The Aneurin Great War Project: Timeline
Part 10 - The War Itself, 1916

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[BUT UNDER CONSTANT EXTENSION AND CORRECTION, SO CHECK AGAIN SOON]

This timeline supports the Aneurin series of interdisciplinary scientific reflections on why the Great War failed so singularly in its bid to be The War to End all Wars. It presents actual or best-guess historical event and introduces theoretical issues of cognitive science as they become relevant.

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The Timeline Items

For ease of back-reference this next entry is repeated from the end of 1915

**************************************************** MONTHLY UPDATE, DECEMBER 1915 ****************************************************
**************************************************** MONTHLY UPDATE, DECEMBER 1915 ****************************************************
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1916 [Saturday 1st January] Present Location of Welsh Units: Here is the status of the British Army's essentially Welsh units at the end of the 17th month of the war ...
ROYAL WELCH FUSILiers (the ancestral 23rd Regiment of Foot [<=1881 (1st July)])
1st Bn is in France with 7th Division. 2nd Bn is in France with 27th Division. Of the twelve service battalions so far created 13th Bn, 14th Bn, 15th Bn, 16th Bn, and 17th Bn are earmarked for 38th (Welsh) [New Army] Division. The first line territorial battalion 1/4th Bn is in France with 1st Division. The remaining three first line territorial battalions, namely 1/5th Bn, 1/6th Bn, and 1/7th Bn, are with 53rd (Welsh) [Territorial] Division, and have just been evacuated from Suvla Bay and shipped to Alexandria for service in Egypt [<=7th December].

SOUTH WALES BORDERERS (the ancestral 24th Regiment of Foot [<=1881 (1st July)])
1st Bn is in France with 1st Division. 2nd Bn is presently with 29th Division in the thick of the fighting at Gallipoli. Of the nine service battalions so far created 4th Bn is with 13th Division and is presently covering the Helles Front evacuation [=>1916 (7th January)], whilst 10th Bn and 11th Bn are earmarked for 38th (Welsh) [New Army] Division.

THE WELCH REGIMENT (the ancestral 41st and 69th Regiments of Foot [<=1881 (1st July)])
1st Bn has recently been shipped out to Salonika with 28th Division. 2nd Bn is in France with 1st Division. Of the twelve service battalions so far created 8th Bn is in Gallipoli with 13th Division and is presently covering the Helles Front evacuation [=>1916 (7th January)]. 9th Bn has just gone to France with 19th (Western) Division, and 10th Bn, 13th Bn, 14th Bn, 15th Bn, 16th Bn, 18th Bn, and 19th Bn are all earmarked for 38th (Welsh) [New Army] Division. The WR's four first line territorial battalions, namely 1/4th Bn, 1/5th Bn, 1/6th Bn, and 1/7th Bn, are with 53rd (Welsh) [Territorial] Division, and have just been evacuated from Suvla Bay and shipped to Alexandria for service in Egypt [<=7th December].

THE MONMOUTHSHIRE REGIMENT
2nd Bn is in France with 4th Division.

THE WELSH GUARDS REGIMENT
1st Bn [1st February =>17th August] is still with the Guards Division in France.

END OF MONTHLY UPDATE, DECEMBER 1915

1916
[Saturday 1st January or hereabouts] Reconstructive Surgery and Rehabilitation [III - At Aldershot]: [Continued from 1915 (15th June)] At the instigation of the R.A.M.C.'s figurehead surgeon Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, 1st Baronet [Wikipedia biography] Gillies [1915 (15th June) =>1917 (16th July)] is transferred back from France during the spring to organise a specialist unit at the Cambridge Hospital [Wikipedia factsheet], Aldershot, for the management of facial injuries. Gillies will remain at Aldershot until shortage of space forces the creation of a dedicated larger facility in the grounds of Frognal House [Wikipedia factsheet], Sidcup, Kent [sub-thread continues at 1917 (16th July) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]

1916
[Tuesday 4th January] Censorship, Propaganda, and Recruitment [XLVII - The Choice Between Free Speech and Munitions]: [Continued from 1915 (25th December)] The Liberal Party MP and Under-Secretary of State for War Tennant [<=1914 (25th August)] makes a statement in the House of Commons concerning the suppression by the police of the previous day's issue of "the Scottish labour paper 'Forward'" in the wake of the near-riot which had greeted Lloyd George's [1915 (25th December) =>] Christmas morning speech to the Clydesiders on the topic of "dilution" [<=1915 (25th December)]. Tennant is entirely unapologetic ...

"Mr. OUTHWAITE [= the Liberal Party MP Robert L. Outhwaite [Wikipedia biography]] I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the current edition of 'Forward' has been seized by the police, and, if so, can he state whether this has been done because the paper published a report of a recent meeting held by the Minister of Munitions, and showing that he received a hostile reception from organised labour on the Clyde?

Mr. TENNANT [...] I have not yet received the official report of the details of the action taken against the newspaper 'Forward', but I understand that action was taken by the competent authority in Scotland under Regulation 51, Defence of the Realm Regulations, at the instance of the Ministry of Munitions. The ground for the action taken was an offence under Regulation 27. It does not necessarily follow that there will be any trial.
Mr. **PRINGLE** [= the Liberal Party MP William M. R. Pringle [Wikipedia biography=>next entry] What about free speech?

Mr. **TENNANT** The ground for the action taken was an offence under Regulation No. 27. It does not necessarily follow there will be any trial” *(Hansard, 77:801-805)*.

Tennant’s statement is noteworthy in the present context as a demonstration of how easy it is for freedom of the Press to be more or less arbitrarily constrained in time of War [sub-thread continues at 5th January (but see also next entry) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1916 [Tuesday 4th January] **The Shells Crisis [XV - The Munitions of War Act (The Section 7 Debate)]:** [Continued from 1915 (23rd June)] The House of Commons debates a proposal to repeal Section 7 of the *Munitions of War Act* passed the previous summer [<=1915 (23rd June)] and presently enforced by the Minister of Munitions **Lloyd George** [preceding entry]<=1915 (23rd June)<=6th July]. The proposer is **Pringle** [=preceding entry] and the justification is that Section 7 has been producing some unforeseen and highly "irritating" outcomes (not least Christmas Day's near-riot in Glasgow [=preceding entry]). Section 7 presently states (a) that a workman engaged upon munitions work cannot leave his employment without a certificate of consent from his employer, and (b) that an appeals tribunal should adjudicate in cases of dispute. As to what has been happening in practice, Pringle continues ...

"I remember when I protested against it [...] I could barely obtain a decent hearing; yet all the prophecies I then made that you were putting workmen on munitions work in a position of slavery [...] have been fulfilled in every part of the country. [...] The remedy was far too drastic. [...] I was induced to assent to it [...] because workmen were being bribed by employers to change from one employment to another [...] because at that time the Government were prepared to pay any prices so long as they could get delivery. [...] In short employers were competing and over-competing with each other [...]" *(Hansard, 77:835-865)*.

And as to why it is now safe to withdraw the clause altogether ...

"But now the situation has largely changed. Employers have no longer the same inducement, because [Lloyd George] has effectively restricted their profits, and at the same time he has also done something to reduce the high prices which were being given to contractors. Under these circumstances, there is no inducement at the present time to employers engaged upon munitions work to compete against each other for workmen, and there no longer exist the conditions which it was alleged did exist at the time of the passing of the original Act, and which were said to render these restrictions on the freedom of workmen necessary” *(ibid.)*.

A heated exchange then follows over exactly what was, or was not, said at the Glasgow meeting. The final vote is that Section 7 should remain in force [sub-thread continues at 17th March]. [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1916 [Wednesday 5th January or hereabouts] **Shellshock [XII - Dykebar Shares the Load]:** [Continued from 1915 (30th October)] Concerned that they are diverting scarce resources unnecessarily **Maghull War Hospital**’s [1915 (1st May)<=25th March] **Rows** [ditto] arranges for 60 seriously psychotic patients to be separated out from his core caseload and transferred instead to **Dykebar War Hospital** [no convenient factsheet], Paisley, who are in their turn transferring civilian patients to nearby Crichton Royal Hospital [Wikipedia factsheet] [sub-thread continues at 25th January ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]
**1916** [Wednesday 5th-25th January] **War in the Balkans [VIII - The Salonika Campaign (The Montenegro Offensive)]:** [Continued from 1915 (9th December)] This battle is fought for control of Serbia's ally Montenegro [map, etc.] between the Austro-Hungarians under von Mackensen [1915 (12th October)] and the Montenegrins under Janko Vukotić [Wikipedia biography], presently not just defending their own lands but providing a stable northern flank for the Serbian retreat out of Albania further south [=1915 (7th October)]. The outcome is a Montenegrin surrender on 25th January, but a successful evacuation of the Serbs, who will reappear on the Salonika Front later in the year [=3rd April] (sub-thread continues at 4th March ...). [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

********** A PROBLEM EXPLORED **********

**1916** [Wednesday 5th-6th January] **Censorship, Propaganda, and Recruitment [XLVIII - The Military Service Bill (The Commons Debate)]:** [Continued from 4th January] A lengthy debate on "a Bill to make provision with respect to Military Service in connection with the present War" is introduced by Prime Minister Asquith [1915 (21st December)]-25th May]. Strongly endorsed by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir William Robertson [1915 (18th December)]-22nd April] the Bill is to apply to unmarried men aged between 18 and 41 years, subject to the following exemptions (note the historic precedents for conscientious objection) ...

"I will enumerate the exemptions. The first is that it is expedient in the national interest that he or they should, instead of being employed on military service, be engaged [...] in work which in the broadest sense it is in the national interest he should continue to perform. Secondly [...] there is the case of the man, though a single man, who is really the support and stay of, it may be, father, mother, sister, who are dependent upon him. [Examples given] So the second ground is that of a man by or in respect of whom application is made by or in respect of any person dependent upon him, and who, if he were called up for Army service, would be deprived of the means of maintenance. [...] The third ground of exemption is the very obvious one of ill-health or infirmity. The fourth ground of exemption is a conscientious objection to the undertaking of combatant service [grumbling from the House] Some hon. Members are, perhaps unacquainted with the history of legislation in regard to these matters. In the days of the great French war [...] when they enforced the Compulsory Militia Bill [1808 - keyword that year's Hansard for background], they expressly exempted the only people who in those days had conscientious objections to Government service - the people called Quakers" (Hansard, 77:949-974).

Not all Members approve, and the Home Secretary Sir John Simon [=1915 (14th October)] actually resigns in protest. Another, the Newport-born Labour Party MP for Derby James H. Thomas [Wikipedia biography] [=14th November], explains the true iniquity of the Bill ...

"My difficulty is that [...] so bitterly do I resent the Bill, so satisfied am I that it is wrong, that you might say to me, 'Stop it by calling a strike'. I am to answer, am I, that I am a coward? Why? Because the calling of a strike would not end in stopping Conscription; it would affect the poor fellows who are fighting our battles. That is the kind of feeling that tears men like me at this moment. On the one hand I know that it is wrong; I believe it is a huge conspiracy. I am the more convinced of that when we find, as we have found to-day, that no military man can defend the proposal for two minutes" (ibid.).

Another anti-Conscriptionist W. Llewelyn Williams [Wikipedia biography; the Liberal Party MP for Carmarthen] similarly takes the position that the Derby Scheme [1915 (15th December)]-1st June (ASIDE)] was "a deliberate trick", engineered so as to fail, in order that a system of compulsion would be needed to replace it (sub-thread continues at 25th January ...). [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION] [THREAD = WW1 PACIFISM AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION]
1916 [Thursday 6th-21st January] **The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XI - The Tigris Corps]**: [Continued from 1915 (7th December)] During January several battles are fought near **Sheikh Sa'ad** [use the Kut-al-Amara maplink at 1915 (28th September) and look 25 miles along the River Tigris to the east] at a point where the road upstream to **Kut-al-Amara** [maplink at 1915 (28th September)] passes through a series of narrow river-cut defiles. A hastily assembled British relief column - the "**Tigris Corps**" - under [Sir] [1916] **Fenton Aylmer** [13th Baronet] [1928] [Wikipedia biography] -> [8 March] is advancing upstream in an attempt to break the Turkish stranglehold around Kut, so that **Townshend**'s [1915 (7th December) => 6th April] trapped troops can be extricated. However the Turkish Sixth Army under **von der Goltz** [1915 (7th December) => 8th March] has defended both the river-line itself, and the high ground to either side of it, and on 6th January the British are driven back with heavily disproportionate losses. Further equally unsuccessful (and equally costly) actions take place on 13th and 21st January, after which it will be a further six weeks before the Tigris Corps is sufficiently reinforced to mount another attempt at a breakthrough [sub-thread continues at 8th March ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 7th January-10th June] **38th (Welsh) Division at War [VI - Learning the Ropes (Richebourg Sector)]**: [Continued from 1915 (28th December)] On 7th January the division relocates to **Richebourg** [map, etc.] to begin a four-month-long spell of duty moving between there and **Givenchy-lès-la-Bassée** [maplink at 1914 (10th October)] [sub-thread continues at 11th June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 DIVISIONAL HISTORIES]

********** A VICTORY AT LAST **********

1915 [Friday 7th-9th January] **The Dardanelles and Gallipoli Campaigns [XLVIII - The Final Withdrawal]** [Continued from 1915 (21st December)] The final action of the Gallipoli Campaign is a naval evacuation conducted under conditions of the greatest secrecy. **Maude**'s [1915 (6th August) => 8th March] **13th (Western) Division** acts as the rear-guard. The subterfuge works, even to the extent of beating off a heavy Turkish attack on the afternoon/evening of 7th January. The last troops take to their boats between 0200hr and 0345hr on 9th January, and only when the ammunition dumps are blown ten minutes later do the Turks realise that the bird has flown [end of sub-thread]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [10th January-16th February] **WW1 in the Caucasus [VIII - Yudenich's Winter Offensive (Erzurum and Köprüköy)]**: [Continued from 27th May 1915] On 10th January 1916 Yudenich takes advantage of the Russians' greater experience with deep snow to launch a surprise attack against the Ottoman winter quarters at **Köprüköy** [map] and **Erzurum** [map]. Köprüköy is taken after a week and Erzurum on 16th February after stiff resistance1 [sub-thread continues at 2nd March 1916 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = WW1 REPRISALS AND ATROCITIES] [THREAD = WW1 PROPAGANDA]

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1 The factual Battle of Erzurum was immediately re-cycled into fiction by state propagandist and novelist **John Buchan**, appearing later in 1916 as "**Greenmantle**" [Amazon] and introducing the **Richard Hannay** character later seen in "The 39 Steps".

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1916 [Saturday 15th January] **German Sabotage in the U.S. [VII - The Von Papen Exposé]**: [Continued from 1915 (28th December)] Today's *Washington Post* publishes a British propaganda release detailing payments by the disgraced German military attaché **von Papen** [1915 (28th December) => 19th April] to his network of agents and saboteurs [sub-thread continues at 19th April ...]. [THREAD = WW1 ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE]

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1916 [Tuesday 18th January] **Von Pohl** [1915(23rd January)] retires on grounds of ill health and is replaced as Commander-in-Chief of the German High Seas Fleet by **Reinhard Scheer** [Wikipedia biography] => 31st May. One of his first command decisions is to agree with **Kaiser** [1916].
Wilhelm II that the High Seas Fleet should henceforth more aggressively seek a confrontation with the British Grand Fleet. This strategy will be put to the test in the bombardment of Yarmouth and Lowestoff and the Battle of Jutland. [THREAD = WW1 SURFACE NAVY OPERATIONS] [THREAD = WW1 GRAND STRATEGIES]

1916 [Sunday 23rd January] The Senoussi (Western Desert) Campaign [V - The Battle of B’ir Halazin]: Following their successes in the Battle of Mersa Matruh a month previously, and with their numbers augmented by the arrival of Lukin’s 1st South African Brigade, Wallace’s Western Frontier Force now mounts a heavy raid on the Senoussi desert encampment at B’ir Halazin. The outcome is a Senoussi withdrawal with disproportionately high losses. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Monday 24th January] Islam in WW1 [XIX - The Afghans Stay Neutral]: After months of negotiation von Hentig submits a draft Afghan-German Treaty to Habibullah Khan, promising to modernise, re-arm, and re-train the Afghan Army, and otherwise purchase his alliance against British India. The Afghans decline the offer and re-affirm their neutrality. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Monday 24th January or hereabouts] Islam in WW1 [XX - The Arab Bureau (Early Work)]: After two months settling in Clayton’s Arab Bureau in Cairo is beginning to feel its feet. Future histories will highlight in particular a 24th January intelligence analysis written by a Welsh-born British intelligence officer Thomas E. Lawrence whose assessment of the Arabs as potential allies against the Turks is set out in a secret Memorandum entitled "The Politics of Mecca", thus ...

"The Arabs are even less stable than the Turks. If properly handled they would remain in a state of political mosaic, a tissue of small jealous principalities incapable of cohesion."

The British continue to court the Arabs nonetheless, and those "small jealous principalities" have been centre-stage in world politics ever since. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 GRAND STRATEGIES]

1 ASIDE: This paper is referred to by different sources with various dates 24th January to 8th February. The T. E. Lawrence Studies website does not include it, but similar views are clearly set out in 1915 drafts formally published in 1917 - check it all out.

1916 [Tuesday 25th January] Censorship, Propaganda, and Recruitment [XLIX - The Military Service Bill (The Lords Debate)]: Although largely a formality the records of the House of Lords debate on Conscription include Lord Lansdowne’s neat summary (a) of the problem, and (b) of the presently proposed solution. Here is the problem ...

