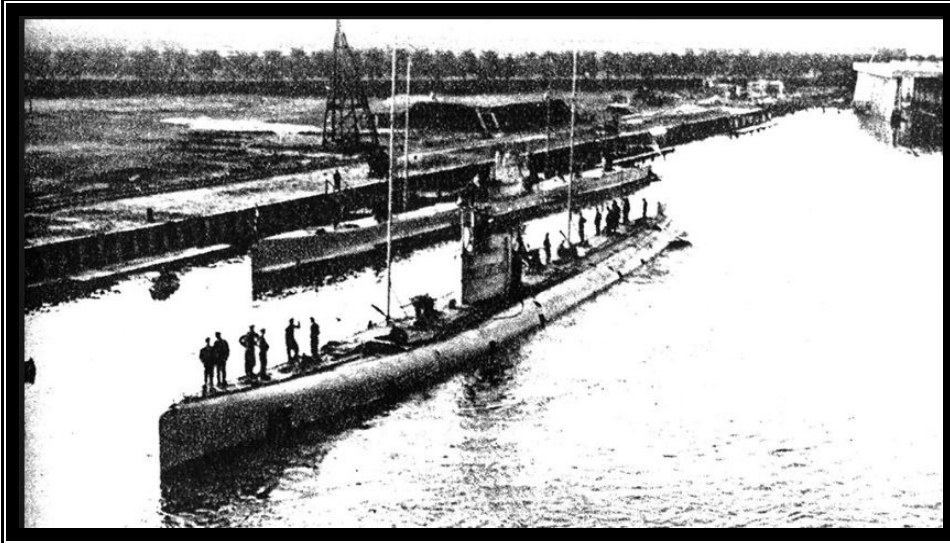
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January 2nd, 1918

U-Boot Untergang



The U-Boat ‘Downfall’

U-Boats are still a threat on the high seas, and they continue to sink hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping per month, including in west Atlantic.

But the scare that they caused in the middle of 1917, has somewhat abated.

There are still approximately 100 U-Boats in the German fleet, but their numbers are not increasing fast.

Germany built 87 new U-Boats between 1 January 1917

and 1 January 1918, including almost a dozen of the larger types of ‘mercantile submarines’ and ‘cruiser submarines’. But during the same period, 78 submarines were sunk.

The missions are also becoming more dangerous for the submariners with the construction of minefields on their most likely approaches.

— In particular, the United States Navy has committed to producing underwater mines in large quantities and placing them in large fields that are becoming more and more restrictive.

●Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (1998), p. 283; ●Botting, Douglas, *The U-Boats* (Alexandria, Virginia: Times-Life Books, 1979; Series Seafarers), Chap 3 - Final blows of the first U-boat war», p. 57-77.



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Le 3 janvier, 1918

Une grande décision individuelle



Formez les rangs!

Les élections générales fédérales du 17 décembre 1917 ont confirmé la politique du gouvernement conservateur pour la conscription des hommes pour le service militaire.

Dès le début de janvier 1918, les recrues des premières classes d'enrôlement visées (20 et 21 ans, non mariés) doivent se rapporter aux établissements militaires qui doivent en faire des soldats.

La Loi sur le Service militaire, qui a précédé les élections, et qui n'a pas été renversée par les efforts de l'Opposition, prévoit toutefois des procédures d'exemption.

Il faut remplir des formulaires, attendre la décision d'un juge, et, décision faite, se plier aux termes de la Loi.

Plusieurs n'attendent toutefois pas d'être appelés. Dans toutes les provinces, il y a des candidats qui refusent de se présenter ou même de présenter des demandes d'exemption. Ils se cachent pour éviter d'être saisis.

Ils deviennent déserteurs lorsque leur absence est notée, et sont immédiatement recherchés par la police militaire.

•Armstrong, Le Québec et la Crise de la Conscription, 1917-1918 (vib éditeur).

January 4, 1918

Finland's Perfect Timing



The Independence of Finland recognized

Before the First World War, the **Duchy of Finland** lay under the authority of the Russian Imperial Tsar. Authorities in Petrograd overruled local government on all aspects of policy.

Liberal elements of the Finnish society looked forward to national independence, but strong conservative elements wished to remain under a perhaps more conciliatory protection of the Russian empire.

The First World War exposed Finland to the aggression of the Central Powers in their fight against

Russia. Parts of Finland's population wanted to welcome a promised German liberation, and other parts preferred to fight for the Tsar and avoid Germanization. Finnish society was divided but not split, on account of the growing weakness of Tsar Nicholas II.

With the negotiations for an Armistice between the Central Powers and Russia, in 1917, consensus emerged in Finland that it wanted to prevail itself of the Wilsonian principle of the «right of peoples to self-determination.» Finland's political factions united in proclaiming Independence in December.

With both the Bolcheviks and the Germans having advantage in being seen by world opinion as open to self-determination, the Independence of Finland was granted on **4 January 1918**.

It was immediately recognized by other Scandinavian countries and by France, before the Germans themselves agreed.

●W.L. Blennerhassett, «Finland», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 22nd Ed., XXXI: 71-5.



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January 5, 1918

Loser Takes All



The Proletarians are boss!

Negotiations for a treaty «with no annexations and no compensations» between the Bolcheviks and the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk have been suspended by Trotsky on January 1st.

The Russian delegation is faced with the impossible mandate of negotiating on equal terms with the Germans, when their government is struggling to remain in power and their army has voted with their feet to return home and leave the defence lines unmanned.

In Petrograd, on **5 January 1918**, Lenin has his back against the wall.

Delegates from all over Russia have gathered for the opening of the Russian Constituent Assembly. He does not have a Bolchevik majority and is not able to obtain the confidence of the assembly.

Forced by the treaty negotiations at Brest-Litovsk and the German intimation that they might take back to the field and push headlong into Russia, Lenin opts for the *coup d'État*. He seizes the premises, expulses the delegates *manu militari* and proclaims a «dictatorship of the proletariat».

From now on, the Soviets are in control with the Red Army as a political arm. Trotsky can go back to Brest-Litovsk with two cards in his sleeve:

— There is an energetic government in Russia and there is a Red Army being put together!

●Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, Chap 18 - The Peace of Brest-Litovsk», p. 475-509.