"This Bill is a war measure, temporary and limited in its application, and it is intended for one purpose, and for one purpose only, namely to provide us with the number of men who are indispensable if we are to maintain our existing military formations, if we are to meet the obligations to which we are already committed, and if we are to carry the war to a successful issue" (Hansard, 20:970-1022).
"What this Bill does is to enact that every unmarried man between the ages of 18 and 41 on August 15 of last year, unless he falls within certain exceptions [...] becomes upon an appointed day automatically enlisted in the Army Reserve" (Hansard, 20:970-1022).

Duly approved in the Upper House, the Bill will now go forward for Royal Assent [sub-thread continues at 27th January ...]. [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

********** "AN ATMOSPHERE OF CURE"**********
********** RECOGNISING SHOCK AS A VALID INJURY **********

1916 (Tuesday 25th January) Shellshock [XIII - The Mott (1916) Paper]: [Continued from 1915 (30th October)] The British physician [Sir]1919 Frederick W. Mott [Wikipedia biography] publishes a paper entitled "Special Discussion on Shell Shock without Visible Signs of Injury!" [full text online] in which he reports his experiences in the "Neurological Section of the Fourth London General Hospital" [now King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London - see their website]. He is particularly concerned that the treatment of "shell shock without visible signs of injury" should take into account a number of predisposing "personal factors", thus ... "That 'psychic trauma' plays a very considerable part in the production of the functional neuroses and psychoses of shell shock without visible injury is shown by the fact that neuro-potentially sound sergeants, non-commissioned officers, and privates, who, after fighting at the front for long periods, have been the subjects of shell shock, as a rule do not manifest severe and prolonged symptoms of functional neuroses. Officers who have been exposed to shell-fire and have suffered temporary loss of consciousness, according to my experience, recover much more quickly. I have not seen a single case of mutism [...] among the large numbers of officers that I have had under my care, nor have I, with one exception, seen severe cases of amnesia from shell shock without visible injury in officers; the one case I have seen had a marked retrograde amnesia [...] and chorea [= bodily jerks and twitches], but in his case there was evidence of physical concussion. [...] These facts undoubtedly point to the importance of the personal factor. A considerable number of the cases of shell shock without visible injury, in my judgement, occur in individuals of a neuropathic or psychopathic predisposition, or of a timorous or nervous disposition" (op. cit., ii-iii; emphasis ours).

Mott then considers the explanatory significance of loss of consciousness, thus...

"Shell shock without visible injury is usually followed by a complete loss of consciousness, due to 'commotio cerebri' [colloquially "concussion", sometimes (especially French military) "commotion"; the term refers to the presumed brain injuries occasioned by blunt head injury, with visible bruising but without deformation or penetration of the cranial bones] of variable intensity and duration [...]. In the majority of cases the shock mainly affects the cortical structures, the vital centres, as in apoplexy [= stroke], continuing to function; in some cases the subconscious centres (Jackson's middle level), which preside over the inborn instinctive and habitually acquired purposive sensori-motor actions subserving the preservation of the individual and species, are able to perform their complex functions; but of the experiences the individual has had during this period of automatisms he has no recollection whatever ...” (op.cit., iii; emphasis ours).

ASIDE - EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE HUMAN BRAIN: There was in 1916 (and still is in 2015) an enormous amount of absolutely basic cognitive theory behind the statements highlighted above. The Jackson referred to is the famous 19th century British neurologist John Hughlings Jackson [Wikipedia biography], who had, following slightly earlier work by the Austrian neurologist Theodor Meynert [Wikipedia biography], profiled the functional purpose of most macroscopic brain structures ...
ASIDE - THE MEYNERT-JACKSON MAP OF THE MIND: To save us reinventing the wheel, a quick glance at the entries for Meynert and Jackson in our Companion Resource will fill in the basic proposals of the Meynert-Jackson model of brain function. Note how the three anatomic levels of the brain support three qualitatively distinct psychological levels of the mind. The Meynert-Jackson model is thus paradigmatic for all (and there are many) modern three-level theories of brain function [example; example] (not to mention robotic control [example (scroll to Figure 7)] and artificial intelligence [Shanghai Lectures tutorial]).

It follows (1) that the top layer of the mind has what is nowadays called "executive control" over the lower layers, and (2) that should any of the component "executive functions" [Wikipedia factsheet] fail for some reason the middle and lower layers have enough "automatisms" available to keep you alive, but in a feral, uncoordinated, and often highly antisocial way, the modern term for which is "Dysexecutive Syndrome" [Wikipedia factsheet].

Readers wishing to explore the similarities between dysexecutive syndrome and shellshock may find it helpful to pre-read our Companion Resource (especially Sections 5 and 6 concerning how executive functions might effectively be assessed by a number of simple clinical tests) [sub-thread continues at 18th March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]

RECOMMENDED READING: This phrase from Mott's original paper. For the fuller history we recommend not just the original paper but also Jones (2010 online) and Jones (2014 online).

MUTISM - TRAUMATIC OR ELECTIVE: [Readers unfamiliar with the notion of malingering should pre-read the entry at 1847 (8th March)] To be mute is to be unable or unwilling to speak, but only the former is a legitimate reason to be excused military duties. Mutism as a clinical sign therefore triggers in the mind of a suspicious clinician the possibility of malingering.

RETROGRADE AMNESIA: A retrograde amnesia is an inability to report memories (caution - there are many subtypes) laid down prior to the moment of injury. It is an everyday clinical correlate of blunt impact head injuries in the work place, home, road traffic accidents, or contact sports. The condition was studied in detail following a paper entitled "Traumatic Amnesia" (Russell and Nathan, 1946) and the clinical picture is typically consistent with the various forms of "consolidation theory" of memory [Wikipedia tutorial].

1916 [Thursday 27th January] Censorship, Propaganda, and Recruitment [L - The Military Service Bill (Royal Assent)]: [Continued from 25th January] The new Military Service Act receives the Royal Assent, thus completing its passage through Parliament. It will come into force five weeks later [=>2nd March] [sub-thread continues at 2nd March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT]

1916 [Saturday 5th February] A Headquarters staff is assembled at British G.H.Q., St. Omer [maplink at 1914 (5th August)], around which to assemble a new - Fourth - British field army. Over the coming weeks this new army gradually replaces French troops in the Somme sector, from Foncquevillers [map, etc.], some 12 miles north of Albert [maplink at 1914 (25th September)], South past the German fortress-village of Beaumont-Hamel [map, etc.], then south-south-eastward past same at Thiepval [map, etc.], Ovillers-La Boiselle [map, etc.], and Fricourt [map, etc.], then eastward around same at Mametz [map, etc.], and then finally south-eastward to the River Somme itself just west of Curlu [map, etc.]. 1st Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers [1st January => 1st July] is in Bois Français [= modern Bois d'Engremont; use the Fricourt maplink (above) and look half a mile to the south-south-east]. [THREAD = THE WW1 ARMIES (ORGANISATION, EQUIPMENT, AND TACTICS)]
1916 [Tuesday 8th February] The East African Campaign [XV - The Second Battle of Lake Tanganyika]: [Continued from 1915 (22nd December)] Spicer-Simson's [ditto] sinks SS Hedwig von Wissmann, [Wikipedia shipography], one of the two remaining German patrol vessels on Lake Tanganyika. The other vessel is then scuttled as the German garrison abandons it and heads eastward to join von Lettow-Vorbeck's [1915 (11th July) <=> 12th February] German East African field force [sub-thread continues at 12th February ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 12th February] The East African Campaign [XVI - The Smuts Offensive (The Battle of Salaita Hill)]: [Continued from 8th February] This battle is fought for control of the northern border of German East Africa near the town of Taveta [map, etc.] between a British/South African column commanded by [Sir] 1920 Wilfred Malleson [Wikipedia biography] and elements of von Lettow-Vorbeck's [8th February <=> 6th May] East African field force commanded by Georg Kraut [no convenient biography]. The outcome is a German victory [sub-thread continues at 19th February ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Monday 14th February] The Somme Campaign [I - Preparations (Field Engineering Works)]: [New sub-thread] 3rd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment [1st January <=> 1st July] is relocated with Perceval's 49th (West Riding) Division to the Somme sector at and around Bouzincourt [map, etc.], where - as (now) a pioneer battalion - it is employed on light railway and similar battlefield construction projects [sub-thread continues at 19th April ...]. [THREAD = THE WW1 ARMIES (ORGANISATION, EQUIPMENT, AND TACTICS)]

1916 [Tuesday 15th February or hereabouts] Counter-Battery Science [VII - The Field Survey Company System]: [Continued from 1915 (12th November)] At around this time the British Army implements its "Field Survey Company" system, one per field army (hence presently four in total). In their early form these companies bring together the specialist skills of trench mapping and observation, feeding information into the intelligence and planning system in general, and the artillery targeting system in particular. Bragg's [1915 (12th November) <=> 11th March] sound-ranging sections will be added during the autumn as fast as personnel can be trained and equipment procured [sub-thread continues at 11th March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 ARTILLERY] [THREAD = THE WW1 ARMIES (ORGANISATION, EQUIPMENT, AND TACTICS)]

********** REAL QUESTIONS AT LAST **********
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1916 [Tuesday 15th February or hereabouts] An Instinct for War?: The British neurosurgeon Wilfred B. L. Trotter [Wikipedia biography] publishes "Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War", in which he applies early ethological science to human society. His particular thesis is that behaviour as a group member cannot easily be predicted from knowing the individual, for groups have their own dynamic. This means that in understanding humankind at war we have firstly to understand "gregariousness" in general and the "mental characteristics of the gregarious animal" (p23) in particular. [We have the 1919 second edition of this work, so all quotations and page numbering from that.] To do this Trotter adopts Boris Sidis' [<=1903] views on suggestibility of groups, and his use of the term "herd" to describe the resulting behaviour.

"The fundamental element in [Sidis' position] is the conception of the normal existence in the mind of a subconscious self. This subconscious or subwaking self is regarded as embodying the 'lower' and more obviously brutal qualities of man. It is irrational, imitative, credulous, cowardly, cruel, and lacks all individuality, will, and self-control. This personality takes the place of the normal personality during hypnosis and when
the individual is one of an active crowd, as, for example, in riots, panics, lynchings, revivals, and so forth. Of the two personalities - the subconscious and the normal - the former alone is suggestible [... and] it is this suggestibility of the subwaking self which enables man to be a social animal. "Suggestibility is the cement of the herd"" (pp26-27; emphasis added).

The work is noteworthy in the present context as an extension of the Darwinian evolutionary perspective on bodily variation into the (even more theoretically fraught) realm of animal, and ultimately human, psychology1. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]

1 ASIDE - ETHOLOGY, MAN-WATCHING, AND THE BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE WITHIN PSYCHOLOGY: The modern name for the general science of the evolutionary perspective on human behaviour is "Comparative Psychology" [Wikipedia factsheet: typical university course]. The specific science of instinctive animal behaviour (studied either in the wild or in wild-like vivaria) is "Ethology" [Wikipedia factsheet], and the specific sub-science of human behaviour is "Human Ethology" [Wikipedia factsheet]. Human ethology was popularised in the 1970s by the British zoologist Desmond Morris [Wikipedia biography] under the far less stuffier title "Manwatching". For more on the history and basic terminology in this study area see our Companion Resource.

ASIDE - INSTINCTS OF THE HERD AND THE MEYNERT-JACKSON MODEL OF THE MIND: Trotter's "subconscious or subwaking self" is, of course, the same "Mr. Hyde" [Wikipedia tutorial] hidden within each of us as Hughlings Jackson's "middle level" [<=25th January]. It is the animal within us, and it is invariably at odds with - and, ominously, sometimes takes over from - the more refined "Dr. Jeckyl mind" of the rational human adult ...

ASIDE - THE FREUDIAN ID: Taking the substantially different "psychodynamic" perspective Sigmund Freud [1913<=>1923] will make much of the same mental dichotomy in his monograph "The Ego and the Id" (Freud 1923), for an introduction to which see our Companion Resource.

Or to put it another way, decent men go to war as Dr. Jeckyls, only to be more or less immediately reduced to fighting as Mr. Hydes. And therein lurks one of humankind's greatest tragic secrets: decent men both hate war and love it at the same time!!

STUDENT EXERCISE: Browse to an Internet video of the movie "Anzio" (1968) [not easy because of copyright restrictions] and watch from 1.37.50 to 1.39.25 (the war correspondent in conversation with the general). It just about says it all.

1916 [Saturday 19th February] The East African Campaign [XVII - The Smuts Offensive (Smuts Takes Command)]: [Continued from 12th February] The Commander-in-Chief of the South African Expeditionary Force Smuts [1910 (31st May)<=>10th March] arrives at Mombasa to replace Tighe [<=1915 (18th January)]. He then proceeds on a reconnaissance mission inland to the Taveta Front to see for himself how best to mount a major offensive into German East Africa [sub-thread continues at 10th March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Monday 21st-24th February] The Battle of Verdun [I - Overview and Days #1 through #4]: [New sub-thread] Although there had been fighting in the Verdun sector since the Battle of the Frontiers [<=1914 (22nd August)] the official histories treat the Battle of Verdun as beginning with the 21st February 1916 offensive by the German Fifth Army under Crown Prince Wilhelm [<=1914 (17th December)] and as lasting until 20th December. The German code-name for the offensive is "Operation Gericht" [roughly "Operation Just Punishment"]. The defenders are (initially) the 30 or so divisions of the "RVF" - the
"Fortified Region of Verdun" - under de Castelnau [<=1914 (25th September)], Until now the Verdun Heights fort-line through Vaux-devant-Damloup [map, etc.] and Douaumont [map, etc.] has kept the Germans at bay lower down on the northern approaches, on a slightly north-bowed arc from Avocourt [map, etc.] in the west, crossing the Meuse at Brabant-sur-Meuse [map, etc.], and then looping round to Ornes [map, etc.] in the east. The artillery barrage begins at 0700hr on 21st February and is maintained for nine full hours before the infantry are sent in, who - well supported by tactical flamethrower teams - thus have a relatively easy time of it. Then as night falls the bombardment restarts. And so it goes on for 96 hours in all, with the Germans advancing uphill toward the fort-line at about a mile a day [sub-thread continues at 25th February ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 25th February-4th March] The Battle of Verdun [II - The French Caught Napping]: [Continued from 21st February] Having been four days fighting their way up onto the Verdun Heights east of the River Meuse the Germans now have a stroke of luck when one of their patrols approaches Fort Douaumont [maplink at 21st February] and finds its observation cupolas and machine gun posts to be unmanned. Cautiously men of the 24th Brandenburg Regiment find their way inside and capture the skeleton garrison without having to fire a shot. Within minutes the Brandenburgers have turned the fort into the queen of strongpoints for the German front line, leaving an ominous dent in the centre of the French defences and a growing sense of panic amongst the French defenders. Now only the hilltop village of Fleury-devant-Damloup [map, etc.], a mile to the south, and Fort Souville [<=1875; browse for Fortiffere virtual tour] beyond that, block the direct route down into Verdun. On the French left, meanwhile, the line now follows the Meuse from Brabant-sur-Meuse [maplink at 21st February] to Vacherauville [map, etc.], and on the right it continues round front of Fort Vaux [maplink at 21st February] to Fort Tavannes [<=1875]. French spirits are lifted, however, when news gets out that the well-liked Philippe Pétain [Wikipedia biography=>19th April] will be taking over the sector at midnight on 25th February, and that his Second Army is being brought forward out of reserve to reinforce them. Pétain\'s first act is to telephone his corps commanders personally telling them to "hold fast"; his next is to go down with pneumonia. Directing the battle from his sickbed he now masterminds the re-garrisoning of the empty forts, the reinforcement of infantry regiments, the priority supply of ammunition to the artillery, and its re-targeting en masse on the German lines of communication. Moreover to make all this work logistically he organises the repair and expansion of the "Sacred Way", the road up to Verdun from Bar-le-Duc [map, etc.], as though France\'s very survival depends upon it (which without exaggeration it does). By 27th February there are no further German advances, thanks to stiffened French defending and their own logistical difficulties moving their artillery uphill in the mud. Nevertheless sustained German attacks on Douaumont village make a little progress each day until finally the village falls on 4th March [sub-thread continues at 6th March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 26th February] The Senoussi (Western Desert) Campaign [VI - The Battle of Agagiya]: [Continued from 23rd January] Following the action at B\'ir Halazin [<=23rd January] the Western Frontier Force [<=23rd January] advances along the coast to occupy Sidi Barrani [map, etc.]. During this operation air reconnaissance locates another Senoussi encampment at Agagiya [map, etc.], five miles inland, and a column detached to deal with it. In the resulting fire-fight the Senoussi leaders Ja\'far Pasha [1915 (19th May)<=5th June] and (his brother-in-law) Nuri Al-Said [Wikipedia biography=>5th June] are captured and imprisoned in Cairo [end of sub-thread, although the main characters will be reappearing in Islam in WWI at 5th June ...]. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]
1916 [Sunday 27th February] **Zionism in WW1 [IV - The Sykes-Picot Agreement (Preliminaries)];** [Continued from 1915 (5th February)] Having assisted Sir Maurice de Bunsen's [<=1915 (8th April)] committee's deliberations on the future of the Middle East Sir Mark Sykes [1915 (1st December) <=10th June] leaves for Petrograd [= modern St. Petersburg] for three-way discussions with his French counterpart François Georges-Picot [Wikipedia biography] and the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazanov [Wikipedia biography]. The topic of discussion is a draft British-French proposal (already ratified by the respective Cabinets), under the terms of which Palestine would be administered internationally after the war, rather than be made over to the new Arabian Kingdom. Sykes, already as familiar as anybody on the Arab position, has carefully taken a briefing on the Zionist position from Herbert Samuel [1915 (24th May)=9th May] before departing, and will report back to him upon his return [sub-thread continues at 9th May ...]. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS]

[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Wednesday 1st-24th March] **Irish Home Rule [XXXV - Casement and the Germans (The Irish Brigade Resurrected)];** [Continued from 1915 (10th June)] Having been working with minimal success since late 1914 [<=1914 (4th December)] on the idea of forming an Irish Brigade from the body of prisoners-of-war in Germany Casement [1914 (4th December) <=9th April] learns from the German authorities that an armed Rising is set to take place in Dublin during Easter Week, seven weeks hence, and that they are willing both to deliver his small force to Ireland to play its part; also to provide a shipment of arms and ammunition with which to arm nationalist sympathisers there.