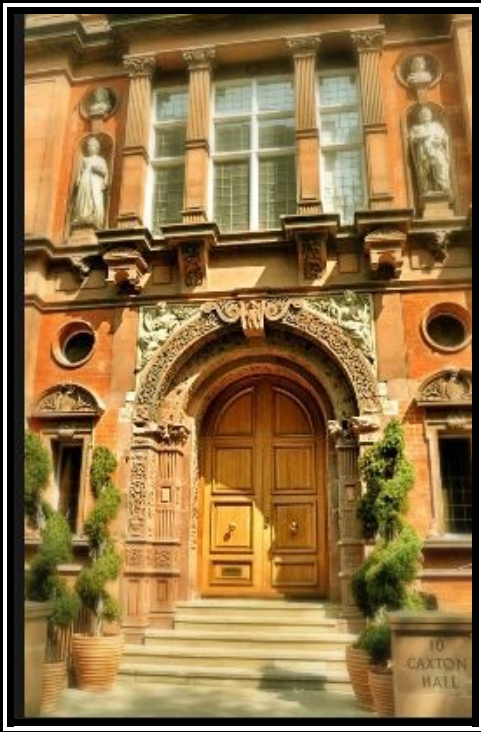
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January 6, 1918

The Power of Speech



The Caxton Hall Speech

The uncertainty of what will emerge of the negotiations between the Bolcheviks and the Germans at Brest-Litovsk leaves the Allies in great apprehension as to what the Spring will bring in France.

Morale in the civilian population in all of Europe has been eroded by the exertions of war and the lack of prospect for victory.

Lloyd George, the prime minister of Great Britain, senses that a great effort must be made to bring confidence and reinstate the purpose of the war in a manner so as to raise energy again.

The Parliament being in Christmas recess, he decides to address a meeting of the Trade Unions on **5 January 1918**, at a well-known venue, Caxton Hall, Westminster.

His speech turns out to be one of the most articulate statements of British policy during the War. It delineates War Aims in a manner that leaves no doubt as to the justice of the cause:

«First, the sanctity of treaties must be re-established; secondly, a territorial settlement must be secured based on the right of self-determination or the consent of the governed; and lastly, we must seek by the creation of some international organization to limit the burden of armaments and diminish the probability of war.»¹

-
- ¹Lloyd George, Memoirs, V:2487; •Grigg, Lloyd George: Vol 4: War Leader, Chap 21 - «Speeches», 377-91;
 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p032rmm0>



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Le 7 janvier, 1918

Des Voyageurs Canadiens en Mésopotamie



Une force spéciale nommée **Dunsterforce**

Le War Office a pris la décision de former une force spéciale pour aller défendre le front du Caucase contre les Turcs et intercepter toute avance qu'ils pourraient compter y faire à l'instigation allemande, vers l'Inde.

L'officier nommé pour prendre le commandement de cette force est le **major-général Lionel Charles Dunsterville**. Puisque cette force spéciale compte environ mille hommes regroupés de façon

inhabituelle, on lui donne le nom de «**Dunsterforce**».

Les membres de cette force sont recrutés de tous les corps d'armée des forces britanniques impériales et des Dominions, notamment du Corps canadien en France. Les autorités canadiennes choisissent d'assigner le Dépôt canadien pour l'entraînement des sapeurs à cette tâche extraordinaire. Quinze officiers et 27 sous-officiers doivent se rendre à Basra, en Mésopotamie, pour ensuite progresser vers Bagdad. Les pionniers canadiens seront employés pour la navigation fluviale sur le Tigre, au mois de mars 1918.

—Les «pionniers» canadiens ont une excellente réputation comme descendants des fameux Voyageurs des Grands Lacs, et des non moins fameux, aux yeux des Anglais, bateliers canadiens du Nil, qui ont aidé Kitchener à progresser vers Khartoum, en 1884-1885.

●MacLaren, Canadians on the Nile, 1882-1898 (UBC Press, 1978); ●Love, A Nation in Making, (Service Publications, 2012), II:299; ●<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205213377>



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January 8, 1918

A President's Dozen



US President Woodrow Wilson

President Wilson's Fourteen Points

On 8 January 1918, US President **Woodrow Wilson**, in one of the momentous speeches of the era, diagnoses the causes of the Great War and outlines practical proposals as a foundation for a peace settlement and to counter the causes of war.

Wilson bases the speech on reports produced in secret by a group called The Inquiry, made up of political and social scientists and organized by his senior assistant, Colonel House.

Wilson called for the abolition of secret treaties, arms reductions, colonial adjustments, freedom of the seas, removal of economic barriers, self-determination for oppressed minorities, and a world organization to oversee these measures.

Of particular historical significance is the self-determination of minorities, which would prove to be a death sentence for the two large multinational empires which have played major roles in the conflict, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires.

Further information:

https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc_large_image.php?flash=true&doc=62



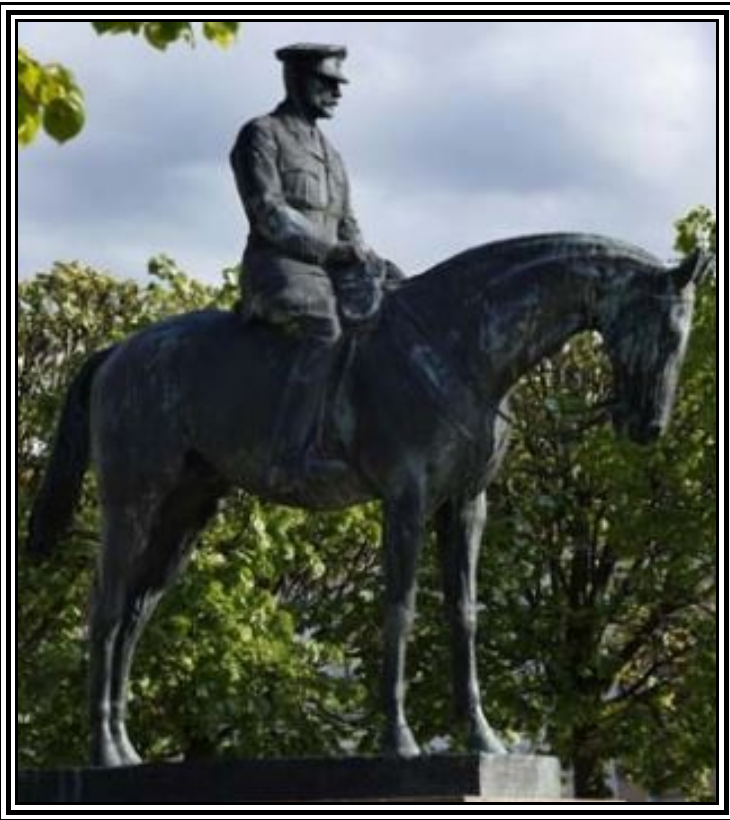
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January 9, 1918

Betting on the wrong horse



Field Marshal Haig presents his assessment to Cabinet

Field Marshal Douglas Haig is in London. He presented a formal assessment to the War Cabinet, two days ago, on what to expect for 1918, and is now making the rounds of politicians and officials to renew contact and justify his views individually.