**ASIDE:** The Rising has been planned by the Irish Republican Brotherhood [Wikipedia factsheet], a splinter-group of/military wing for the rump of the Irish Volunteers [1914 (25th October)=17th March] (that is to say, the 12,000 or so who felt no bond of loyalty to the British Empire, seeing it instead as an occupying power). The key figures were (in alphabetical order) Thomas J. Clarke [Wikipedia biography=>24th April], Seán Mac Diarmada [Wikipedia biography=>24th April], Thomas MacDonough [Wikipedia biography=>24th April], Patrick H. Pearse [Wikipedia biography=>24th April], and Joseph M. Plunkett [Wikipedia biography=>3rd May]. In addition the militant socialist James Connolly [Wikipedia biography=>24th April] and the Brotherhood's own Chief of Staff Eoin MacNeill [1914 (25th October)=17th March] - had been deliberately kept in the dark. Plunkett had been sent to Berlin in late 1915 for three-way talks with Casement and the Germans, and so we presume that close contacts had been maintained in the meantime.

The Germans do their part by procuring the freighter SS Libau [Wikipedia shipography=9th April] and by setting about disguising her as a neutral vessel. They are unwilling, however, to support any such uprising with boots on the ground [sub-thread continues at 17th March (but see also the ASIDE at 2nd March concerning Conscription in Ireland) ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]


********** CONSCRIPTION AND IRELAND **********
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**ASIDE - CONSCRIPTION IN IRELAND:** The Military Service Act did not apply to Ireland, because the issue of British recruiting in Ireland had already become a cause of sectarian friction.
For their part the Unionists needed nationalist recruits (albeit not too many of them because they feared that one day those recruits might turn against the hand that fed them). The majority of Irish nationalists, on the other hand, saw themselves as a soon-to-be-ruling-themselves nation within a greater empire, and volunteered eagerly. Indeed in his contribution to the Commons debate on the Military Service Bill [<=1914 (5th January)] the Leader of the (moderate) Irish Parliamentary Party [<=1914 (3rd August)] John Redmond [1915 (21st December)<=>9th May] had quoted figures showing that loyal Irishmen had delivered voluntarily on all recruitment expectations so far made of them (Hansard, 77:949-1074). Nevertheless the Chief Secretary for Ireland (and Cabinet member) Augustine Birrell [Wikipedia biography] had grown pessimistic over the prospects of voluntary recruiting continuing to deliver, but feared what would happen if Irish conscription were ever attempted (Coogan, 2001). The Brotherhood's Mac Diarmada had already been imprisoned in 1915 under the Defence of the Realm Act for speaking out against recruiting.

1916 [Thursday 2nd March-26th June] WW1 in the Caucasus [IX - Yudenich's Spring Offensive (Trebizond and Erzincan)]: [Continued from 10th January 1916] On 2nd March 1916 Yudenich's IV Corps capture the town of Bitlis [map], thus consolidating Russian control over the countryside west of Lake Van. With his southern flank thus secured, Yudenich is now able to use Erzurum as his springboard to advance north-westward toward the strategically valuable Black Sea port of Trebizond/Trabzon [map] and westward toward Erzincan [map], on the road to Ankara. Trebizond is captured with support from the sea on 15th April, and Erzincan on 26th June [sub-thread continues at 2nd August 1916 ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = WW1 REPRISALS AND ATROCITIES] [THREAD = WW1 PROPAGANDA]

1916 [Friday 3rd March] The Battle of Vauquois: Having been a battlefield miners' paradise for a year already [Wikipedia factsheet] the stand-off on the Butte de Vauquois [map, etc.], 15 miles west of Verdun, is now intensified by the Germans as a way of threatening the western flank of the French salient at Verdun. Today's mine is a four-ton affair which kills 11 French defenders. The battle here will continue on a tit-for-tat basis until 1918, and the pock-marked hilltop is nowadays an awe-inspiring open-air (and underground) museum - check it out. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 4th March] War in the Balkans [IX - The Salonika Campaign (The Allies Plan a Spring Offensive)]: [Continued from 5th January] Joffre [1915 (9th December)<=>26th May] orders Sarrai [1915 (23rd November)<=>3rd April] to prepare plans for an offensive out of the Salonika bridgehead [sub-thread continues at 3rd April ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 REPRISALS AND ATROCITIES]

1916 [Monday 6th-10th March] The Battle of Verdun [III - The Battles of Mort Homme and Hill 304]: [Continued from 25th February] The first two weeks of the Verdun Offensive saw action on the eastern bank of the Meuse only, with the Germans occupying the river-line from Brabant to Vacherauville [both maplinks at 25th February]. As such, however, they have been sitting targets for the French guns on the western bank of the river from Forges-sur-Meuse [map, etc.], via Cumières-le-Mort-Homme [map, etc.], to Marre [<=1875; browse for Fortifivese virtual tour]. The Germans are therefore forced to mount a major west bank attack up toward the Mort Homme Heights [use the Cumières maplink above and note the two miles of hilltop to the west of Cumières village] and give the honour of leading that attack to VI Reserve
Corps under Konrad von Gossler [Wikipedia biography]. Again the first day of fighting sees the Germans make good progress up the northern approaches, only to get bogged down by "a veritable wall of gunfire from the French artillery" (Horne, 1962, p172) as they near the summit. It is now painfully apparent that they have become sitting targets for French artillery dug in on the southern slope of Hill 304 [use the Cumières maplink above and note the two miles of hilltop between Mort Homme and the modern D18], two miles further west again. They therefore bring up fresh units to von Gossler's right and attack those heights in turn; only to get bogged down there as well [sub-thread continues at 20th March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Wednesday 8th March] The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XII - The Battle of Dujaila]: [Continued from 6th January] After its defeat in the wadis and defiles around Sheikh Sa'ad [<=6th January] Aylmer's [6th January<=12th March] Tigris Corps now mounts another relief expedition, this time reinforced by the first two battalions of Maude's [7th January<=12th March] 13th (Western) Division, now hurriedly shipping round to the Persian Gulf from Egypt1. Unfortunately for Aylmer Von der Goltz's [<=6th January] Turkish Sixth Army has been busily strengthening its positions at the Dujaila Redoubt, about seven miles south of the Tigris but still a full ten miles east of Kut-al-Amarra [maplink at 1915 (28th September)], and again the relief column is beaten back with disproportionately heavy losses. At Basra, meanwhile, the Arab Bureau's [<=24th January] academic-turned-intelligence-agent Gertrude Bell [Wikipedia biography] arrives from Cairo to bring the Tigris Corps some much-needed local knowledge [sub-thread continues at 12th March ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1ASIDE: The bottleneck was the tiny docking facility at Basra, followed by too small a flotilla of river-boats for onward transport up the Tigris.

1915 [Thursday 9th-15th March] The Italian Adriatic Front [VI - The Fifth Battle of the Isonzo River]: [Continued from 1915 (10th November)] The Italians mount an offensive along the Isonzo/Soča River [maplink at 1915 (23rd June)], but with little effect [sub-thread continues at 6th August ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Thursday 9th March] The Columbus Raid: [Continued from 1915 (1st November)] This comparatively small border skirmish is fought between a Mexican Villista column under Pancho Villa [1915 (1st November)<=14th March] and elements of 13th Cavalry Regiment at Columbus, NM [map, etc], commanded by Herbert J. Slocum [no convenient biography]. The Villistas launch their attack at 0400hr under cover of darkness but pay too much attention to burning and looting the town and are soon made to suffer by 13th Cavalry's machine guns. As the surviving Villistas retire back across the international border into Chihuahua County, Mexico, President Wilson [1915 (7th December)<=28th May] authorises an immediate "hot pursuit" counter-expedition to arrest Villa [continues at 14th March]. [THREAD = WW1 AMERICAN NEUTRALITY]

1916 [Friday 10th March-1st April] The East African Campaign [XVIII - The Smuts Offensive (Breakthrough at the Border)]: [Continued from 19th February] Having spent three weeks bringing troops and supplies up the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway from the coast Smuts [<=19th February] finally drives the German forces from the border area around Taveta [maplink at 12th February]. He then divides his force into two columns. The easternmost column under [Sir]1919 Arthur Reginald Hoskins1 takes nearby Moshi [map, etc] on 13th March and then strikes southward. To its right a South African column under Sir Jacob L. van Deventer [Wikipedia biography] takes Arusha [map, etc] on 1st April and then moves south-westward. The two columns will follow broadly parallel lines of advance (typically a hundred miles or so apart) for the remainder of the summer [sub-thread continues at 19th April ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]
1916 [Saturday 11th March] Counter-Battery Science [VIII - Bragg Inspects the Latest Bull-Weiss Equipment]: [Continued from 15th February] Bragg's [15th February <= 1st April] team visits Ernest Esclangon [Wikipedia biography] at the French artillery testing station at Gâvres [map, etc.] for further demonstrations of the Bull-Weiss String Galvanometer [<=1915 (12th November)] at work. The problems with microphone sensitivity remain as previously described however [ditto] [sub-thread continues at 1st April ...]. [THREAD = WW1 ARTILLERY]

1916 [Sunday 12th March] The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XIII - Aylmer Sacked]: [Continued from 8th March] After his defeat at the Dujaila Redoubt Aylmer [<=8th March] is replaced as commander of the Tigris Corps by Sir George F. Gorringe [Wikipedia biography] [<=11th July], who now has to await the arrival of the remainder of Maude's [<=8th March] reinforcing 13th (Western) Division before he can renew the relief operation toward Kut-al-Amara [maplink at 1915 (28th September)] [sub-thread continues at 6th April ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Tuesday 14th March-1917 (7th February)] The Punishment Expedition: [Continued from 9th March] Following the border incident at Columbus, NM, on 9th March [q.v.] Pershing [<=1898 (1st July)] now begins an 11-month-long counter-incursion in an attempt to bring Pancho Villa [<=9th March] to justice. However the Villistas simply melt into the hills and in the end the legitimate Mexican government - the Carrancistas - request that the Americans withdraw. [THREAD = WW1 AMERICAN NEUTRALITY]

1916 [Wednesday 15th March] Tirpitz [<=1914 (28th August)] resigns as Secretary of State for the German Navy and is replaced by Eduard von Capelle [Wikipedia biography]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]


1916 [Friday 17th March–4th April] The Shells Crisis [XVI - The Dilution Strike, Glasgow]: [Continued from 4th January] Following Parliament's refusal earlier in the year to repeal Section 7 of the Munitions of War Act [<=4th January] a major strike breaks out amongst Glasgow's munitions workers. The strike has been organised by the Clyde Workers' Committee [Wikipedia factsheet] led by the militant trade-unionist William ["Willie"] Gallagher [Wikipedia biography]. It starts at the Beardmore Works, Parkhead, [<=1886, as Parkhead Forge] and soon spreads across Glasgow, much to the concern of the government in London, who resolve the problem by summarily rounding up and legally muzzling the ringleaders with charges of-convenience under the Defence of the Realm Act [end of sub-thread]. [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

187(4829):627-628) argues that the term *Neurasthenia* - although popular both as a diagnosis and as an explanatory concept since 1875 (see previous sub-thread) - should be dropped in favour of the more matter-of-fact (and less theoretically bound) term "*Shell Shock*" [sub-thread continues at 25th March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]

1916 [Monday 20th-21st March] **The Battle of Verdun [IV - The Battle of Avocourt (Early German Success)]:** [Continued from 6th March] Avocourt [maplink at 21st February] is strategically placed at the western end of the Verdun Sector and therefore key to the left flank defence of Hill 304 (which is itself key to the defence of Mort Homme (which is itself key to the defence of the Verdun Heights on the other side of the river)). The latest German battleplan is therefore an attempt to "roll up" the French line from the west and the task of making the all-important initial breakthrough falls to 11th Bavarian Division [Wikipedia factsheet] under Paul von Kneussl [no convenient biography]. The French defenders in the Avocourt sector are 29th Division [Wikipedia factsheet] under Arthur Guyot d'Asnières de Salins [Wikipedia biography]. Von Kneussl's attack goes in early on 20th March and is, by reports, a bit of a walkover, so much so, indeed, that it takes the Germans a whole day to work out what to do next [sub-thread continues at 22nd March ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Wednesday 22nd March-8th April] **The Battle of Verdun [V - The Battle of Avocourt (The French Fight Back)]:** [Continued from 20th March] The German follow-up in the Avocourt sector takes place on 22nd March. This time, however, the French are waiting for them, and the attack is driven off with heavy casualties. The Germans thereafter concentrate on the approach slopes to Hill 304 and Mort Homme, taking Malancourt [map, etc.] on 31st March and Béthincourt [map, etc.] on 8th April [sub-thread continues at 9th April ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Thursday 23rd March] **The Armenian Genocide [IX - Morgenthau Resigns]:** [Continued from 1915 (15th December)] The American Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau Snr [1915 (13th September)<>21st July] resigns in order to devote more time to the Armenian relief effort [sub-thread continues at 21st July ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = THE TRUE CAUSES OF WAR]

1916 [Saturday 25th March] **Shellshock [XV - The Rows (1916) Paper]:** [Continued from 18th March] Maghull War Hospital's [5th January<>16th October] Rows [ditto] publishes a paper entitled "Mental Conditions Following Strain and Nerve Shock" [full text online] in which he summarises his first year's experiences with shellshock patients. He notes firstly the research opportunity afforded by the war ...

"... it seems improbable that examination of the cases invalided from the war will add very much to our knowledge of the symptomatology of these conditions. On the other hand, such an opportunity to investigate a large number of those suffering from psychic disturbances during the early stages of the illness has never been provided before. In this early period the patient is capable of cooperating effectively with the physician, and it is thereby rendered possible to go beyond the mere symptoms and to discover the psychic cause which has [determined] the form assumed by the disease and in many cases to trace the various stages through which the illness may have passed" (p441).

He then presents four specific case histories where the men in question ...

"... have lived through a prolonged period of strain before they have broken down under some special shock, such as the death of comrades at their side, the explosion of a shell near them, or the blowing up of a trench" (p443).
In resolving the complex of emotionally horrific memories at the heart of the disease, Rows then advises that patients be given insights into the "cause and effect" of their condition, and generally treated in an atmosphere of mutual client-physician confidence and cooperation. [sub-thread continues at 15th May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]

********** "AN UNMITIGATED DISASTER"! **********

1916 [Monday 27th March-19th April] The Battle of the St. Eloi Craters: This three-week-long battle is fought at St. Eloi [maplink at 1914 (27th October)] as a British attempt to straighten out the south-western concavity of the Ypres Salient created by the localised German attack a year previously. The battle begins at 0415hr on 27th March with the detonation of four large and three smaller mines under the German front line. The initial infantry assault then falls to Haldane’s [1915 (25th September)<=>29th June] 3rd Division's 9th Brigade under Herbert C. Potter [Wikipedia biography], and specifically to its 1st Bn Northumberland Fusiliers, 4th Bn Royal Fusiliers, and 8th Bn King's Own Scottish Borderers. The Germans defend fiercely and it is only after a week of fighting that the last of the craters is taken. Then at 0300hr on 4th April the exhausted 3rd Division is replaced in the craters by 2nd Canadian Division under the Boer War veteran Sir Richard E. W. Turner, V.C. [Wikipedia biography]. It is their first set-piece battle and they find themselves in flooded trenches unprotected by barbed wire. The Germans welcome them with a more or less uninterrupted 48 hour barrage, and then follow this up on 6th April with an infantry attack which retakes the four main craters. Canadian counter-attacks between 7th and 19th April are severely dealt with. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

'RECOMMENDED READING: This phrase from Tim Cook's "The Blind Leading the Blind" (Cook, 1996 online).

1916 [Saturday 1st April or hereabouts] Counter-Battery Science [IX - Tucker and McNaughton Make Breakthroughs]: [Continued from 11th March] Around this time William S. Tucker [Wikipedia biography], one of Bragg’s [<=11th March] sound-ranging technical assistants at Kemmel Hill [maplink at 1914 (7th October)] is promoted to 2nd lieutenant and given the task of improving the low frequency sensitivity of the microphones used in the Bull-Weiss String Galvanometer system of artillery sound-ranging. Over the coming months he will develop a "hot wire" microphone which does the job admirably because the cooling effect of a passing low-frequency pressure wave momentarily changes the electrical resistance in, and thus the Galvanometer current carried by, an electrically heated wire. This system will now be deployed by incorporating specially trained and equipped sections alongside the flash-spotting and mapping sections of the new Field Survey Companies [<=15th February], and Tucker will subsequently be granted war-secrecy patent #21 "Improvements in and Relating to Microphones" for this work. Around the same time McNaughton [1915 (9th April)<=>1917 (19th January)], having recovered from wounds received in the Second Battle of Ypres, returns to duty with the 3rd (Montreal) Field Battery. During his convalescence he has been putting his pre-war experience as an electrical engineer to good work, conducting experiments with an oscilloscope [start at 1897 (15th February) and then follow the 16 linked entries] as a display device for ballistics purposes (he is particularly concerned (a) that every single gun should be separately calibrated for muzzle velocity, and (b) that empirically justified adjustments should be made for the effects of weather variables such as temperature [which both changes the tightness of fit of the projectile in the barrel and affects the burn speed of the propellant charge] and barometric pressure [which affects both forward and rotational drag]) [Sub-thread continues at 1st May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 ARTILLERY]
RECOMMENDED READING: For more on the McNaughton story we recommend Phillips (2011 online).