The prime minister was not particularly impressed when Haig said:

«In my opinion the best defence would be to continue our offensive in Flanders, because we would then retain the initiative and attract the German reserves against us.»¹

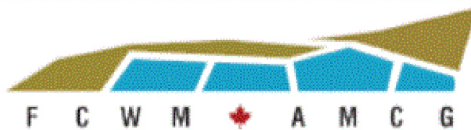
The campaign of Passchendaele has turned off Lloyd George from any further attempt in the Belgian mud and he will simply not release the last reserves of manpower held in England for such a headbutting plan.

On 9 January 1918, the two men have lunch together. In what Haig describes as ‘a very cheery party’, Haig predicts that the war will be over by the end of the year because of the civilian hardship in Germany.

— The prime minister bets 100 cigars against 100 cigarettes that this will not happen...

¹●Sheffield and Bourne (eds), Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters, 1914-1918 (2005), p. 370.

●Dancocks, Passchendaele, (1986), p. 203.



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January 10, 1918

The Shell Game of Manpower



British field divisions cut from 12 to 9 infantry battalions

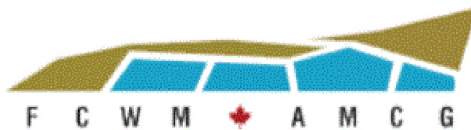
On **January 10th 1918** the War Office orders the implementation of the planned reduction in the strength of its field divisions from 12 to 9 infantry battalions, in order to address the manpower shortage in the exhausted and understrength British Expeditionary Force.

The shortage is most acute in infantry units and Haig's earlier proposal to break up 15 of his 57 divisions to bring the remaining formations up to strength was rejected for political effect in favour of maintaining the larger number of divisions, but reducing infantry battalions in each division.

The change can in part be justified as a fulfilment of the necessary trend to increase the proportion of artillery to infantry. Lloyd George argues in Parliament that the cuts make the divisions stronger as a result. The underlying reason, however, is simply a shortage of soldiers. 145 battalions are being dismantled, their manpower used as reinforcements for the remainder.

— This reorganization will have disastrous consequences, particularly for Gough's Fifth Army, in March 1918.

●John Keegan: The First World War, 395-6; ●Keegan, The Long, Long Trail; ●Lloyd George: Memoirs, vol. V, 2637-40.



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January 11, 1918

We'll Pass on That One



Currie maintains Canadian divisions structure

General Arthur Currie is convinced that the British reduction in infantry battalions in each division will harm the Canadian Corps' tactical efficiency.

As a national commander he informs FM Haig that such reorganization will not apply to the Canadian Corps.

Based on his Passchendaele experience, Currie has already made changes in artillery organization and procedures, and considerably increased the signals service. Planning is currently underway for the reorganization of the engineers and machine-gun corps.

Currie also secured the full support of Sir Edward Kemp, the new Overseas Minister, in proposing the breakup of the Canadian 5th Division in Britain. Its men will be posted to understrength units in the Corps in France, with an additional 100 men to be attached to the existing battalions without altering the infantry structure of the Corps.

— Currie's increase in the supporting arms is in fact superior to what is being done in British divisions and will prove decisive in the battles of 1918.

•A.M.J. Hyatt, General Sir Arthur Currie, p. 98-102.

January 12, 1918

Between a Rock and a Wrong Place



Latvia bails out of Russia

As the tensions build around the ongoing negotiations for a peace treaty in Brest-Litovsk between the Bolcheviks and the Central Powers, border provinces of Great Russia are sensing that the Bolchevik regime is dangerous for them.

The dictatorship of the proletariat does not appear bent on any more real democracy than its Tsarist predecessor.

Moreover, the interest of Germany in supporting a Buffer between herself and socialist Russia leads to a timely offer of protection against a Soviet backlash to a Latvian Independence move.

Latvia, is not undivided in its own political makeup. It is not Germanophile. But when the Germans occupied Riga, in August of 1917, Latvia was bitterly discredited by the Russian Central government.

This leads, on **12 January 1918**, to the Latvian Declaration of Independence by Janis Goldmanis, a member of Latvian Parliament.

– German interest and assistance in Brest Litovsk make the move a possibility – It will be an acrid flight of freedom.

●Baron Alexander Meyendorff, «Latvia», Encyclopaedia Britannica, 12th Ed., 1922, XXXI: 729-31.



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January 13, 1918

A One-Tiger Zoo



George Clemenceau, Radical

George Clemenceau «Le Tigre» is a man of such energy, at 76, that he brushes aside the nameless ministers of his cabinet when it comes to making policy.

He is foremost the author of the pre-war articles «*Vouloir ou Mourir*», and «*Triompher ou Périr*», which marked him in French history as the most irredentist Frenchman. For him war is the price of freedom.

His newspaper *L'Homme Libre* changed name to *L'Homme Enchaîné* when war censorship tried to stop his criticism of

Government and Army.

«The censorship had to forge fresh fetters for chaining him. With all the skill of a surgeon Clemenceau laid bare the faults which too frequently characterized French war-leading.»¹

On 13 January 1918, as *Président du Conseil des ministres*, he said, famously:

«*Le droit d'injurier les membres du gouvernement doit être mis hors de toute atteinte.*»²

Although he never said it himself, all heard it said clearly:

«*Le Gouvernement, c'est moi!*»³

¹●Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXX: 702; ²●Michel Winock, *Clemenceau* (Paris: Perrin, 2007), p. 434; ³●Enc. Brit., Ibid. ;

●Image: [Ça n'empêche pas, Nicolas](http://canempechepasnicolas.over-blog.com/article-le-petit-clemenceau-et-son-ministere-de-combat-123178242.html) - Blog de Jean Lévy sur l'actualité politique au jour le jour,

<http://canempechepasnicolas.over-blog.com/article-le-petit-clemenceau-et-son-ministere-de-combat-123178242.html>



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January 14, 1918

Rumblings of Discontent



Threats to British India

German-Ottoman efforts to raise jihad among Indian Muslims have produced scattered mutinies and plots but no general uprising, largely because of the success of British counter-intelligence.

However, the activities of what was known as the Hindu-German Conspiracy are perhaps more of a threat and become increasingly associated with the developing movement for Indian independence.

In late 1917, Indian troops began to return to an economically and politically disturbed India as the British campaign in Mesopotamia concluded.

Accordingly, in early 1918, a committee under **Mr Justice Sydney Rowlatt** is established to evaluate the threat of political terrorism in India, especially in Bengal and Punjab, and the links with Germany and the Bolsheviks.

The Committee concludes that the German threat was real and its recommendations will lead to the Rowlatt Act, a major factor shaping the Indian independence movement after the War.

●T.W. Holderness, «India», Encyclopaedia Britannica, Twelfth Ed., 1922, XXXI: 432-54, see «Rowlatt Bill, p. 441. ● Wikipedia, "The Rowlatt Committee".



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January 15, 1918

A Pair of Eyes in the Sky



A new asset in anti-submarine protection

Early in 1918, new plans are being made to use airships and aircraft for the anti-submarine role.

Airports, seaplane stations and airship bases for antisubmarine work are being built all around the coast of Britain.

Observation from the air allows to spot shadows of submarine underwater and report their position. Flying boats can also pounce out of the sun on unwary cruising U-Boats.

Blimps with up to fifty hours of endurance are put into service as convoy air escorts and U-Boat spotters in the British Western Approaches, the Channel and the North Sea.

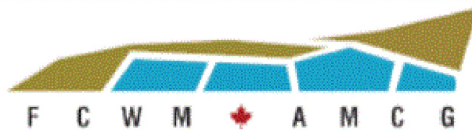
Of the 312 ships torpedoed in convoy from April 1917 to the end of the war, only two will be hit while an air escort is present.

Seven U-Boats will be sunk by flying boats before the end of the war, but 40 will be damaged.

U-Boats which in average sunk 70 ships each at the peak of their effectiveness, will sink only 16 in July 1918. Sixteen of 55 at sea will be lost in May 1918.

— The resolute introduction of the air arm in the antisubmarine role will spell the end of U-Boat threat.

●Butting, The U-Boats, 60.



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Le 16 janvier, 1918

Des bataillons Tout Nus!



Plus vite que vite!

La certitude que les Allemands vont profiter de la libération de leurs troupes sur le front Est pour faire une offensive massive en France, avant que les troupes américaines aient atteint leur niveau stable, force les Alliés à hâter leur transport .

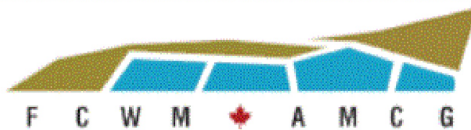
Le premier ministre Lloyd George offre au gouvernement américain, **le 15 janvier 1918**, de consacrer des navires présentement voués à la nourriture au transport de troupes des États Unis.

Puisque les Américains transportent présentement leurs troupes par contingents de divisions formées, celles-ci apportent avec elles un matériel considérable et les infrastructures d'état-majors.

L'offre anglaise est de transporter très rapidement 150 bataillons disparates (150,000 hommes) sans équipements et supports divisionnaires, et les attacher à des divisions britanniques déjà formées. L'entraînement nécessaire serait ainsi réduit de 85%!

Pershing s'opposera à ce plan. Il ne voudra pas que des soldats américains soient attachés à des divisions européennes!

•Lloyd George, Memoirs, Chap. 81.



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Le 17 janvier, 1918

Perte d'expertise manufacturière



Les Unions de travail en congrès

Les Unions de travail ont formé un congrès à Londres pour déterminer une politique face à l'intention du gouvernement britannique de forcer encore 150,000 hommes à servir sous les drapeaux.

Plusieurs de ces hommes sont de la catégorie de ceux dont l'expertise irremplaçable a fait qu'ils ont été retournés à la vie civile par la Loi de la conscription du travail, après s'être portés volontaires et avoir servi en uniforme.

La décision des Unions est maintenant à savoir s'ils vont s'opposer à ce qu'elles appellent la «dilution» de l'expertise manufacturière, où ces derniers ouvriers expérimentés vont être remplacés par des hommes et femmes sans expérience. On craint ainsi que les normes de fabrication, la productivité et les accidents de travail soient tellement influencés par la perte d'expertise que l'effort de guerre pourrait très bien en souffrir.

Il s'agit là de mesures ultimes, qui attestent que les ressources d'état en main d'oeuvres sont maintenant étirées à craquer.

Ce sont maintenant les femmes qui remplissent des rôles dans toutes les fonctions de production, incluant des postes de gestion industrielle auxquels elles n'ont jamais été formées auparavant.

●Lloyd George, Memoirs, Chap 72, «The problem of manpower».



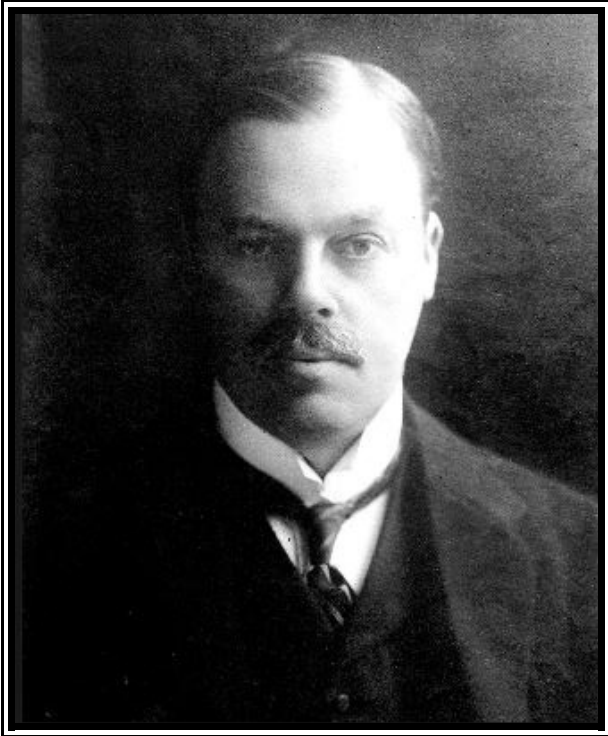
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January 18, 1918

Air Ministry Takes Flight



Lord Rothermere's Air Ministry

Throughout the war the bitter rivalry between the War Office (responsible for the Royal Flying Corps - RFC) and the Admiralty (the Royal Naval Air Service - RNAS) caused serious problems for supply and equipment, particularly supplies of new and updated aircraft.

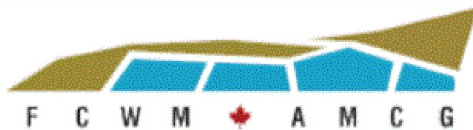
Matters were complicated by the government's wildly over-optimistic and unrealistic production forecasts that proved the 'figments of the politicians' imagination.'

The German bombing attack on London, on June 13, 1917, gave impetus to considering the merger of the RFC and the RNAS, and a report by General Smuts and Sir David Henderson recommended this, that the whole air arm be overseen by a new independent Air Ministry.