1916 [Sunday 2nd April] The Faversham Explosion: At 1420hr a 200-ton TNT explosion lays flat part of the munitions works at Faversham [maplink at 1847 (14th July)], Kent, killing 115 men and boys. [THREAD = WW1 FINANCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WARFARE]

1916 [Monday 3rd-15th April] War in the Balkans [X - The Salonika Campaign (The Serbs Rejoin the Fight)]: [Continued from 4th March] Following its winter evacuation [<=5th January] the Allies now ask the Greek government to allow the rebuilt Serbian Army to take the field. The Greeks refuse permission, but Sarrail [4th March<=23rd July] arranges for them to be ferried across to Thessalonika on 15th April. The Greeks will get their own back six weeks later [sub-thread continues at 26th May ...], [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Thursday 6th-22nd April] The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XIV - The Battle of Sannaiyat]: [Continued from 12th March] Maude [8th March<=>11th July] 13th (Western) Division (including 8th Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers) now leads the Tigris Corps’ final relief operation toward Kut-al-Amara [maplink at 1915 (28th September)]. Good progress is made during the initial advance but a more intense battle then breaks out at Sannaiyat [map, etc.], strategically positioned on the Tigris half way between Kut and Sheikh Sa’ad. Four Victoria Crosses are awarded for deeds of bravery in these actions, but with casualties running at around 50% 13th Division hands over to 3rd (Meerut) Division and 7th (Lahore) Division, which now take heavy casualties in their turn. All-in-all, by 22nd April the Tigris Corps lacks the strength to go any further and the fate of Townshend [6th January<=29th April] and his command is finally sealed [sub-thread continues at 29th April ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 7th-8th April] 2nd Australian Division [1915 (2nd September)<=23rd July], now commanded by Legge [1915 (2nd September)<=23rd July] moves by night into the Armentières sector [maplink at 1914 (5th October)] of the Western Front. [THREAD = THE WW1 ARMIES (ORGANISATION, EQUIPMENT, AND TACTICS)]

1916 [Sunday 9th April] Irish Home Rule [XXXVII - The Taskforce Sails]: [Continued from 17th March] With her illicit load of munitions carefully concealed below a cargo of timber (but - crucially - not equipped with wireless) SS Libau [1st March<=20th April] departs Lübeck on 9th April and heads northward up the coast of Norway on a long anticlockwise loop around the Faroe Islands. U-19 [Wikipedia shipography] will follow on 15th April with Casement [1st March<=20th April] and two of his staff [sub-thread continues at 20th April ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Sunday 9th April] The Battle of Verdun [VI - "A Glorious Day"]: [Continued from 22nd March] Having made some progress between the villages of Avocourt [<=20th March] and Bethincourt [<=22nd March], and with von Gallwitz [1915 (7th October)<=3rd May] brought back from the Balkans to take command of those elements of Fifth Army west of the Meuse, the Germans now attack Hill 304 and Mort Homme simultaneously. The French artillery proceeds to hammer the new attack to a standstill. Duly impressed, von Gallwitz accordingly spends the rest of the month concentrating his own artillery in readiness for a decisive stroke against Hill 304 at the beginning of May [sub-thread continues at 19th April ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

de Cary [<=1914 (17th December)] as Commander of Army Group Centre [sub-thread continues at 3rd May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Wednesday 19th April] German Sabotage in the U.S. [VIII - The Money Man Arrested]: [Continued from 15th January] Following the deportation in disgrace of von Papen [<=15th January] the American authorities now raid the 60 Wall Street offices of his former assistant Wolf von Igel [no convenient biography]. The documents taken away confirm the German Embassy’s complicity in black operations against both the Allies and (neutral) America [sub-thread continues at 30th July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE]

1916 [Wednesday 19th April] The Somme Campaign [II - Preliminaries (The Build-Up)]: [Continued from 14th February] Rawlinson [1915 (25th September)<=29th June] sends Haig [1915 (18th December)<=26th May] his latest thinking for a Fourth Army attack on the Somme between Gommecourt [map, etc.] in the north and Montauban-de-Picardie [map, etc.] in the south. Rawlinson had originally wanted to limit the objectives for the first day of the attack to the German First Line (an advance of a mile or so in most places), but had been overruled by Haig. The new plan accordingly sets both First and Second Line objectives, an advance of up to two miles in most places. The problem is that the barbed wire on the Second Line will not have been cut by the preliminary barrage (because it needs to be done by field artillery under short range observation), and it will not be possible to bring forward the field artillery until the First Line has been taken [sub-thread continues at 8th May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Wednesday 19th April-19th June] The East African Campaign [XIX - The Smuts Offensive (The Columns Continue their Advance)]: [Continued from 10th March] Following the breakthrough in the border area around Taveta [maplink at 12th February] van Deventer’s [10th March<=18th August] column takes Kondoa-Irangi [map, etc.] on 19th April and Hoskin’s [<=18th August] column occupies the Handeni region [map, etc.], 120 miles to the east, on 19th June [sub-thread continues at 6th May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Thursday 20th-21st April] Irish Home Rule [XXXVIII - Casement and the Germans (The Banna Strand Rendezvous)]: [Continued from 16th March] On Thursday 20th April U-19 arrives in Tralee Bay. Here is a recent summary of the mission at hand ... "Aboard the U19, under the command of Lieutenant Wiesbach, the man who fired the torpedoes which sank the Lusitania, apart from [Casement [9th April<=3rd May]], were [Daniel J. Bailey [browse for biography]], one of the few Irish prisoners whom Casement had been able to recruit, and [Robert Monteating [Irish Brigade biography]], an officer in the Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers. By now Casement was neither a well or a happy man. He was, in fact, returning to Ireland not with a view to taking part in a Rising but to calling it off. Casement had risen from a hospital bed in great anger and distress at the discovery that the Germans had no intention of sending either officers, an expeditionary force, or artillery to Ireland” (Coogan, 2001, p87).

After several hours of waiting it emerges that (due, it will later emerge, to a misunderstanding) there is no nationalist shore party at hand. The submarine therefore offloads the three men at 0200hr on 21st April at Banna Strand [map, etc.], only for a near fatal mishap in the surf to force an exhausted Casement to take shelter in a nearby ruined fort while the other two go off to seek help. Within hours, however, Casement and Bailey have been arrested and Monteating forced into hiding. As for SS Libau she fails to rendezvous with either U-19 or a shore party and therefore still has the consignment of arms on board when intercepted shortly afterward by Royal Navy patrol vessels and ordered to make for Queenstown [= modern Cobh]. Judging that the game
is up her captain duly scuttles her [sub-thread continues at 24th April ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Saturday 22nd April] The 2nd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment [1915 (26th July)<=>23rd June] is allocated to 29th Division now redeploying¹ to France as that division's resident pioneer battalion, that is to say, equipped primarily for field works rather than combat. [THREAD = WW1 REGIMENTAL HISTORIES]

¹ASIDE: As Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir William Robertson [5th January<=>9th June] has been actively transferring surplus capacity from Egypt to the Western front.

1916 [Tuesday 24th-25th April] Irish Home Rule [XXXIX - The Easter Rising (The Shooting War)]: [Continued from 20th April] At 1100hr on Easter Monday more than a thousand armed Irish nationalists led by the seven-man Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood [listed at 1st March<=>3rd May] move into Dublin city centre. At noon they storm the General Post Office and a number of other large buildings, including Jameson's Distillery, Boland's Bakery, Clanwilliam House/Mount Street/Mount Street Bridge, and the Four Courts [best seen in prospectuses for 21st century walking tours]. The Military Council have been joined at the last moment by The O'Reilly [1st March<=>wounded in action 28th April, denied medical treatment, died 29th April]. Also present (but yet to achieve their subsequent fame) are Michael Collins [Wikipedia biography>3rd May] and Éamon de Valera [Wikipedia biography>3rd May], Pearse [1st March<=>3rd May] and Connolly [1st March<=>3rd May] establish a headquarters and provisional seat of government in the General Post Office, the former famously reading the "Proclamation of the Irish Republic" [full text online] from its steps. Presently responsible for homeland security the former Commander-in-Chief of the B.E.F. Sir John French [1915 (18th December)<=>3rd May] is told of the insurrection within minutes and orders two infantry brigades to be sent to strengthen the British forces in Ireland. Armed response on Day #1 is, however, subdued and disjointed. It is only on Day #3 that British regulars properly engage the Irish strongpoints and even then several rather hopeful early attacks are driven off with heavy losses. The new British commander Sir John G. Maxwell [Wikipedia biography>3rd May] arrives in the early hours of 28th April and by the evening of 28th April many buildings in the city centre are ablaze and several rebel outposts have been abandoned. The O'Reilly is wounded leading a sortie in search of an escape route through the British siege line. Finally at 1245hr on 29th April, with many wounded and their headquarters burning down around them, the Irish commanders agree to a surrender [sub-thread continues at 3rd May ...], [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Monday 24th-25th April] The Bombardment of Yarmouth and Lowestoft: Following the High Seas Fleet's new aggressive strategy [<=18th January] the five battlecruisers of the High Seas Fleet's 1st Scouting Group [Wikipedia sheet], led by Friedrich Bödicker [Wikipedia biography>31st May] aboard SMS Seydlitz [1915 (23rd January)<=>31st May], sails at 1200hr on 24th April from Wilhelmshaven with orders to bombard the British naval bases at Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. Almost immediately Seydlitz strikes a mine and is forced to return to base for repairs. The remaining four ships (with Bödicker now flying his flag aboard SMS Lützow [Wikipedia shipography]) proceed with the raid, bombarding Lowestoft between 0410hr and 0420hr on 25th April and inflicting some damage, but prevented by fog from achieving much at Great Yarmouth. Sir John French [<=preceding entry] is alerted immediately in case German troops should be put ashore. The British Grand Fleet, meanwhile, has been scrambled from its bases, but by 1100hr both sides are content to call their respective operations off. [THREAD = WW1 SURFACE NAVAL OPERATIONS]
1916 [Saturday 29th April] The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XV - The Surrender of Kut-al-Amara]: [Continued from 6th April; also from 24th January as entry XXI in the sub-thread Islam in WW1] Following the failure of three months accumulated relief efforts Townsend [<=6th April] is finally forced to surrender Kut-al-Amara, he and the 13,000 survivors of his long-suffering 6th (Poona) Division being duly taken as prisoners-of-war. Townsend will be afforded senior commander privileges by the Turks and knighted in his absence by the British; his troops, on the other hand, will be less well-treated and some 40% will die in captivity [sub-thread continues at 11th July; also as Islam in WW1 at 5th June ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Monday 1st May or hereabouts] Counter-Battery Science [X - Hemming Makes a Breakthrough]: [Continued from 1st April] Around this time Hemming [1915 (?7th April)<=1917 (19th January)] is field trialling his new "flash-buzzer board" [details previously given at 1915 (?7th April [ASIDE])] System for locating enemy guns from their flashes [sub-thread continues at 1917 (19th January) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 ARTILLERY]

1916 [Wednesday 3rd-12th May] Irish Home Rule [XL - The Easter Rising (Executions and Reprisals)]: [Continued from 24th April] Maxwell's [<=24th April] response to the Rising is to hold a series of in camera courts martial and on 3rd May the first three of the rebel leaders - Pearse [<=24th April], Clarke [<=24th April], and MacDonough [<=24th April] - are shot. The executions are reported to the House of Commons later in the day (Hansard, 82:30-39), and in the same session the Chief Secretary for Ireland Birrell [17th March<=18th May] announces having already tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister, the better to be able to assist the gathering of evidence in the imminent Commission of Inquiry. On 4th May those executed are Plunkett [<=1st March], Edward Daly [Wikipedia biography], William Pearse [Wikipedia biography], and Michael O'Hanrahan [Wikipedia biography]; on 5th May John MacBride [Wikipedia biography]; on 8th May Éamonn Ceannt [Wikipedia biography], Michael Mallin [Wikipedia biography], Cornelius "Conn" Colbert [Wikipedia biography], and Séan Heuston [Wikipedia biography]; on 9th May Tomás Ceannt [Wikipedia biography]; and on 12th May the last two senior figures, namely Mac Diarmada [<=24th April] and Connolly [<=24th April], Casement [20th April<=3rd August], meanwhile, has been taken to the Tower of London and will be tried separately with full media coverage [=>26th June]. Collins [24th April<=23rd December] and de Valera [24th April<=1917 (18th June)] are sentenced to death but their sentences are then commuted to imprisonment. We shall be hearing from them again in due course [sub-thread continues at 18th May ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

RECOMMENDED READING: One of Patrick Pearse's essays, "The Murder Machine" [full text online] clearly indicates the strength of the Irish nationalist desire for their land to be free of British rule.

1916 [Wednesday 3rd-7th May] The Battle of Verdun [VIII - The Battle of Hill 304]: [Continued from 19th April] After the setback on 9th April [<=v.q.v.] von Gallwitz's [<=9th April] concentrated artillery now spend 48 hours systematically obliterating the French defences on Hill 304, followed by a further 72 hours of equally systematic infantry fighting up through the craters. By 8th May the French line has been pushed back down the southern slope of the Heights onto a fall-back line supported by Fort Marre [maplink at 6th March] and Fort Bois Bourrus [browse for Fortissere virtual tour] [sub-thread continues at 8th May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 6th May] The East African Campaign [XX - The Smuts Offensive (A Second Front Opens)]: [Continued from 19th April] Following the breakthrough on the Taveta Front (the border between German and British East Africas) in March [<=10th March] a Belgian field force commanded by Charles Tombur [Baron of Tabora] [1928] [Wikipedia}
now strikes eastward out of the Belgian Congo, north of Lake Tanganyika, taking the border town of Kigali [map, etc.] on 6th May before turning south-eastward for Tabora [map, etc.] with the aim of cutting the Dar-es-Salaam to Lake Tanganyika railway. Von Lettow-Vorbeck's [12th February<=14th October] field army now has to contend with three columns of advance, but continues to make good use of the Tanzanian hinterland for concealment and guerrilla warfare [sub-thread continues at 18th August ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Monday 8th May] The Australian Mining Corps [no convenient factsheet] commanded by Albert C. Fewtrell [no convenient biography] arrives at Hazebrouk [maplink at 1914 (7th October)], where it will be divided into three tunneling companies in readiness for deployment to the front. [THREAD = THREAD = THE WW1 ARMIES (ORGANISATION, EQUIPMENT, AND TACTICS)]

1916 [Monday 8th May] The Battle of Verdun [IX - The Douaumont Fire]: [Continued from 3rd May] Reputedly started by a carelessly brewed cup of coffee a magazine fire inside Fort Douaumont [maplink at 21st February] kills 679 of the occupying German garrison in moments [sub-thread continues at 13th May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

**********  "ALL MUST BE PREPARED FOR HEAVY CASUALTIES"1  **********

1916 [Monday 8th May] The Somme Campaign [III - Preliminaries (Standardising the Training)]: [Continued from 19th April] The B.E.F.'s Chief of Staff Sir Launcelot E. Kiggell [Wikipedia biography=>29th June] issues a guidance document to his divisional HQs stating the requirements for training in the run-up to the planned offensive. The training grounds include complete systems of enemy trenches prepared full-scale from aerial photographs. The German trenches at Carnoy [map, etc.], for example, in the Montauban sector, are re-modelled 25 miles behind the British lines, and the countryside around the base town of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise [map, etc.] will be used for large manoeuvres [sub-thread continues at 29th June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Tuesday 9th May] Censorship, Propaganda, and Recruitment [LII - The Military Service Act and Ireland]: [Continued from 2nd March] During a House of Commons debate on possible amendments to the Military Service Act [<=2nd March] Sir John Lonsdale [1st Baron Armaghdale]1918 [Wikipedia biography], whip for the Irish Unionist Party, appeals to Redmond's [2nd March<=19th July] Irish Parliamentary Party to extend the Act to apply to Ireland. There are, he calculates, "at least 250,000" available men but "practically no recruiting going on in Ireland at the present time" (Hansard, 82:472-620) [sub-thread continues at TBA ...]. [THREAD = WW1 RECRUITMENT]
1916 [Tuesday 9th-16th May] **Zionism in WW1 [V - The Sykes-Picot Agreement (Substantive)]:** (Continued from 27th February) In a briefing letter to the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey (=<1915 (9th December)) the French Ambassador Paul Cambon [Wikipedia biography] gives details of the top secret agreement reached in Petrograd (=27th February). The letter helpfully includes a supporting map [online]. The blue area includes south-eastern Turkey, Syria, northern Iraq, and Lebanon, and is to be administered by France. The pink area is Mesopotamia (= modern Iraq), and is also to be administered by Britain. The yellow area bottom left is the future Palestine (= modern Israel), and is also to be administered by Britain. The uncoloured area in the centre (subdivided A/B) is the planned Confederation of Arab States (= largely modern Jordan and Saudi Arabia). Russia will administer Istanbul, the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, and Armenia [sub-thread continues at 2nd February 1917 ...]. [THREAD = WW1 GRAND STRATEGIES] [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Sunday 14th May] **The Battle of Verdun [X - The Vaux Sector (Raynal Assumes Command)]:** (Continued from 8th May) Lacking the physical agility (due to earlier wounds) to cope with trench warfare Sylvain E. Raynal [Wikipedia biography=>1st June] is appointed commandant of Fort Vaux [Wikipedia factsheet] [sub-thread continues at 15th May ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

****** "RECKLESS OF ALL LIVES AND OF NONE MORE THAN HIS OWN"******

1916 [Monday 15th-22nd May] **The Battle of Verdun [XI - The Battle of Douaumont]:** (Continued from 14th May) This battle is an attempt by the French 5th Division [Wikipedia factsheet] under Charles Mangin [Wikipedia biography] to retake Fort Douaumont [maplink at 21st February]. There is a five day preliminary bombardment followed by two days of close quarters infantry fighting, by the end of which 5th Division has nobody left to fight with and Douaumont remains in German hands [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1ASIDE: This description of General Mangin from Winston Churchill's "The World Crisis (Volume 3)" (Churchill, 1927, p150).

********** A POEM REVEALS THE LIES **********

1916 [Tuesday 16th May] **Top Ten WW1 Poetry [I - "In Memoriam"]:** [New sub-thread] A young subaltern named Ewart A. Mackintosh [Wikipedia biography] is involved in a 5th Bn Seaforth Highlanders [Wikipedia factsheet] trench raid near Arras [maplink at 1914 (29th September)] in which two [in some reports three] of the men under his command are killed, including 19-year-old David Sutherland [no convenient biography], Sutherland "and the others who died" will subsequently be remembered in a poem - "In Memoriam" [full text online; extract below'] - written by Mackintosh later in the summer, after (presumably) having gone out of his way when next on leave to visit the dead boy's father [sub-thread continues at 29th June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES] [THREAD = WW1 POETRY]

2ASIDE: It was common practice for a dead man's commander and comrades to visit his family as soon as possible after the event to help provide "closure" for all concerned. In these painful encounters it was (a) the soldiers' duty to tell a standard set of mistruths, and (b) the relatives' duty to believe them. In those with the requisite literary skills the writing of commemorative poetry was another useful safety valve.

3CITATION AS TOP TEN WW1 POETRY: In Memoriam uses Mackintosh's closure visit to Sutherland's grieving father to tease out a deeper poetic inspiration. Here is the work in full, with explanatory highlighting ...

"So you were David's father,
And he was your only son,"
And the new-cut peats are rotting
And the work is left undone,
Because of an old man weeping,
Just an old man in pain,
For David, his son David,
That will not come again.

Oh, the letters he wrote you,
And I can see them still,

**ASIDE:** Remember that as the young man's platoon officer it would have been Mackintosh's duty to censor his letters home.

Not a word of the fighting,
But just the sheep on the hill
And how you should get the crops in
Ere the year get stormier,
And the Bosches have got his body,
And I was his officer.

You were only David’s father,
But I had fifty sons
When we went up in the evening
Under the arch of the guns,
And we came back at twilight -
O God! I heard them call
To me for help and pity
That could not help at all.

Oh, never will I forget you,
My men that trusted me,
More my sons than your fathers’,
For they could only see
The little helpless babies
And the young men in their pride.
They could not see you dying,
And hold you while you died.

Happy and young and gallant,
They saw their first-born go,
But not the strong limbs broken
And the beautiful men brought low,
The piteous writhing bodies,
They screamed ‘Don’t leave me, sir’,
For they were only your fathers
But I was your officer.”

Mackintosh's substantive point, therefore, is that command creates bonds at least as strong as the father-son bond, only with far greater exposure to the guilt of having directed one's men's final steps, and - moreover - for 50 men at a time. For more on the loss of a single son see the story of Rudyard and John Kipling [<=1915 (25th September [ASIDES])]. For more on the telling of lies to relatives see Sassoon's "The Hero" [=>18th November].

1916  [Thursday 18th May-26th June] **Irish Home Rule [XLI - The Easter Rising (The Hardinge Commission)]:** (Continued from 3rd May) On 18th May Sir Charles Hardinge, 1st Baron Hardinge of Penshurst [Wikipedia biography] begins to take evidence concerning the Easter Rising. Its findings will be published in early July, with the Chief Secretary for Ireland Birrell [<=3rd May] receiving much of the blame for not having done more to disrupt the Military Section of the Irish Republican Brotherhood¹. The final headcount for the British Army and local constabulary is 141 dead or missing and
around 400 wounded; for the rebels and civilians 318 dead and 2217 wounded [sub-thread continues at 25th May ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

^ASIDE: This line of argument is outspokenly put during the House of Lords debate on 11th July [=q.v.].

1916 [Sunday 21st May] Islam in WW1 [XXI - The Germans Leave Kabul]: [Continued from 29th April] Having spent a total of 13 months getting precisely nowhere the Niedermayer-Hentig Mission [=1915 (17th April)] departs Kabul. After many adventures (for Niedermayer his approach march in reverse, and for Hentig an escape eastward via Shanghai) they will arrive back in Germany more than a year later [sub-thread continues at 5th June ...]. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Thursday 25th May-17th June] Irish Home Rule [XLII - The Easter Rising (The Partition Proposal)]: [Continued from 18th May] The British Prime Minister Asquith [5th January-10th July] announces in the House of Commons that talks will be held and modifications to the Home Rule Act made as necessary to move the Home Rule agenda forward. The core of the proposal is that the country should be temporarily "partitioned", with the north - protestant and loyalist - kept (as "the six counties of Ulster") within the United Kingdom, and the south - catholic and nationalist - separated off and given some degree of independence. The draft proposals will be ready for broader debate on 17th June [sub-thread continues at 17th June ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Thursday 25th May] The Kiel Trench Raid: This in-itself-insignificant local action involving 1st Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers [1st January-1st July] Sees the war poet Sassoon [1915 (24th November)-1st July (Fricourt)] lead a small recovery party out into Nomansland after a raid in search of Corporal Richard O'Brien [no convenient biography], reported wounded. By the time O'Brien is brought back in he is dead, but for his part in the rescue operation Sassoon is citationed for the Military Cross. [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES]

1916 [Friday 26th May] The Battle of Verdun [XII - Joffre Asks for Help]: [Continued from 15th May] Deeply concerned by the level of losses at Verdun Joffre [4th March-12th December] notifies Haig [19th April-29th June] that the planned French contribution to the forthcoming Somme Offensive [=1st July] will have to be considerably smaller than originally discussed. He also asks for the date of the offensive to be brought forward from mid-August to end-June [sub-thread continues at 1st June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 26th May] War in the Balkans [XI - The Salonika Campaign (The Fort Rupel Affair)]: [Continued from 3rd April] Angered by the Allies' wilful disregard of its wishes to remain neutral the Royalist Greek government orders its garrison at and around Fort Rupel [map, etc.] to surrender itself to the advancing German-Bulgarian forces, thereby de-stabilising the entire Macedonian Front [sub-thread continues at 9th June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS][THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Friday 26th May] The Abwehr's marine section deciphers a British mine clearance intercept for the approaches to the Grand Fleet anchorage at Scapa Flow. Judging that this precedes a sortie of some sort the Germans re-mine the cleared channel¹. It is a lucky guess, for the next ship out through the channel is HMS Hampshire [Wikipedia shipography=>5th June], carrying the Secretary of State for War Kitchener [1915 (9th December)-55th June] on a diplomatic mission to Russia [continues at 5th June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE]
ASIDE: German submarines were more than normally active off the Scottish coast at this moment in time as part of an ongoing High Seas Fleet operation [=>30th May]. The mines were laid by *U-75* [Wikipedia shipography]. For the attendant Conspiracy Theory, see the entry for 5th June 1916.

********** "WAR EQUALS JOBS"! **********

1916 [Sunday 28th May] Economics, Social Confrontation, and War [I - America Against Preparedness (The Seattle Anti-Preparedness Parades)]: [Continued from Preparedness Committee at 1915 (7th December)] One of the first cities to organise against President Wilson's Preparedness Programme [<=1915 (7th December)] is Seattle, where there is presently a very large body of disaffected unemployed workers.

RECOMMENDED READING: For more on Seattle, its socialists, and its unemployed we recommend Chapter 1 of O'Connor (1964) [Amazon].

Among the organisers of the protest are the journalists and political activists Hulet M. Wells [<=1914 (5th August)] and Anna L. Strong [Wikipedia biography], founder of the Seattle branch of the American Union Against Militarism [Wikipedia factsheet]. Against them stand the thug armies recruited by businessmen such as the newspaper proprietor Alden J. Blethen [Wikipedia biography]; but also many of the workers themselves, for they have mouths to feed and life-dreams to dream and need the money which war work would bring [sub-thread continues at 4th July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 AMERICAN NEUTRALITY] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION] [THREAD = THE WW1 FINANCIAL AND ARMAMENTS INDUSTRIES] [THREAD = THE WW1 WORKING CLASS SOLDIER]


1ASIDE: After O'Connor (op. cit., p82).

2ASIDE: Compare the eastern seaboard riots a generation earlier [<=1892 (30th June)] when the strikebreaking was organised by the Pinkerton's Agency.

3ASIDE: Rather unfairly they would then, as war workers, be exempted from actually having to participate in the fighting!

1916 [Tuesday 30th May] The Battle of Jutland [I - Preliminaries and Overview]: [New sub-thread] Still operating an aggressive strategy [<=24th April] Scheer [18th January <=] next three entries] mounts a major High Seas Fleet sortie. As originally conceived (earlier in the month) the plan is to use the five battlecruisers of von Hipper's [1915 (23rd January) <=] next entry] 1st Scouting Group to bombard Sunderland while flotillas of U-boats lie in wait off the Firth of Forth to intercept the Royal Navy's battlecruisers as they scramble. However on 30th May this plan has to be revised somewhat when a forecast of strong winds rules out zeppelin cover. Now the sortie is to be northward up the western coast of Jutland [= Denmark]. Scheer will personally lead out the 16 dreadnoughts based in the Jade [maplink at 1914 (28th August)], with the six pre-dreadnoughts of 2nd Battle Squadron out of the Elbe Estuary in attendance, and with von Hipper scouting ahead out of Wilhelmshaven [maplink at 1914 (28th August)]. However the Germans have under-estimated the efficiency of the chain of Direction-Finding Stations and Listening Stations set up along Britain's eastern seaboard by the Marconi Company's Round [<=1914 (2nd August)], thus ...

"Since May 17, Room 40 codebreakers had been peeking at Scheer's plans. The signals arranging the departure of the U-boats from their bases were the first to be deciphered [...] and bly May 28 it was clear to the Admiralty that something unusual was afoot [...] Early on Tuesday morning, May 30, Room 40 began deciphering signals from Scheer ordering his U-boats to remain at sea and telling the High Seas Fleet to assemble in the outer Jade by [1900hr]. Later that morning Room 40 intercepted the German signal '31 G.G. 2490'
addressed to all units of the High Seas Fleet. Although its meaning was unknown it seemed likely to be an operational order of supreme importance. From the number 31 the cryptologists deduced that an operation by the German fleet was to begin the following day” (Massie, 2003, p575).

As a result the Grand Fleet lights its boilers at 1716hr 30th May, that is to say, half a day ahead of the German sortie which had been designed to draw them out, and by 2230hr is at sea [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 SURFACE NAVY OPERATIONS] Round, H.J. (1920). Direction and position finding. Journal of the IEE, 58:224-247.

1916 [Wednesday 31st May] The Battle of Jutland [II - The Fire Control Systems]; [Continued from preceding entry] This entry summarises the fire-control systems in use in the opposing fleets, but because this is a highly technical issue with a long history ...

**RECOMMENDED PRIOR READING:** To do this topic proper justice it is necessary to weave together a number of separate histories. These are (1) **Analog Computing (Per Se)** [start at 1814 (Johann Hermann), then see 1876 (Sir William Thomson) and 1881 (Ventosa Integrator), and then note especially 1882 (25th August [ASIDE]), (2) **Director Firing Theory** (as a natural evolution of naval gunnery) [we strongly recommend Brooks (2005) [Amazon] for the academic technicalities, supported by the online resources at the Dreadnought Project Website - take me there], and (3) the first two histories brought together as **Analog Computing for Fire Control** [start at 1892 (Prince Louis of Battenberg), then 1901 (Computerised Naval Fire Control) and the dozen or so follow-up entries; some particularly important ballistics terms are explained in the ASIDES at 1911 ([?5th May])].

**FIRE CONTROL, 1916:** Ideally a capital ship's main armament in 1916 would be trained and elevated by powered servomotors to precisely the most appropriate angles, given the positions and speeds of both own ship and target and adjusted in real time for own helm movements applied since the last reliable range-taking, and then fired remotely from a central Control Station. At the moment of firing a timer would be set to sound a bell or buzzer at the predicted moment of impact (itself a function of the range, of course), in order to allow own ship's fall of shot (splashes if misses, flashes if hits) to be told apart from that of other ships in the same line of sight. Corrections were then called and entered. The basic mathematics were (and still are) complex and as many operations as possible were carried out on a purpose-designed analog computing device [imagelinks in the recommended reading above] variously referred to as a "clock" or "plotting table". Helm and speed aside there are also a number of desirable variables to be taken into account, each demanding a sub-device to put it into effect and additional human operator intervention to obtain the necessary input values. More importantly, the resulting accumulation of optics, mechanics, electrics, and electromechanics (not to mention the 50 or so highly trained crewmen required to operate the system) ought - with battle damage - to degrade progressively, seamlessly bringing in back-up procedures as this or that component dropped out of service. NEITHER SIDE AT JUTLAND CAME EQUIPPED WITH SUCH A SYSTEM AND WHAT MOST DICTATED THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE WAS THE RELATIVE SKILL WITH WHICH THE TWO SIDES COMPENSATED FOR THE MISSING FUNCTIONALITY.

Here is an introduction to the opposing systems on the day ...

**A - THE BRITISH GRAND FLEET:** Readers are reminded that there had been intense professional and commercial rivalry between the independently produced Pollen-Isherwood Argo System [<=1901] and Elliott Brothers' [<=1894 (30th March)] Dreyer-Elphinstone System [<=1912 ([?7th March])]. The Argo System had been around longer but (a) having carried the burden of primary invention had advanced quite slowly, and (b) being "perfectly accurate" [see next entry but one] was inherently complicated. It had been the trial system since 1911 [<=1911 ([?7th May])] and was presently fitted on the battlecruiser Queen Mary and the battleships Ajax, Centurion, Erin, and Orion. The Dreyer System had modelled itself on many - but not all - of the Argo's better points and had been, since 1914 [<=1914 (4th August)] the standard issue "service system" for the Royal Navy's capital ships. However as well as having been engineered up to its cleverer forerunner it had also been engineered down to a price by the military contracting clout of the well-established Elliott Brothers. At Jutland the following five ships were equipped with a Mark III Dreyer Table [Brooks (2005; Figure 5.3): HMS King George V [Wikipedia shipography], HMS Thunderer [Wikipedia shipography], HMS Monarch
A 17,000-yard Mark IV Dreyer Table was fitted to HMS Tiger [<=1915 (23rd January)] ... Readers are reminded that at the Battle of the Dogger Bank [<=1915 (23rd January)] Tiger couldn't hit a barn door. Things do not seem to have improved much, for at Jutland Beatty's [1915 (23rd January)<=>next two entries] six battlecruisers scored six hits whilst the five German battlecruisers scored 22 in return (Brooks, 2005, p243) [more details in the narrative below].

"DOUBLE ASIDE: Pollen" (1980) reports that the Argo-ranged Queen Mary scored four hits. If these two data are true then it follows that the other five battlecruisers scored only two hits between them. Three of these battlecruisers (the newer Lion, Tiger, and Princess Royal) were Dreyer-ranged, whilst the other two (the older New Zealand and Indefatigable) were fitted with the older and less automated Dumasq-Vickers system [<=1902].

"TREBLE ASIDE: This Pollen is the son of the Pollen [Senior] [1914 (29th August)<=>next entry but one] who developed the Argo system. Pollen (1980) is the son's attempt to right the academic and commercial wrongs inflicted by the military establishment upon his father. It contains much priceless primary source evidence but nevertheless requires more than normally due diligent cross-checking.

... HMS Benbow [Wikipedia shipography], HMS Emperor of India [Wikipedia shipography], and HMS Queen Elizabeth [<=1915 (13th May)]. A 20,000 yard Mark IV* Dreyer Table was fitted to HMS Warspite [Wikipedia shipography]. The rest of the fleet was equipped with older and less automated Dumasq-Vickers systems [<=1902].

B - THE GERMAN HIGH SEAS FLEET: Here is Brooks on this ...

"In [the German battlecruisers] fire was normally directed from the fore control position, an armoured tower in the rear of the conning tower [...] linked by telephone and voice pipe to the transmitting stations beneath the armoured deck; gunnery data and orders were thence transmitted electrically to the turrets by fire control instruments from Siemens and Halske [<=1847 (12th October)]. All the battlecruisers at Jutland were fitted with Zeiss [<=1884] 3-metre stereoscopic rangefinders. [...] The rangetakers were carefully selected for good three-dimensional vision and [...] rigorously trained. [...] These instruments were, at 20,000 yards, as accurate as the [Royal Navy's] Barr & Stroud [<=1888] 9-foot coincidence rangefinders at 15,000-16,000 yards. In addition, stereoscopic rangefinders were sometimes able to obtain ranges when coincidence instruments could not, notably when a target was almost shrouded in smoke. In German ships, ranges were transmitted electrically from the rangefinders to the control position [...] but mean range and rate were never obtained by any form of plotting [further technicalities]. All the German battlecruisers at Jutland were fitted with a training director, which transmitted target bearing from a periscopic sight in the control position to follow-the-pointer receivers in the turrets [...] Unlike training, gun laying remained the responsibility of the individual layers, who were accustomed to aim continuously and preferred to fire their own pieces once the fire gong had sounded; thus at Jutland, several British observers described the German salvoes as rapid ripples" (Brooks, 2005, pp221-222).