Hugh Trenchard was recalled from command of the RFC in France, and offered the position of Chief of the Air Staff, by **Lord Rothermere**, a newspaper magnate and newly-appointed Secretary of State for Air, in order to prepare for the establishment of the Royal Air Force.

— Trenchard began his work on **January 18th 1918**, after much hesitation, distrusting Rothermere as a "difficult and devious man."

●Michael Armitage: The Royal Air Force, 27-28; ●Chaz Bowyer: History of the RAF, 22-40; ●David Jordan: The Battle for the Skies, 74-80; ●Russell Miller: The Life of Viscount Trenchard, 194-6; ●Andrew Boyle, Trenchard Man of Vision, 260-2.



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January 19, 1918

Second to None!



The Second Constituent Assembly of Russia

After its establishment at the end of the October Revolution in 1917, the **All Russian Constituent Assembly** was dissolved on January 18-19th, 1918 (January 5-6th in the old Russian calendar).

A meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee at the Tauride Palace in Petrograd decided the fate of the Assembly.

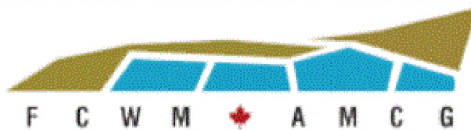
After the meeting, which lasted all night, Constituent Assembly members were banned

from re-entering the palace by the Bolcheviks and the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets became the governing group of the country.

The closure prompted no reaction from the public for, despite belief to the contrary, the proletariat did not share the Socialist-Revolutionary Party's excitement for the Constituent Assembly.

Members of the dissolved Assembly continued to meet in secret until January 28 (January 15), 1918, when its members were forced by Trotsky's «Red Army» to flee the city, and the Assembly was officially disbanded.

-
- Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924*. (London: Pimlico, 1997).
 - Adam Bruno Ulam, *The Bolsheviks: The Intellectual and Political History of the Triumph of Communism in Russia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).



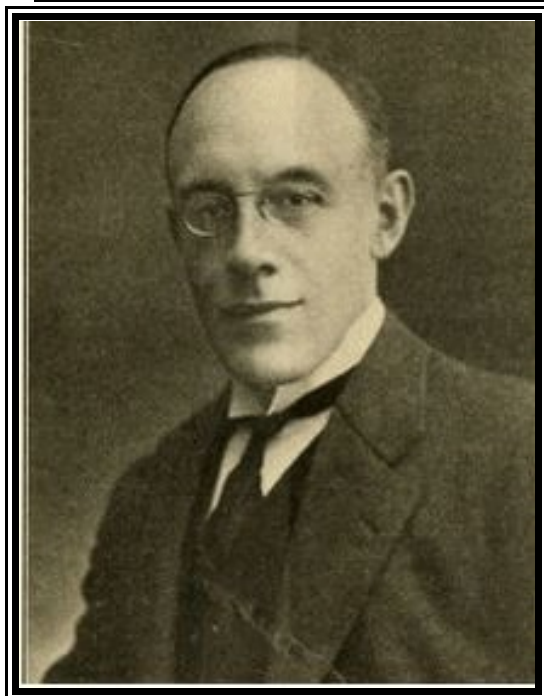
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January 19, 1918

A Rather Convincing Baron



Critical manpower shortage

At the outbreak of the war, in 1914, thousands of British men were granted guarantees of conditional or absolute exemption from military service for the needs of industry.

However, as the war progressed heavy casualties reduced the British and Allied forces to a critical point. This, coupled with the transfer of German reinforcements from the East, in the winter 1917-1918, made the need for additional manpower even more urgent.

Baron, Sir Auckland Campbell Geddes, Minister of National Service, in charge of army recruitment, holds a National Conference with 350 representatives of Labour Unions at Westminster, on **January 19, 1918**, with the aim of getting their support for efforts to increase British forces by at least 250,000 men.

As expected, it is a hard sell. But Geddes succeeds in convincing Labour of the dire emergency of the situation. This will lead him to introduce and carry through Parliament a new conscription bill and law in February.

— «It was largely due to his efforts that the manpower and woman-power of the whole country was so completely thrown into the prosecution of the war as to make the victory of 1918 possible.»¹

¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Twelfth Edition, 1922, XXXI:198.



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January 20, 1918

Two Bulls Out the Bullpen



The Battle of Imbros

The German battlecruiser **Goeben** and the cruiser **Breslau** were transferred to the Ottoman Navy in 1914, retaining their German commanders and crews.

They were renamed **Yavuz Sultan Selim** and **Midilli** respectively, and saw extensive service against the Russian navy, primarily in the Black Sea.

On January 20, 1918, the two ships exit from the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean to attack British warships near the island of Imbros

and the base at Mudros, hoping to relieve the pressure on Palestine. They sink two British monitors (shore bombardment vessels) and damage others, but in moving to attack Mudros, they run into minefields.

Midilli is sunk, and **Yavuz**, damaged, hobbles back to Turkish waters where she is beached and later moved to safety, despite multiple air attacks.

– **Yavuz** remained in Turkish service to 1950, the last operational capital ship of the Dreadnaught era.

Further information: •Geoffrey Bennett, Naval Battles of the First World War

•Photo: Selim damaged and beached after the battle of Imbros.



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January 21st, 1918

Winding the St. Quentin Spring



Ludendorff's Spring Offensive

On **21 January 1918**, Ludendorff issues definite orders for the development of Operation Michael, a final war-winning offensive aimed at the British front.

This is an all-or-nothing gamble that it is hoped will put Germany in a position "to lay down conditions for peace with the Western Powers."

Of three attack plans considered, MICHAEL is chosen because the ground is likely to dry more quickly after the winter in the St Quentin-Arras area, and Allied defences are considered weaker there.

Sixty divisions, many transferred from the east, trained in new tactics and newly-equipped, will attack on a 50-mile front in depth in a bold, novel and ambitious operation emphasizing speed, with specialized storm troops spearheading a rapid advance and disregarding security of the flanks. This is to be preceded by a massive but brief artillery bombardment, and characterised by fluidity, initiative and infiltration on the part of the infantry, instead of the usual rigid timetable and fixed objectives approach.

– The first Operational Order will be signed off on January 24th for this final March offensive.

●John Keegan: The First World War, 375-7, 393-4; ●Martin Middlebrook: The Kaiser's Battle, 29-64; ●Correlli Barnett: The Swordbearers, 299-336; ●Barrie Pitt: 1918 The Last Act, 65-69.



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Le 22 janvier, 1918

Versailles Ne Commande Pas!