And yet no matter how skilled an admiral's gunners might be, it still needs a skilled seaman to position his ships to allow those gunners to go about their grisly business to best effect. Sea warfare requires systems, yes, but the systems will achieve little unless supported by the far more ancient skills of intelligence gathering, cunning manoeuvre (which in turn requires effective tactical signalling systems), and basic "line of battle" discipline.

LINE OF BATTLE SKILLS, A REMINDER: Pollen (1980) calls these the "interdependence of gunnery and tactics" (p171). The basic line-of-battle manoeuvres remain
as set out in Lord Howe's "Fighting Instructions" more than a century earlier [<=1782 (9th April)], but these were guidelines and subject to more specific Grand Fleet Orders from time to time. With - as at Jutland - a six-battlecruiser British line engaging a five-battlecruiser German line the rule of the day is that (unless and until specifically ordered to do otherwise, or unless and until required by unfolding events to override the rule) the first two British ships should jointly engage the first German ship, with the remaining four/four engaging in pairs. This means that no German ship is unengaged and the presumptive German flagship is twice as likely to be hit. In practice, however, it is never that straightforward, firstly because ships come into range one by one, secondly because downrange smoke can obscure some targets but not others, and thirdly because unfolding events present "targets of opportunity".

DOUBLE ASIDE - TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY: Ships are not six-guns and naval battles are not gunfights at the OK Corral. When deviating from pre-set rules of engagement in order to engage a target of opportunity a captain needs to allow at least three minutes - far longer (if possible at all) if under helm - for the necessary ranging to be carried out. He also risks certain Court Martial if he gets it wrong.

Admirals must also take account of time of day and weather because both the position of the sun and the direction of the wind can affect gunnery and the coming of night can allow a half-defeated enemy to escape to fight another day. Such factors had already influenced the Battles of Coronel [<=1914 (1st November)] and the Falkland Islands [<=1914 (8th December)], and they would intervene again at Jutland, where the British were approaching from the west in mid-to-late afternoon and were therefore doomed to lose the Germans in their (already inferior) rangefinders a good hour before the Germans lost them [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 SURFACE NAVY OPERATIONS]


********** HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BATTLE **********
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1916 [Wednesday 31st May-1st June] The Battle of Jutland [III - The Battle Itself]: [Continued from preceding entry] [all times London U.C.T./G.M.T.; add 1 hour for local C.E.T.] At 0100hr on 31st May von Hipper's [preceding entry<=>next entry] battlecruisers, escorted by five light cruisers and 30 destroyers, weigh anchor and head northward. Around the same time sightings start coming in from the submarine screen to the effect that British capital ships are on the move. Scheer [30th May<=>next entry] dismisses these as insignificant local movements. At 0230hr the 16 dreadnoughts of the High Seas Fleet depart the Jade, escorted by six light cruisers and 31 destroyers. They, too, head northward, being joined at 0500hr by the six pre-dreadnoughts - the "five minute ships"1 of the 2nd Battle Squadron - from the Elbe Estuary. Nine hours later the opposing battlefleets are getting close to each other, but neither side yet has accurate intelligence on the other's whereabouts.

ORDER OF BATTLE - BRITISH BATTLECRUISERS AND FAST BATTLESHIPS: The Royal Navy had ten battlecruisers in commission at this time, but HMAS Australia was in dock for repairs. The remaining nine ships involved in the battle. Beatty [preceding entry<=>next entry] had six - the 1st (LionFlagship, Princess Royal, Queen Mary, and Tiger) and 2nd (New Zealand and Indefatigable) Battlecruiser Squadrons - under his command, whilst Sir Horace L. A. Hood [Wikipedia biography] dies this day was back with Jellicoe's battleships with the now quite old 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron (InvincibleFlagship, Inflexible, and Indomitable). Beatty also had the four brand new (and very excellent) fast battleships of Neath-born Hugh Evan-Thomas's [Wikipedia biography] 5th Battle Squadron (BarhamFlagship, Valiant, Warspite, and Malaya) attached to his force.

ORDER OF BATTLE - GERMAN BATTLECRUISERS: The High Seas Fleet had five battlecruisers in commission at this time, and all five - LützowFlagship, Derfflinger, Seydlitz, Moltke, and Von de Tann - were involved in the battle, all commanded by von Hipper.
At 1415hr Beatty, believing it to have been unsuccessful, orders his squadrons to abandon their south-easterly search pattern and to turn northward in order to rendezvous with Jellicoe. However no sooner have his ships executed this turn than the light cruiser *HMS Galatea* - from her vantage point in the scouting screen some eight miles further to the south-east - breaks radio silence to report *Enemy in Sight*. At 1432hr Beatty duly orders his ships to *Action Stations* and raises the flag-hoist to resume course south-east. The four super-dreadnoughts of Evan-Thomas's 5th Battle Squadron do not see this flag-hoist and - it not being repeated by searchlight - continue due north. By the time their absence is noted aboard *Lion* and the order re-transmitted they have fallen some 10 miles behind.

At 1439hr *Galatea* signals that she has now further sighted von Hipper's battlecruisers to the east-north-east, heading northward.

**ASIDE**: Readers unfamiliar with the 32 “points” of the "mariners' compass" should consult the *Wikipedia tutorial* before proceeding. In this entry we shall be working to the 16-point system of "winds" (eight) and "half-winds" (eight), each a "two point" turn from the one before.

Beatty is thus well positioned to get in behind the Germans, thereby forcing them to fight their way home. To prevent this happening, and at the same time to draw Beatty southward onto Scheer's advancing battleships, von Hipper at 1528hr orders 1st Scouting Group to reverse its course.

******* THE RUN TO THE SOUTH *******

For the next hour or so the two battlecruiser fleets run more or less parallel to each other, commencing firing at 1545hr at around 16,000 yards range. Massie (2003) reports that for the first ten minutes every British shell "sailed far over the German line, some even as much as three miles beyond" (p591). At 1600hr *Lion* is hit by *Lützow* on her Q-turret, setting it on fire and forcing the flooding of its magazine.

**ASIDE - FRANCIS HARVEY, VICTORIA CROSS**: For ordering the flooding of Q-magazine despite mortal wounds, and thereby saving his ship from a fatal magazine explosion, Francis J. W. Harvey [Wikipedia biography] will be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Two minutes later *Indefatigable* is hit on or near a turret by *Von der Tann* and sinks in seconds following a magazine explosion, with the loss of all but two of her crew. Around the same time (but entirely coincidentally) Jellicoe orders Hood's 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron (the battlecruisers *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, and *Indomitable*, and the escorting light cruisers *Chester* and *Canterbury*) to detach itself from the main battlefleet and proceed eastward at full speed [this squadron will reappear in the narrative at 1735hr below].

Following the damage to *Lion* and the loss of *Indefatigable* Beatty's command cohesion is only restored at 1608hr when Evan-Thomas's 5th Battle Squadron comes into range and manages to score hits on *Von der Tann* and *Moltke* almost immediately, damaging the former's steering gear and forcing her momentarily out of line. Thus encouraged, Beatty brings his surviving ships round to the south-east to close the range again, only to lose *Queen Mary* at 1626hr when hits from *Derfflinger* cause her, too, to suffer a magazine explosion, this time with 18 survivors.

******* THE RUN TO THE NORTH *******

At 1638hr the light cruiser *HMS Southampton* [Wikipedia shipography] interrupts the firefight to report by wireless that she has sighted Scheer's battleships to the south-
east, heading north. Suddenly heavily outnumbered Beatty's first duty is now to lure Scheer northward toward Jellicoe's advancing battleships, and so at 1640hr he orders a 180-degree turn in succession, with 5th Battle Squadron delaying compliance long enough to take station astern. This places **HMS Warspite** [Wikipedia shipography] and **HMS Malaya** [Wikipedia shipography] closest to Scheer's leading ships.

Between 1646hr and 1709hr the four surviving British battlecruisers are unable, due to poor visibility, to get the Germans' range. The Germans, however, have the British ships silhouetted against a bright horizon and continue to score hits until Beatty's greater speed pulls him ahead. Now the 5th Battle Squadron comes under fire from both von Hipper's battlecruisers and the four König-class battleships making up Scheer's vanguard 5th Division. Evan-Thomas accordingly divides his fire, instructing **Barham** and **Valiant** to engage the battlecruisers and **Warspite** and **Malaya** to engage the Königs. Both sides accumulate damage in the ensuing running fight.

At 1735hr Bödicker's [<=24th April] 2nd Scouting Group (the light cruisers **Frankfurt** Flagship, **Wiesbaden**, **Elbing**, and **Pillau**) runs into **Chester**, part of Hood's 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron, and in the space of only five minutes hits her 17 times.

**ASIDE - JOHN CORNWELL, VICTORIA CROSS:** For single-handedly keeping his gun in action despite severe wounds 16-year old John T. ["Jack"] Cornwell [Wikipedia biography] will be awarded the Victoria Cross. The gun itself was salvaged when **Chester** was scrapped in 1921 and is nowadays on display in the Imperial War Museum, London.

Then at 1745hr **Lion**'s lookout reports that Jellicoe's starboard station cruiser screen - **Sir Robert K. Arbuthnot**'s [Wikipedia biography=>killed this day] 1st Cruiser Squadron (the armoured cruisers **Defence** Flagship, **Warrior**, **Black Prince**, and **Duke of Edinburgh**) - has come into sight on the horizon. Beatty duly changes course to the north-east, so as to be able to take station ahead of Jellicoe's battleships when eventually they deploy into line of battle. As they turn to starboard to follow Beatty around this latest course change takes von Hipper and the Königs into banks of haze. Arbuthnot simply holds his course, intending to slot his way through Beatty's line where gaps permit in order to relieve Chester in her uneven fight against 2nd Scouting Group.

**ASIDE:** Beatty's (from the south-west) and Arbuthnot's (from the north-west) lines are thus attempting the naval equivalent of the formation crossover manoeuvre so popular with motorcycle and similar display teams [check this one out].

However only Arbuthnot's first and second ships - **Defence** and **Warrior** - are able to get through Beatty's line, and, thus delayed, **Black Prince** and **Duke of Edinburgh** get detached from their sisters, the former being never positively sighted again [see Black Prince's Wikipedia shipography for the competing theories, and 0110hr below for our preferred explanation].

At 1759hr the Königs emerge from their bank of haze and sight Jellicoe's still undeployed fleet a mere 16,000 yards away. They therefore come two points further around to starboard to steer east-north-east. Meanwhile in the watery Nomansland - the "killing zone" - between the two capital ship fleets the cruiser/destroyer mêlée continues as Arbuthnot's half squadron and both Hood's and von Hipper's battlecruisers all arrive in the arena at much the same time. **Wiesbaden** is hit in the engine room by Invincible at around 1802hr and left dead in the water, remaining a target of passing opportunity for various British ships, Jellicoe's flagship **Iron Duke** included, until she finally sinks in the early hours.
********** JELLCIOE DEPLOYS INTO LINE OF BATTLE **********

While this is all going on Jellicoe decides at 1815hr that the time is right to try to cross Scheer's "tee" ([Wikipedia tutorial]). He chooses to do this by turning his six four-ship squadrons simultaneously to the east-north-east, in succession within squadron, so as to form a single 24-ship line of battle running more or less parallel to, and some ten miles north of, von Hipper and Scheer. Evan-Thomas judges that 5th Battle Squadron should detach from Beatty at this juncture, and steers so as to tag on instead to the rear end of Jellicoe's line of battle. However just as his ships begin the necessary manoeuvre Warspite is hit by a shell from Kaiserin which jams her rudder to starboard and slewed her round toward the advancing Germans. Around the same time Iron Duke scores seven hits on König and Defence is hit on or near a turret by Derfflinger and sinks with all hands following a magazine explosion ([visit the wreck]). Warrior continues to take hits but is saved by the timely (but entirely fortuitous) arrival of (the still out-of-control) Warspite. By 1821hr the heavy units of Hood's 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron have moved into line ahead of Beatty's.

**ASIDE:** The British divisions are presently (from rear/west to front/east) Evan-Thomas, Jellicoe's six squadrons, Beatty, and Hood.

Hood's squadron now engages von Hipper's two leading ships, Lützow and Derfflinger, both sides scoring several hits. However at 1834hr Invincible is hit on or close to a turret and sinks in seconds following a magazine explosion, with the loss of Admiral Hood and of all but six of her crew.

********** FIRST "BATTLE ABOUT TURN TO STARBOARD" **********

At 1836hr Scheer judges that Jellicoe's initial 'tee-ing' deployment has played very effectively to the Royal Navy's numerical advantage. He therefore orders a Gefechtskehrtwendung (= "Battle about turn"); a much practised fleet manoeuvre which requires every single ship to execute a simultaneous 180-degree turn to port or starboard as instructed (see [Wikipedia tutorial]) to starboard.

**ASIDE:** The Germans will execute three such turns during the battle. The corresponding British manoeuvre is to turn simultaneously by division (but sequentially within division).

The effect of this sudden break-away is to leave the entire German fleet steering westward with the British somewhat further north and steering eastward. This not only blocks the Germans off from escaping via the Skagerrak ([map, etc.]) into the Baltic, but also seriously threatens to cut them off from their home ports to the south.

At 1844hr, uncertain as to Scheer's position, Jellicoe brings the British line round onto course south-east. Then at 1855hr he temporarily abandons his single line battle-astern by turning to the south in squadrons abeam. This gives him six parallel columns of four dreadnoughts again, with Evan-Thomas's fast squadron on the western wing and the six remaining battlecruisers on the eastern.

**ASIDE:** Taken in conjunction with the initial deployment at 1815hr, the turns at 1844hr and 1855hr start to sweep the entire Grand Fleet in a 18-mile radius clockwise circle centred on - and thus continuously "tee-ing" - Scheer's entire High Seas Fleet ([see Wikipedia summary graphic (Main Engagement)]). The British are also cutting off Scheer's escape routes, at least until nightfall. Moreover since the circle is actually composed of repeated straight runs, each of ten miles or so, Jellicoe's ranging difficulties are firmly back under control and hits are being scored.

********** SECOND "BATTLE ABOUT TURN TO STARBOARD" **********
At 1855hr Scheer repeats the *Gefechtskehrtwendung* to starboard, re-engaging the rear of the British line. He is still "tee-d", however, and during the ensuing 10 minutes the Germans suffer repeated hits.

**ASIDE**: Scheer will later confess that his primary motivation in re-engaging was the heat-of-the-moment feeling that he ought to be seen to be doing something. "If I'd done it in peacetime manoeuvres," he admitted, "I'd have been sacked".

Meanwhile by 1900hr it has become apparent that *Lützow* is so badly damaged that she has no further part to play in the battle, and so von Hipper has himself taken off onto the destroyer *G-39*. The destroyer takes him to *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, and *Von der Tann* in turn, but all have had the requisite signalling facilities blown away. Finally at 1913hr he is about to transfer his flag onto *Moltke* when she is suddenly ordered to join her sisters and the 14 available destroyers in a suicidal charge directly at Jellicoe's line, under cover of which Scheer will attempt a second emergency withdrawal.

**********  THIRD "BATTLE ABOUT TURN TO STARBOARD"  **********
********** THE DEATH RIDE OF 1ST SCOUTING GROUP  **********

The ensuing "death ride of the German battlecruisers" lasts only three or four minutes, during which period they suffer many more hits. Then at 1920hr, as the destroyers - far harder targets - come up from behind them the battlecruisers are ordered to veer away, their job done. Moments later Jellicoe turns his fleet away in order to avoid the destroyers' torpedoes, and by the time he reforms his line some 10 minutes later, now heading due south, Scheer and von Hipper have disappeared into the haze again. At 1940hr Jellicoe executes a complex manoeuvre consisting of an eight-point turn to starboard in divisions abeam, taking the fleet some eight miles to the west, followed by a four-point redeployment to port into line of battle steering south-westward, thus crossing Scheer's (still southbound) "tee" yet again. As a result at 2012hr Beatty's battlecruisers are yet again scoring hits on the now nearly defenceless German battlecruisers. This time they are rescued when Scheer's pre-dreadnought squadron draws the British fire for long enough for the battlecruisers to turn away.

By 2100hr it is dark and Jellicoe adopts a defensive night cruising formation of three heavy columns with the lighter elements bringing up the rear. There then follows a series of local engagements as ships stray into harm's way here and there. In a light cruiser clash at 2215hr *Goodenough* suffers severe shell damage but manages to sink one of her assailants - the light cruiser *Frauenlob* - with a torpedo. At 2320hr a British destroyer flotilla is caught by three German battleships and the light cruisers *Hamburg*, *Elbing*, and *Rostock*, and in the ensuing firefight four of the destroyers are sunk and *Elbing* and *Rostock* disabled (both are later abandoned and scuttled). At 0110 hr *Thüringen* and *Ostfriesland* claim hits on (probably) *Black Prince*, which then sinks following an internal explosion. At 0147hr *Lützow* finally sinks; *Wiesbaden* likewise at around the same time. At 0202hr *Pommern* is destroyed by an internal explosion following another destroyer attack.

Scheer, meanwhile, has gradually been manoeuvring eastward as the Grand Fleet passes south of him, and sometime after 0200hr successfully slips across Jellicoe's wake heading for the shielding minefields along the Danish coastline. After dawn Jellicoe resumes a search pattern of divisions abeam, combing the previous day's battle area for stragglers and survivors alike (only while doing a head-count at 0907hr does he learn of the loss of *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable*). *Warrior* proves to be beyond assistance and is abandoned at 0825hr. Then at 1100hr Jellicoe turns the Grand Fleet for home and the burials at sea can begin. 24 hours later, reeking of disinfectant, the
The High Seas Fleet reaches the Jade between 1300hr and 1445hr.

********** SO WHO WON? **********

The histories conventionally list the Battle of Jutland as tactically inconclusive in that the Germans had sunk more ships but failed to drive the British from the field. But there will be a feeling that the British could have achieved far more had it not been for the lamentable problems in their battlecruiser design and fire control systems. For their part the Germans made much of the "unsinkability" of their ships. Nevertheless Jellicoe had out-sailed them in the old-fashioned sense on the day, and they had suffered far greater battle damage. Neither side had much success with their destroyers or submarines. As for the often-controversial battlecruiser concept it had largely been validated, provided you could keep the things from blowing up under you under plunging fire.

1 ASIDE: Because five minutes was about as long as their crews expected them to last in battle.

2 ASIDE: Evan-Thomas was a signals expert and so there can be little doubt that he went entirely "by the book" as this incident unfolded. He had served on the Admiralty committee set up in the 1890s to update the navy's Signal Book, had witnessed and help to evaluate the experiments with wireless telegraphy in 1898, and had commanded the navy's Signal School for a time thereafter.

3 ASIDE: The WW2 battlecruiser HMS Hood was still under construction at the time of Jutland, and her completion was delayed for extensive redesign work while still on the slipway. Nevertheless on 24th May 1941 she, too, was lost to a magazine explosion.

1916 [Thursday 1st June] The Battle of Jutland [IV - The Post Mortem (Helm-Free Gunnery)]: [Continued from preceding entry] Over the years the Battle of Jutland will inspire a number of major debates. We shall deal firstly with the issue of helm-free gunnery. As previously noted, neither side at Jutland possessed a fire-control system capable of firing accurately while "under helm", that is to say, while turning. The Royal Navy, however, had actually trialled just such a system - Pollen [Senior]'s Argo A.C. Clock - four years previously aboard HMS Orion, but had turned it down in favour of a less expensive but technically inferior competitor system. To save looking back here is our original entry for this ...

1912 [??th September] Computerised Naval Fire Control [XV - The Orion Trials]: [... Continued from ??th March] The Mark IV Argo Clock is tested aboard HMS Orion, one of the Royal Navy's latest "Super-Dreadnoughts". It is a success (see Pollen, 1980, p92). Nevertheless around this time it is beginning to become apparent that no matter how good the Argo is, the rival Dreyer Mark III Fire Control Table will be the one selected for standard issue [continues at 1914 (4th August: 2400hr) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 CYBERNETICS, COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCE, AND FIRE-CONTROL]

The technical thrust of the trial can be seen in the following excerpt from the inventor's correspondence at the time, courtesy of his son-biographer ...

"We were given the range of a fixed mark, whose distance from the ships had been exactly ascertained. Our clock was set to its bearing and range and to our own course and speed. Orion then described a quadrilateral figure, whose sides measured between eight and nine..."
miles, and the three turns executed in describing it were made under full helm, and aggregated more than three full right angles. [...] The task was to keep the range of the fixed mark and its line of aim throughout the run, without having transmitted to us any range or bearing corrections of any kind whatever. At the end of the run, it was found that we had the range within twenty-five yards, and the bearing within half a degree” (Pollen [Senior], correspondence with the Admiralty, cited in Pollen, 1980, p92).

A month later the system was trialled again, this time with live firing ...

"...’with no other gear have firing tests ever been carried out in such difficult conditions or with more novel and startling results. Never, until the A.C. Clock was tried in the Orion, had firing at high speed during a six-point turn been attempted. By hitting a fast and distant target continuously at a high rate of change with the firing ship under full helm the Orion has achieved what all gunnery experts would, a few weeks ago, have said was impossible” (ibid.).

In non-technical language, what was therefore on offer was a system which remembered where it had started, computed its own movements under helm using an early form of inertial guidance system, and then used those data to recalculate target range and bearing in real time.

Later, in his 1980 biography, Pollen [Junior] publishes extracts from a letter his father had written to Winston Churchill [1915 (24th May)<=>3rd June] dated 8th November 1923. This letter was prompted by the publication earlier that year of Churchill’s Memoirs dealing with the Dardanelles and Gallipoli Campaigns, where, it will be remembered, repeated attacks into the Mouth of the Dardanelles were driven back by Turkish mines and artillery ...

BEFORE PROCEEDING: Readers unfamiliar with the attempts to “force the Narrows” during the Dardanelles and Gallipoli Campaigns should pre-read entries I through IX [1915 (1st January through 19th March)].

Pollen [Senior] seems to have been particularly irritated by the Memoirs' glib explanation for the failure of these attacks, thus ...

"In Chapter XI you show that, after a month's operations [...] during which between 7000 and 8000 shells were fired from over 120 guns of a power vastly superior to those of our opponents, the forts above the Narrows, the minefields, and the batteries protecting them from the sweepers, were all, on the evening of 18th March, practically intact. [...] It seems to me a summary of your argument to say that our ships could not steam past the minefields unless they were swept, the minefields could not be swept until the protecting batteries were crushed; the batteries could not be put out of business until the fortress guns were dismantled at long range, and the mobile eight and six inch howitzers had compelled the battleships to 'wheel and manoeuvre' which 'destroyed' the accuracy of their long range fire. Thus forts, batteries, and minefields were, at the end of it all, as effective obstacles as they were when we began - a failure so complete and disconcerting that the attempt was never renewed, with the result you rightly and eloquently deplore” (Pollen [Senior], private papers, cited in Pollen, 1980, p172).

Pollen [Senior] then makes his basic point, namely that the task of hitting stationary targets while evading counter-fire requires precisely the sort of helm-free fire control functionality he had built into the Argo Clock system. Here is how he phrased it ...

"Is it not obvious that, had 'wheeling and manoeuvring' not been fatal to hitting [...] the remaining operations [...] would have presented no difficulty. The causa causans [Latin = "the cause of the causes"; hence primary cause] of the disaster, then, was the inability to keep the range under helm” (ibid.).
... and here is Pollen [Junior] making the same point ...

"The parallel between [the Orion] exercise and the task that faced the Navy at the Dardanelles three years later is exact: and it is obvious that had our ships been equipped with the Argo Clocks they would have experienced no difficulty in keeping the forts under effective fire while circling round for their own protection" (Pollen, 1980, p173).

Pollen [Junior] would conclude 57 years later as follows ...

"It is a remarkable fact and the key to the riddle of our failure at Jutland, that on each of the three occasions the rate of approach was in the neighbourhood of forty miles an hour and on each occasion the British fleet, for differing reasons, was compelled to make a wide turn within minutes of opening fire - in other words compelled to fight in precisely the conditions which the Admiralty has supposed would never arise and for which they had refused to make provision. [...] Never was a prophecy more exactly fulfilled. For here we have precisely the circumstances foreshadowed by Pollen when in October 1912 he wrote to [Winston Churchill] 'We maintain that range, speed, and course-finding must be available however high the relative speed [...] and that to be ready for war the Lion must be able to get the data for doing this while she is on a steady course or under helm. The proposed Service methods cannot do either of these things because they are not designed to attempt to do them' [...] In place of such a system Beatty had at his disposal instruments of observation so ineffective that he believed and reported in his despatch that at [1538hr] both sides had opened fire at 18,500 yards whereas the actual range had been only 15,000" (Pollen, 1980, pp174-176; emphasis added).

Pollen [Senior] got no answer to his 1923 letter [sub-thread continues at next entry ...] [THREAD = WW1 SURFACE NAVY OPERATIONS]

1916 [Thursday 1st June] The Battle of Jutland [V - The Post Mortem (Von Hipper versus Beatty): [Continued from preceding entry] Historians have also repeatedly compared and contrasted the seamanship and command styles of the opposing battlecruiser commanders, Beatty being regularly portrayed as an arrogant bungler, von Hipper as the consummate professional. Brooks (2005), for example, makes much of Evan-Thomas's later complaint that at no time since 5th Battle Squadron had been attached to Beatty's force had Beatty made time to discuss battle tactics with him. He also quote's Goodenough's [<=preceding entry but two] caustic remark (in his 1943 Memoirs) that Beatty's fighting spirit "did not derive from 'great professional knowledge, certainly not of gun or torpedo'" (p240). Beatty was also slack with signals, mislaying 5th Battle Squadron before the first shot had even been fired [<=1432hr] and forgetting to tell his Commander-in-Chief that he was two battlecruisers worse off than he thought. Massie (2003) devotes the whole of Chapter 31 to the comparison. Here is his assessment of von Hipper ...

"No one followed [events] more closely than Hipper on Lützow's bridge. 'His unruffled calm communicated itself ... to all those on the bridge,' said one of his officers. 'Work was carried on exactly as it had been in peacetime manoeuvres.' Another officer reported that Hipper 'could not be separated from the telescope. There was nothing which escaped him, nothing he forgot'. [...] War at sea was Franz Hipper's 'business'" (Massie, 2003, p591; emphasis added).

Two further issues will be dealt with in two later-dated entries: the first - a debate concerning whether Britain had lost command of the seas - will bubble up in the following spring [=1917 (19th April)], and the second - a debate concerning truth and cover-up - will run and run once the participants' post-war Memoirs start to come out [=1918 (30th November)] [sub-thread continues at 1917 (19th April) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 SURFACE NAVY OPERATIONS]
1916 [Thursday 1st June] During a Commons adjournment debate on the iniquities of the Defence of the Realm Act the Liberal Party Member for Hexham Richard D. Holt [1st Baronet] reminded the House of an 1813 article by a clergyman named Sydney Smith, which had observed as follows...

"There is more misery inflicted upon mankind by one year of war than by all the civil peculations [archaic = embezzlements] and oppressions of a century. Yet it is a state into which the mass of mankind rush with the greatest avidity" (Hansard, 82:2953-3050). [THREAD = THE CAUSES OF WAR]

1916 [Thursday 1st-7th June] The Battle of Verdun [XIII - The Battle of Vaux]: [Continued from 26th May] Having held on to Fort Douaumont by the skin of their teeth [<=15th May] this battle is a five-division set-piece German assault on the Fleury-Fort Souville sector [both maplinks at 25th February] and the eastern shoulder thereof at Fort Vaux [maplink at 21st February]. The assault on Vaux begins at dawn on 2nd June and continues for five days before lack of water finally forces Raynal [<=14th May] to surrender [sub-thread continues at 23rd June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 2nd-22nd June] The Battle of Mount Sorrel: This battle is fought in the Sanctuary Wood - Hill 60 [maplinks at 1915 (3rd May)] sector on the south-eastern chin of the Ypres Salient between elements of Theodor von Watter's XIII (Royal Württemberg) Corps and Malcolm S. Mercer's 3rd Canadian Division. It is the Canadian unit's first set-piece battle, and the key point in their sector is opposite the German-held ridge code-named Mount Sorrel [use the Hooge maplink at 1914 (27th October) and look a mile to the south]. A preliminary German barrage begins on 2nd June and is exceptionally accurate and sustained. It is followed at around 1300hr by the explosion of four mines under the Canadian line. The German infantry attack, when it comes, pushes the surviving Canadians back nearly half a mile. A major Canadian counter-attack is then organised for 13th June, which, thanks to carefully coordinated artillery support, succeeds in retaking the lost ground. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]


1916 [Saturday 3rd June] The founder of the Hall Shipping Line, Cardiff Councillor, President of the Cardiff Shipowners' Association, confidant of Winston Churchill [<=31st May], and prolific disseminator of his opinions to newspaper editors, Edward Nicholl [Wikipedia biography=>18th November], is knighted for services to the nation. [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES]

1916 [Sunday 4th June] Wilfred Owen [see 1915 (21st October)] is commissioned into the Manchester Regiment. [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES] [THREAD = WW1 POETRY]

********** HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BATTLE **********
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1916 [Sunday 4th June-20th September] The Eastern Campaign [XII - The Brusilov Offensive]: [Continued from 1915 (13th July)] This battle is fought by four Russian armies under the overall command of Aleksei Brusilov [Wikipedia biography] and the Austro-Hungarian forces in Galicia [map, etc.]. The Russians achieve complete surprise and for a month drive the Austro-Hungarians back in no little disorder. This so de-stabilises the Eastern Front that von Hindenburg [1915 (7th February)<=19th August] is forced to divert German reserves to
support his allies, thereby contingently weakening the offensive at Verdun. The overall outcome of the offensive is a convincing Russian victory (albeit at the cost of at least a million casualties), a deeply demoralised Austro-Hungarian Army, and a German Army so weakened that its next offensive at Verdun [=>23rd June] will be an unsuccessful last throw of the dice [sub-thread continues at 27th August ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

***** HIS COUNTRY NO LONGER NEEDED HIM *****

1916 [Monday 5th June] [Continued from 26th May] On her way out of the Scapa Flow anchorage HMS Hampshire [26th May<s= sinks this day] strikes one of U-75’s mines and sinks with the loss of Secretary of State for War Kitchener [26th May<dies this day= replaced 6th July], his staff, and all but 12 of the ship’s crew. These events are revisited in Chapter 25 of Jim Macgregor [see own entry] and Gerry Docherty's [see own entry] 2017 book "Prolonging the Agony" [see own entry]. In this particular chapter the authors are questioning to what extent Kitchener had by early 1916 exceeded his shelf life. They point out that his initial success had been with the British public as a figurehead, not with the government as a natural administrator. As a result, by the end of 1915 Asquith had (a) passed his supply portfolio to the new Minister of Munitions Lloyd George [see 24th May 1915], and (b) established a War Committee with responsibility for the strategic direction of the war. Macgregor and Docherty then suggest a deeper reason for Kitchener’s progressive marginalisation, namely that he was actually unacceptably soft on Germany, thus ...

"Kitchener saw himself as the arbiter of a good peace [...] and had] confided his philosophy to Lord Derby over dinner some three or four days before he sailed on his final fatal journey. Derby took notes immediately afterwards so that he did not have to rely on memory. He recorded Kitchener’s absolute belief that ‘whatever happened’, at the end of the war, the peace negotiators should not ‘take away one country’s territory and give it to another’. The fate of Alsace and Lorraine was included in his statement [...] Kitchener had also confided in Sir Douglas Haig that only a decisive victory against Germany followed by a fair peace treaty, would prevent further wars in Europe. He had come to the conclusion that the war should not be about the conquest of Germany. In the eyes of the Secret Elite, he had completely lost focus. [...] To the powers behind the government it was unthinkable. Unimaginable. Kitchener had become more than just a liability. He was a danger to the Secret Elite’s ambitions. [...] Inner-core members of the Secret Elite were very concerned. They had erred in their judgement about Kitchener. Lord Milner, especially so. [...] They] intended to recast Germany and re-affirm the primacy of the British Empire" (Macgregor and Docherty, 2017, pp336-338).

Authorisation for Kitchener’s mission was given 26th May 1916. Ten days later he was dead, the conspiracy explanation being that in arch-conspirator Balfour’s Admiralty, intelligence reports of U-75’s mine-laying patrol were deliberately not factored into Hampshire’s planned departure route. An alternative explanation - the "cock up" theory - is that this was merely a failure in inter-departmental communication. Then again, one might just as easily suspect a German agent in the offices of St. Petersberg’s British attaché, General Sir John Hanbury-Williams [see own entry]. [THREAD = WW1 ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE]

1916 [Monday 5th June] Islam in WW1 [XXII - The Arab Uprising (The Battle of Medina)]: [Continued from 21st May] After six months of persuasion by Britain’s Arab Bureau [<=24th January], and tempted by the secret promise of a new Arab Caliphate [<=9th May], the Sharif of Mecca Hussein bin Ali [1915 (24th October)<=10th June] orders two of his sons - Ali bin Hussein [Wikipedia biography] and Faisal bin Hussein [Wikipedia biography] to stage an armed raid against the Ottoman garrison at Medina, thereby proclaiming the Arab Uprising as a shooting war. Around the same time the two captured Senoussi commanders Ja’far Pasha [26th February<=1921 (23rd August)] and Nuri Al-Said [26th
defect to the Allies (having presumably been "turned" by similar Arab Bureau promises during their ten week imprisonment in Cairo) at the head of a battalion of 700 or so like-minded Ottoman prisoners-of-war from The Middle Eastern Campaigns [sub-thread continues at 10th June ...]. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Friday 9th June] **War in the Balkans [XII - The Salonika Campaign (The Downing Street Conference)]:** [Continued from 26th May] At an Anglo-French planning conference in London the Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir William Robertson [22nd April<=1st July (Serre)] vetoes a major offensive in Salonika since all his reserves are needed in France [sub-thread continues at 23rd July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 GRAND STRATEGIES]

1916 [Saturday 10th June-9th July] **Islam in WW1 [XXIII - The Arab Uprising (The Battle of Mecca)]:** [Continued from 5th June] Following the preliminary attack at Medina the previous week the Sharif of Mecca Hussein bin Ali [5th June<=23rd October] now declares himself king of the Hejaz and launches a sustained attack on the Ottoman garrison in and around Mecca, supported by British and French advisors on the ground and British and French ships offshore. On 15th June HMS Ben-my-Chree [<=1915 (12th August)] provides air cover from offshore in the Red Sea and the port of Jeddah surrenders on 16th June allowing Egyptian troops to come ashore. Nevertheless by as early as July Sir Mark Sykes [27th February<=1917 (28th January)] is warning the British Cabinet that there has been/will be no mass defection of Turkish Muslims to the new regime (Fromkin, 1989) [sub-thread continues at 23rd October ...]. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Sunday 11th-25th June] **38th (Welsh) Division at War [VII - Learning the Ropes (The Saint-Pol Practice Trenches)]:** [Continued from 5th April] On 11th June the division is relieved by 61st Division, re-attached to XVII Corps, and moves 25 miles to the south-west to Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise [maplink at 8th May]. Hughes (1982) explains what skills are now being developed ...