Une Note du Conseil Supérieur de Guerre

La Note 12 du Conseil Supérieur de Guerre des Alliés à Versailles présente dix-neuf résolutions préparées par les représentants militaires, qui incitent à une préparation très méthodique en prévision d'opérations renforcées des armées germaniques, au printemps, contre le front de France.

En particulier, ils implorent les commandants-en-chef de former des réserves communes qui pourront être employées selon les besoins sur tout le front allié.

Mais les commandants-en-chef de chaque nation insistent

pour garder leur autonomie et former leurs propres réserves, qu'ils pourront prêter selon les cas.

L'influence de Foch se fait sentir parmi les représentants militaires, en particulier par Weygand, qui le représente.

–Mais les généraux Wilson et Cadorna doivent s'y opposer pour représenter la volonté de leur commandant-en-chef.

●Lloyd George, Memoirs, Appendix I «Note 12», to Chapter 74, «The Military position», Vol. V, p. 2744-54.



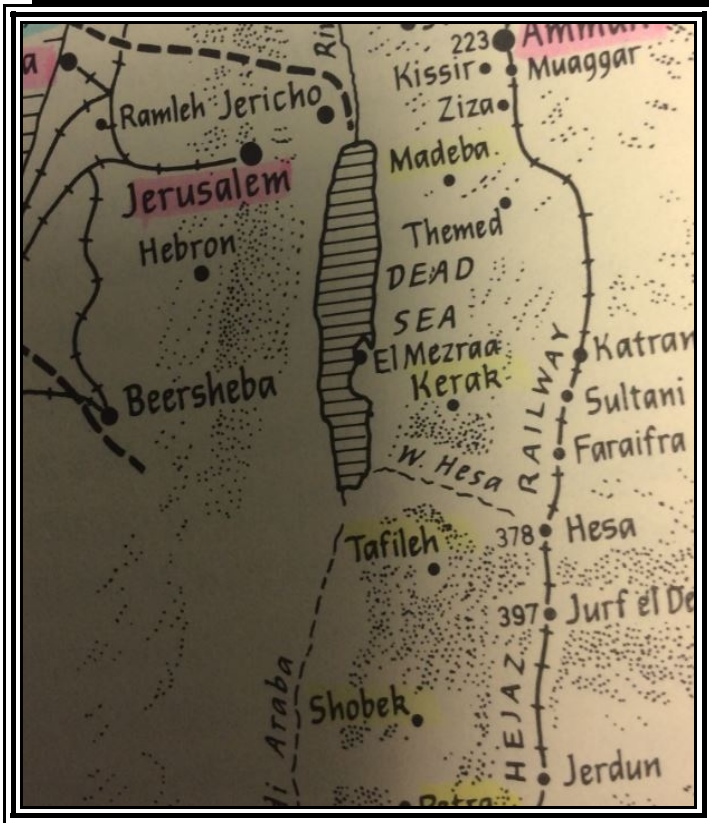
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January 23rd, 1918

A Good Day of Fighting in Palestine



Lawrence and the defence of Tafileh

The camel cavalry of the Arab Army is progressing on the right flank of the British Army in Palestine. They have recently taken Tafileh, just to the south of the Dead Sea.

Meanwhile Allenby has progressed on the west of the Dead Sea. He is in Jerusalem, well ahead, on the west bank, and Lawrence is making recesses forward into enemy territory so as to ascertain if the local tribes will join the Arab Army and turn against the retreating Turks.

On 23 January 1918, the Turks make a counter-attack with a large force against Tafileh.

After a day of hard fighting, the Turks are driven back into Wadi Hesa, to the north. The fighting results in one thousand Turks killed and 200 captured with some artillery.

This is a sound defeat. Lawrence is satisfied with the results since he has been able to convince the Arab leaders to fight it out and not withdraw. This is the first time in this campaign that an Arab force fought a battle on conventional

lines. Arab losses were about 25 killed and 40 wounded.

— They must now push on to Madeba, at the head of the Dead Sea, with new local tribes.

- Jeremy Wilson, Lawrence of Arabia (New York: Atheneum, 1990), p. p. 476, Map p. 436.
- Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Chap 85.



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Le 24 janvier, 1918

Une réponse qui en dit peu



L'Alliance du Centre répond au Président Wilson

Les discours des 5 janvier, par le Premier ministre britannique, et 6 janvier, par le Président des États-Unis, ont rendu clairs les buts envisagés par ces deux puissances dans la Guerre.

Le 24 janvier 1918, les puissances du Centre répondent à ces déclarations très importantes de sorte à elles-mêmes exposer les buts qu'elles se donnent.

Toutefois, il est très clair que les déclarations faites le même jour par le Comité central du Reichstag, à Berlin, et par le ministre des affaires extérieures

de l'Autriche-Hongrie, à Vienne, cachent bien des ambitions.

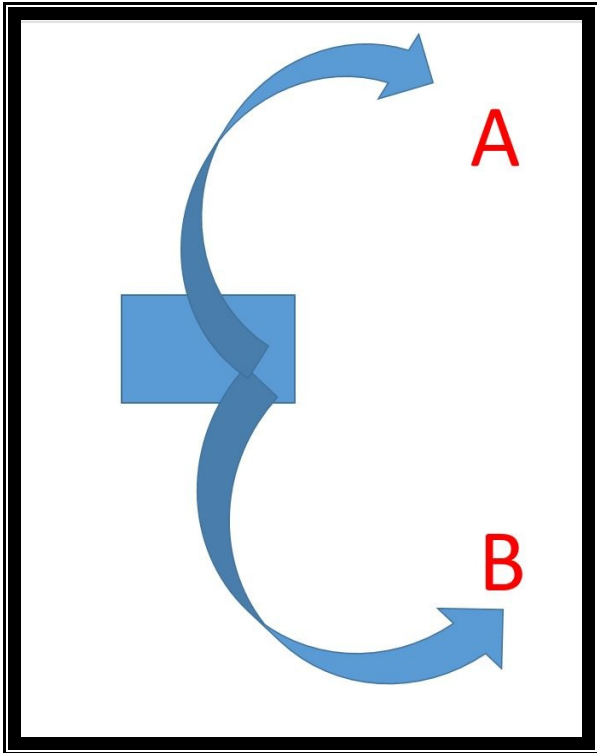
Les négociations se poursuivent toujours avec les Russes à Brest-Litovsk. Les Allemands sont suprêmement confiants qu'avec les résultats de ce traité, ils vont pouvoir gagner la main-mise sur l'économie de toute une bande frontalière de la Russie, de la Mer Baltique à la Mer Caspienne, et y exploiter les richesses en ressources tant minérales que végétales, en plus des potentialités humaines.

— L'Allemagne est au plus haut de sa confiance en l'avenir d'une Mitteleuropa qu'elle va pouvoir dominer.

•Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, Chap 22.

Le 25 janvier, 1918

Faire des réserves pour le printemps



La question des réserves stratégiques en France

Le général Foch est le chef de l'état-major général des armées françaises. C'est le général Pétain qui est commandant-en-chef de ces armées, et donc l'autorité finale sur la planification opérationnelle.

Foch a toujours représenté la fougue française, lui qui a été l'apôtre de l'offensive à outrance bien avant la guerre. Pétain est un défensif, cérébral et méthodique.

Foch a pu influencer le Conseil de Guerre supérieur de Versailles pour qu'il recommande des dispositifs de contre-attaque puissants dès que les Allemands se manifesteront au printemps. Il envisage donc, pour la manoeuvre, la création d'une grande réserve mobile alliée, qui pourra se déplacer vers le lieu de l'action et frapper à l'endroit choisi avec aplomb.

Pétain ne croit pas au besoin d'une réserve commune avec les Britanniques. Dans une rencontre avec Foch, **le 25 janvier 1918**, Pétain met les choses bien au clair, qu'aucune planification d'état-major ne sera

faite sur une telle réserve commune. Il a rencontré le maréchal Haig qui est d'accord avec lui. Chacun aura sa réserve intégrale, qui pourra être prêtée sur autorisation nationale.

Foch se voit ainsi rabroué, lui qui entrevoit déjà les tiraillements que les attaques allemandes portées sur les limites inter-armées vont créer entre les états-majors obligés d'improviser.

● Barnett, The Swordbearers, 295.



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January 26, 1918

French Game of Strategies

Scissors, Stone or Paper: Three French Leaders

The dynamic of politics in France is in an awkward balance, in January 1918. Three great leaders are pulling in their own direction when all know that the spring will bring similar harshness as the Battle of the Frontiers, in 1914; Joffre's 'grignotage' of 1915; Verdun and the Somme, in 1916; and the tragedy of Chemin des Dames, in 1917.

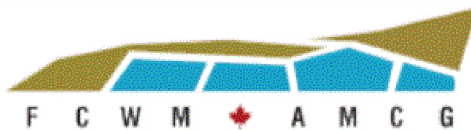
The new prime minister, **George Clemenceau**, wants the armies to attack as soon as possible so as to disrupt the enemy before he can organize the reinforcements from the Russian front. He does not want to wait for the Americans.

The Chief of the General Staff, **Ferdinand Foch**, wants to wait for the Americans for an all-out effort, but he wants the Allies to have a powerful common reserve ready to pounce on the attacker so as to not only resist the advance, but destroy the attacking forces by manoeuvre.

Philippe Pétain, the Commander-in-chief, wants to wait in defence for the Americans to be ready, and not commit to manoeuvre battle as the risk is too high to be defeated in the open. He wants digging and holding for this year.

The three are in a deadlock. Pétain is so popular with the public that Clemenceau cannot fire him; Pétain cannot fire his Chief of Staff as he was put there by the Government; and Foch is right, but cannot impose his will over the others.

— This is a game of scissors, stone and paper, where the stakes are quite high...



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January 27, 1918

A Special Force of Adventurers



The Dunsterforce leaves Baghdad

The special force under Lieutenant-Colonel (acting Major-General) **Lionel C. Dunsterville**, has left England at the beginning of January, and has now progressed up Mesopotamia from the Persian Gulf to Baghdad.

This force of 100 officers and 250 sergeants, is composed of picked volunteer adventurers, Englishmen, Scotsmen, Irishmen, Canadians, South Africans, Australians and New Zealanders.

Its mission is to find its way to Baku and convince and train local Armenian and Georgian

troops of Azerbaijan to resist the advance of the Turks, now that the Russian Army has abandoned Persia to return home.

A convoy of officers with armoured cars leaves Baghdad as an advanced party on **27 January 1918** to reach Kermanshah, where it is intended that famine relief will be organized. The task of the party is to show British goodwill and repair the terrible damage that was left by the retreating Russians.

The special force's mission has become furthermore important that the Germans, still in negotiations with the Russians in Brest-Litovsk, are making separate deals with frontier states to enlist their support.

— This is becoming a serious threat to India.

• The TIMES History of the War, Vol. XX (1919), p. 85-88.



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January 28, 1918

The CINCs Scratching Each Other's Backs



Commanders-in-Chief ignore Versailles

In November 1917 Lloyd George was instrumental in establishing the Supreme War Council to unify Allied command, as a means of lessening Haig's authority.

In **late January 1918**, it is proposed that an inter-Allied force, called a General Reserve, be created, controlled by an executive committee of the SWC under Foch.

Both **Pétain** and **Haig** have warned their governments of an impending German offensive. British divisions are in the process of being reduced from 12 to 9 infantry battalions to assume responsibility for more of the front line.

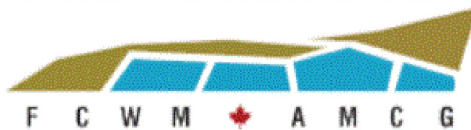
Haig and Pétain refuse to release any of their divisions to the proposed Reserve, believing that they are already short of troops to meet their own threat.

Moreover, Haig is not prepared, with good reason, to be subordinated to neither Foch nor Wilson (the British military representative at Versailles), and Pétain loathes Foch.

Instead, the two national Commanders-in-Chief agree among themselves to help each other with reserve divisions if either needs them in the face of a German blow.

— They command-in-chief... not the Council!

●Gary Sheffield: [The Chief: Douglas Haig and the British Army](#), 258-265;
●Trevor Wilson: [The Myriad Faces of War](#), 548-551; Correlli Barnett: [The Swordbearers](#), 293-5, 323-4.



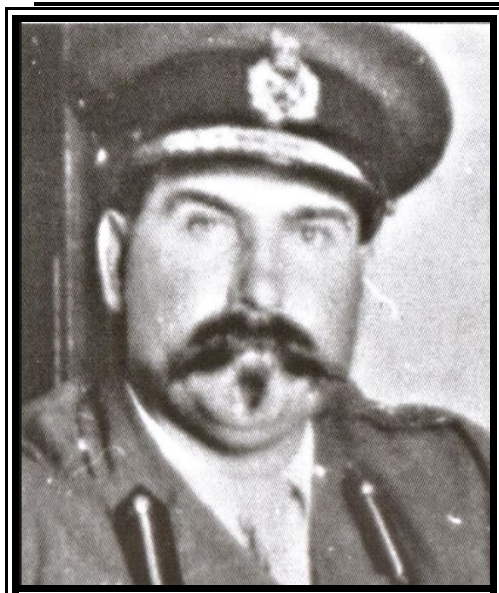
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Le 29 janvier, 1918

Association 'porto' en Afrique du Sud-Est



Rencontre entre Jacob Van Deventer et Alvaro De Castro

Malgré les relations souvent tendues en Afrique de l'Est entre les forces anglaises et portugaises, surtout concernant l'instabilité politique à Lisbonne et le manque de zèle de ces derniers à se défendre contre les troupes allemandes en Afrique, les Britanniques en concluent néanmoins qu'une relation entre les deux nations serait avantageuse pour contrer la menace du général allemand von Lettow-Vorbeck.

Voilà le pourquoi d'une rencontre organisée **le 29 Janvier 1918** à Lourenco Marques, au Mozambique portugais (aujourd'hui Madua, au Mozambique) entre Alvaro De Castro, le gouverneur general et **le Général sud-africain Van Deventer**.

L'objectif est de rattacher les deux forces au sein d'une union militaire à laquelle les Britanniques seraient la force dominante sans bien sûr entacher la ferveur patriotique portugaise.

Cette rencontre vient à point car au mois de décembre 1917, des attaques allemandes en zones portugaises ont permis aux troupes allemandes de capturer une très grande quantité de nourriture, d'armes et d'équipement médical, en plus de faire de nombreuses victimes chez les Portugais et leurs alliés africains.

Les Portugais ont déjà fourni des troupes pour assister les Anglais en France. La vieille association qui remonte à Wellington dans la guerre contre Napoléon reprend vie.

Source: ●Ross Anderson, The Forgotten Front: The East African campaign 1914-1918, (Briscombe Port Stroud, Gloucestershire(UK): The History Press, 2014), p. 268.



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January 30, 1918

Post-election rage in Quebec

The Francoeur Debate in Québec

The *Military Service Law* of August, the *Wartime Election Law* of September, and the General election of December 1917, have shown that public opinion in Quebec does not sway the rest of Canada.

The Liberal Party in Ottawa consists almost exclusively of MPs from Québec, and its defeat was utterly devastating in every other province.

This has created a terrible frustration in the provincial parliament in Québec City. All parties are united in saying that the point of view of Quebec in regard to participation to an Imperial war was not only nullified by the majority vote, but insulted and derided in public pronouncements in Ottawa and other provinces. The rancid rancour of the Conscription debates has left bruised ego and bitter blood.

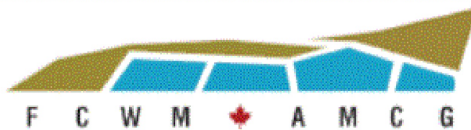
With the opening of the Québec parliamentary session in January 1918, the mood of the House is rancorous and vindictive. Speakers are so exacerbated by humiliation that they pour acrid

and inflammatory oratory .

Joseph-Napoléon Francoeur, a seasoned and respected Liberal from Lotbinière, a farmland county 100 km the south of Québec City, burst out livid in reproach when he submits what will become his famous «Francoeur motion» to Parliament. It is a separatist option which he will rapidly withdraw in the face of Premier Sir Lomer Goin's rallying counter-speech.

— But Francoeur's incendiary motion cleansed the wound very deep. From this point, the pain will be bearable.

●Elizabeth H. Armstrong, The Crisis in Quebec, 1914-1918, Chapter 8.



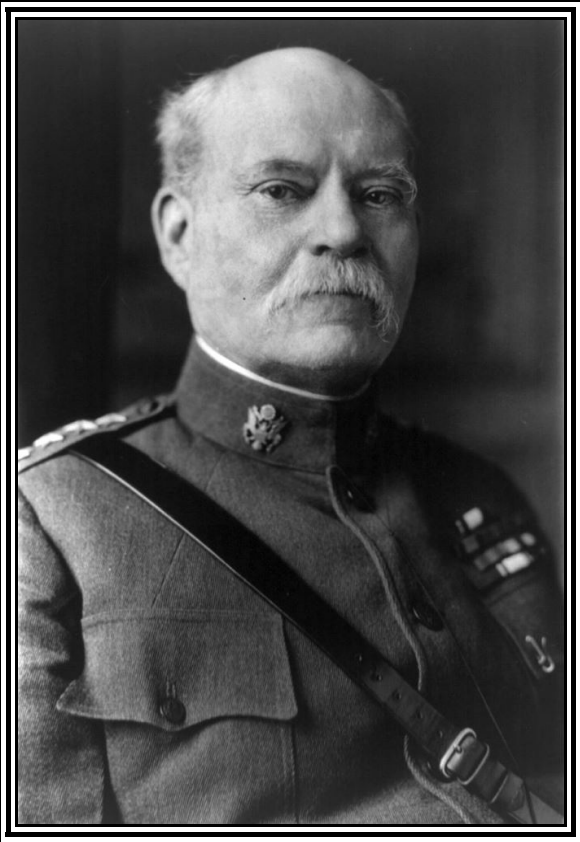
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Le 31 janvier, 1918

Deux Américains à Versailles



Bliss accompagne Pershing

Une conférence de quatre jours a commencé hier, à Versailles, pour le Conseil Supérieur de Guerre des Alliés.

Plusieurs sujets sont discutés, notamment, le niveau d'autorité que possèdera le Conseil pour influencer les opérations militaires.

On est bien loin encore d'y établir un commandement central avec son Generalissimo, mais le comité des représentants militaires des nations propose des plans pour au moins coordonner plus étroitement les collaborations inter-armées.

Un des représentants militaires, arrivé en janvier, est le chef de l'état-major de l'Armée américaine, le **général Tasker H. Bliss**.

C'est le Président Wilson qui l'a nommé pour ce poste à Versailles. Avec le Général Pershing, Commandant-en-chef des forces américaines en Europe, il doit veiller à la bonne organisation des appuis fournis par les Alliés.

La conférence de Versailles résoud plusieurs problèmes rattachés à l'arrivée massive des divisions américaines. Bliss parle maintenant de passer de 12 à 24

divisions pour l'été 1918, et malgré l'opposition initiale de Pershing à l'idée d'entraîner les bataillons américains au sein de divisions européennes, Bliss obtient des concessions qui vont permettre de tels entraînements, tellement plus efficaces.

Le but de Bliss est maintenant de trouver, coûte que coûte, plus de navires pour transporter ses 600,000 hommes!

●Lloyd George, Memoirs, V: 3026-9. ●Churchill, World Crisis, III (2), 386; ●Dancocks, Passchendaele, 205.



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