"For the first six days of training, platoons and companies practised going into attack over open ground in extended lines, or 'waves', each successive wave carrying the action forward as the one in front supposed itself in check. This was followed by three days of brigade and divisional manoeuvres in which [...] all arms joined: artillery brigades, machine gun companies, signallers and engineers, aided by spotter aircraft from the Royal Flying Corps. The exercises were carefully planned. Each unit was given a definite objective and detailed orders were issued by divisional and brigade headquarters. [...] Though the absence of an enemy must have lent an air of unreality to the proceedings, the brigade staff were, nevertheless, given an opportunity to handle large forces in the open and to practise the difficult manoeuvre of passing one battalion through another. As the attack proceeded, unit commanders were deliberately confronted with unexpected difficulties. [...] Some valuable lessons were learned during this all-too-short period of training - particularly about the importance of maintaining good communications between infantry and artillery" (pp60-61).

Hughes observes that this eve-of-battle exercise did not include practice in woodland fighting [sub-thread continues at 26th June ...]. [THREAD = WW1 DIVISIONAL HISTORIES]

1916 [Saturday 17th June] **Irish Home Rule [XLIII - The Easter Rising (The "Headings" Proposal)]:** [Continued from 25th May] Delivering upon the promise made to Parliament three weeks previously the British Cabinet now makes available under the title "Headings of a Settlement as to the Government of Ireland" its draft proposals for the temporary partition of Ireland [sub-thread continues at 29th June ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]
1916 [Friday 23rd June] The 2nd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment [22nd April<=1st July] relocates to Acheux-en-Amiénois/Acheux Wood [map, etc.; the wood is half a mile to the east of the village], alongside 29th Division HQ and Casualty Clearing Station. [THREAD = WW1 REGIMENTAL HISTORIES]

********** "THE TURNING POINT IN THE GREAT WAR"1 **********
********** "THE TURNING POINT IN THE GREAT WAR" **********
********** "THE TURNING POINT IN THE GREAT WAR" **********
********** "THE TURNING POINT IN THE GREAT WAR" **********

1916 [Friday 23rd June] The Battle of Verdun [XIV - The Battle of Fleury]: [Continued from 1st June] Buoyed by their success at Fort Vaux [maplink at 21st February] earlier in the month <=1st June this battle is a set-piece German assault on the Fleury-Fort Souville sector [both maplinks at 25th February] and the western shoulder thereof at the Ouvrage de Thiaumont [map, etc.]. The battle is noteworthy in the present context for trying out a new tactic, namely that of gas-shelling the French rear areas just before the infantry attack with a view to neutralising defensive artillery fire. When their infantry attacks at 0500hr on 23rd June both Thiaumont and Fleury fall in short order, leaving the Germans only two and a half miles from Verdun itself. However on so narrow a front the French have enough reserves to block any further advance. Nivelle [19th April=>24th October] helps stiffen the defence with the now-fabled soundbite "Ils ne passeront pas!" [= "They shall not pass!"] [sub-thread continues at 19th October ...], [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1ASIDE: This phrase from Horne (1962, p293), who notes Fleury as the high point in the German advance. The French now spend the rest of the summer building up their forces in readiness for a highly successful autumn counter-offensive [=19th October].

1916 [Monday 26th-30th June] 38th (Welsh) Division at War [VIII - Assembling at Toutencourt]: [Continued from 11th June] The division's final move prior to the battle begins on 26th June and takes them, by 30th June, to Toutencourt [map, etc.], seven miles west of Albert [map, etc.]. Here, not yet formally allocated to Fourth Army, they await the call to action [end of sub-thread; 38th Division will now reappear in The Somme Campaign on 5th July ...], [THREAD = WW1 DIVISIONAL HISTORIES]


1916 [Thursday 29th June or hereabouts] Top Ten1 WW1 Poetry [II - "Before Action"]: [Continued from 16th May] Shortly before going into action on the Somme a young 7th Division officer named William N. Hodgson [Wikipedia biography=killed in action 1st July] composes a poem entitled "Before Action", in which he puts his finger on the greatest of all a soldier's fears - that of making a fool of oneself [sub-thread continues at 18th November ...], [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES] [THREAD = WW1 POETRY]

1CITATION AS TOP TEN WW1 POETRY: Here is Hodgson's work in full, with explanatory highlighting ...

By all the glories of the day
And the cool evening's benison
By that last sunset touch that lay
Upon the hills when day was done,
By beauty lavishly outpoured
And blessings carelessly received,
By all the days that I have lived
Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all man's hopes and fears
And all the wonders poets sing,
The laughter of unclouded years,
And every sad and lovely thing;
By all his mad catastrophes
Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill
Saw with uncomprehending eyes
A hundred of thy sunsets spill
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
Must say good-bye to all of this;
By all delights that I shall miss,
Help me to die, O Lord.

A classics student before the war, Hodgson's substantive point is that most men are more afraid of looking less than a man in the eyes of their fellows than of actually ceasing to exist per se.

********** "SOMEONE IS GOING TO GET HURT"**********

1916  [Thursday 29th June]  The Somme Campaign [IV - Preliminaries (Initial Order of Battle and Objectives)]: [Continued from 8th May] The order of battle for the first three days of the offensive is as shown below (Welsh units highlighted in green) ...

G.H.Q.  [Haig  [26th May<=5th July];  Kiggell  [8th May=>5th July])

NORTHERN PIVOT - ELEMENTS OF THIRD ARMY  [Allenby  [<=1914 (23rd August)])

VII Corps  [D'Oyly-Snow  [1915 (9th April)<=1st July])


MAIN ATTACK - FOURTH ARMY  [Rawlinson  [<=19th April])  [Note: All Fourth Army corps are presently deliberately over-strength at four divisions apiece (see main narrative below for the reasoning), with further reinforcements close at hand. Corps are listed north to south, showing divisions in ascending numerical order within corps. Divisions will then be treated in north-to-south order in the sector-by-sector entries which follow. The significance of the asterisking is explained below.]

VIII Corps  [Hunter-Weston  [<=1915 (28th June)])


X Corps  [Sir Thomas L. N. Morland  [Wikipedia biography])

(including 3rd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment)

III Corps (Pulteney [=1914 (31st August)])

***1st Division [=1914 (12th October)] ([Sir]1917: Edward P. Strickland [Wikipedia biography])
(including 9th Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers, 5th Bn South Wales Borderers, and 9th Bn Welch Regiment); **23rd Division [Wikipedia factsheet] (Sir James M. Babington [Wikipedia biography]); *34th Division [Wikipedia factsheet] (Edward C. Ingouville-Williams [Wikipedia biography]—killed in action 22nd July)

XV Corps (Henry S. Horne [1st Baron Horne]1919 [Wikipedia biography]—9th July)

*7th Division ([Sir]1917: Herbert E. Watts [Wikipedia biography]—immediately below)
(including 2nd Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers); ***38th (Welsh) Division [see dedicated sub-thread from 1914 (19th September)]
(Sir Ivor Phillipps [Wikipedia biography]—5th July; then on a temporary basis on 9th July Watts [immediately above<=9th July]; then on 12th July (fresh from presiding over several of the Easter Rising courts-martial) Charles G. Blackader [Wikipedia biography]—12th July)

XIII Corps (Sir Walter N. Congreve, V.C. [Wikipedia biography])

***3rd Division [=1915 (25th September)] (Haldane [=27th March])

RESERVE (LATER FIFTH) ARMY (Gough [=1915 (25th September)]) Gough's reserve army had originally been conceived as a cavalry force capable of exploiting a German collapse, hopefully in the direction of Bapaume [map, etc.] It had therefore been promised ...

Indian Cavalry Corps

1st Indian Cavalry Division [Wikipedia factsheet] (Henry P. Leader [Wikipedia biography]; 2nd Indian Cavalry Division [Wikipedia factsheet] (George A. Cookson [no convenient biography])

However for several days Gough's headquarters has been serving as a centre of administration behind the lines, directing arriving divisions to their intended corps, and it will not become a fighting unit until 0700hr on 2nd July, when Gough has the survivors of VIII and X Corps transferred to him from Fourth Army, allowing Rawlinson to concentrate on his three southern corps.

SOUTHERN PIVOT - ELEMENTS OF FRENCH SIXTH ARMY (Émile Fayolle [Wikipedia biography])

XX Corps (Maurice Balfourier [Wikipedia biography])

*11th Division (Eugène F. G. Vuillenmot [Wikipedia biography]); *39th Division (Adolphe Guillaumat [Wikipedia biography])

Thirteen of these divisions - those marked * above - are deployed on the historic "first day of the Somme". Given an 18-mile-long front this is equivalent to one division every 2500 yards, that is to say, 7.2 men (and, by sunset, 1.8 casualties) every yard. Unlike earlier battles it has been decided to rotate, rest, and reinforce divisions before they have been too badly mauled, this being the French Army's tried and tested practice. A further eight divisions - those marked ** above - are then rotated into the
assault line within 24 hours as circumstances demand. The final six divisions - those marked *** above - will rotate on Day #3. Fourth Army's total head-count at this juncture is 519,324 men; and not a conscript among them (Middlebrook, 1971).


**ASIDE - DISAMBIGUATION:** Somewhat confusingly, the previous (and much mentioned during the battles of 1914) commander of Second Army was Karl von Bülow (<=1914 (4th August)) and Fritz von Below's cousin Otto von Below presently commands the Eighth Army on the Eastern Front.

In addition to the two XX Corps divisions listed above, the French Sixth Army also commits a further 11 divisions against Second Army south of the Somme [sub-thread continues at 1st July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1**ASIDE:** Gallows humour. Attributed to one Paul Scheytt, 109th Reserve Regiment (Middlebrook, 1971, p99). He was right: the Campaign will rack up more than a million casualties.

2**ASIDE:** Farrar-Hockley (1964) has it at 26,000 yards.

The Somme Campaign [V - Day #1 (The Mines)]: [Continued from preceding entry] The four-month-long Battle of the Somme begins with an offensive by the British Third and Fourth Armies on an 18-mile-long stretch of front north of the River Somme. The infantry assaults follow a seven-day artillery barrage (two days longer than foreseen because poor visibility had slowed the registration of targets) and are preceded at 0730 hr by the detonation of five large mines and half a dozen assorted smaller ones.

**ASIDE:** Readers are reminded that mines are not always sited underneath tactical obstacles. Lesser ones can be blown in No Man's Land simply to provide advanced cover.

The best known of the Day #1 mines are (from north to south): Beaumont-Hamel (Hawthorn Redoubt) [=next entry but two], La Boiselle (Y Sap) [=next entry but five], La Boiselle (Lochnagar) [ditto], Fricourt (Triple Tambour) [=next entry but six], and Mametz (Kasino Point) [=next entry but seven] [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

THE FOLLOWING ENTRY DESCRIBES THE EVENTS OF 1ST JULY IN THE THIRD ARMY SECTOR ALLOCATED TO D'OYLEY-SNOW'S VII CORPS

The Somme Campaign [VI - Day #1 (Gommecourt)]: [Continued from preceding entry] Counting from the north Gommecourt [maplink at 19th April] the first of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line. The defences at this point are more than usually strong, this being the most westerly point of German advance of the entire Western Front. The British objective here is not actually to capture the place but rather to launch a diversionary attack so as to provide a stable pivoting point for advances expected further south. The task has been allocated to (to the north of the salient) Montagu-Stuart-Wortley's 46th (North Midland) Division [=1915 (13th October)] and (to the south of the salient) Amyatt Hull's 56th (1st London) Division [Wikipedia factsheet], the idea being that the two divisions should meet up at 0900 hr behind Gommecourt, thus cutting it off. Both divisions "go over the top" at 0730 hr, and 46th Division on the left is immediately engaged by defensive machine-gun fire, both direct and in enfilade from the south ...

**ASIDE - ENFILADE:** When a line of troops is subjected to enemy fire from one of its flanks (rather than from the front) it is said to be "enfiladed" (the word comes from the French enfiler, to string out [literally, to "en-thread"], as in pearls on a thread). Enfilading fire is very efficient for the shooter because a number of targets can be in - or nearly in - their sights simultaneously (as in looking down a string of pearls). At Gommecourt the Germans had 46th Division in enfilade for the simple reason that the salient around the village (which was being deliberately by-passed, remember) looked out along the trench lines to the north.

As a result, few North Midlands make it as far as the German front-line trench, and those who do are soon killed, captured, or driven back. 56th Division on the right make markedly better progress, quickly overrunning a half-mile-long stretch of the German front-line trench and pushing forward to (their first objective) the support line. By 0900 hr the lead company has made it to the specified rendezvous point, only to find that it is alone ...

**ASIDE - 46TH VERSUS 56TH DIVISION:** Official reports will soon be criticising 46th Division for "lack of offensive spirit" and blaming the divisional commander for not being sufficiently frequently "among his men in the front lines". Montagu-Stuart-Wortley was duly relieved of his command on 5th July. D'Oyley-Snow [=29th June], the corps commander, was also criticised for having taken leave 10 days' leave in the run-up to the battle (Middlebrook, 1971). By contrast, 56th Division were the blue-eyed boys, thus ...
"The London Division was probably the best Territorial division in France at that time. Its battalions had seen much action yet still contained a high proportion of well-trained pre-war volunteers. The soldiers themselves were mostly well educated, intelligent men from London's commercial class and many would have become officers in other divisions" (ibid., p170).

Eventually, therefore, (being unable to maintain much of a stranglehold on its own,) 56th Division is forced to pull back its survivors, leaving zero territorial gain. The two divisions suffer 2455 and 4314 casualties, respectively. [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

THE FOLLOWING TWO ENTRIES DESCRIBE THE EVENTS OF 1ST JULY IN THE TWO FOURTH ARMY SECTORS ALLOCATED TO HUNTER-WESTON'S VIII CORPS

1916 [Saturday 1st July] The Somme Campaign [VII - Day #1 (Serre/Redan Ridge)]: [Continued from preceding entry] Counting from the north Serre-lès-Puisieux is the second of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line. There is no attack north of Serre, so the main effort is on the northern rise of the Redan Ridge south of the village [using the Serre maplink find a point midway between Serre and Beaumont-Hamel and the spine of the ridge is aligned to east and west beneath your feet]. The task of taking the ridge has been jointly allocated to (on the left) O’Gowan’s 31st Division and (on the right) the regulars of Lambton’s 4th Division, with the former aiming to swing left into Serre from the south and the latter aiming to swing right into Beaumont-Hamel [see next entry] from the north. The battle begins at 0728hr with the exploding of a number of small mines. Within 31st Division's allocated sector, that is to say, between the Redan Ridge and Serre, the attack is made by (on the left) 94th Brigade and (on the right) by 93rd Brigade. The division’s third brigade, 92nd Brigade, follows in support. The experience of 94th Brigade's Accrington Pals in the front wave may be taken as typical ...

****** "MOWN DOWN LIKE MEADOW GRASS" ******

CAMEO - 11/EAST LANCACS AT SERRE, 1ST JULY 1916: 94th Brigade is an "all-Pals" brigade, and includes 11th Bn ("Accrington Pals") East Lancashire Regiment. This battalion was raised in late 1914 [see the explanatory entry at 1914 (24th August)], recruiting exclusively from the town of Accrington, Lancashire, and its environs. Different towns across the industrial north of England (Scotland’s equivalents tended to be termed "City Battalions") raised different battalions, but Accrington's is the best known. The battalion's fate on 1st July was simplicity itself: some 720 friends and neighbours attacked at 0730hr, were immediately engaged by German machine-gun, artillery, and rifle fire, and by 0800hr had suffered 584 casualties. In the words of one eye-witness a single community's menfolk were "mown down like meadow grass".

RECOMMENDED READING - THE ACCRINGTON PALS WEBSITE: Andrew C. Jackson's tribute website contains much of interest - check it out.

Within 4th Division's allocated sector, that is to say, atop the Redan Ridge itself to the north of Beaumont-Hamel, the spearhead attack is made by 11th Brigade, with 12th Brigade offset rear-left and 10th Brigade offset rear-right. The first obstacle is a trench system known to the Germans as the Heidenkopf and to the British as "the Quadrilateral" ...

"This position jutted right out into Nomansland which was very narrow at that point. The Germans had previously decided that in the event of an attack it could not be held, and had left only one machine-gun crew [...] and some engineers to blow a demolition charge when the machine-gunners had to withdraw. Through a fault, the charge had exploded earlier than planned, killing both engineers and machine-gunners" (Middlebrook, 1971, p168)
ASIDE: Recent German sources claim (a) that there were four mines, (b) that they were out under Nomansland, and (c) that their detonation killed many in the British first wave.

CAMEO - 11TH BRIGADE AT THE QUADRILATERAL, 1ST JULY 1916: Although the Quadrilateral may well have been expendable it was well covered from the flanks and the support line. It was also subjected to repeated counter-attacks during the morning, with much hand-to-hand fighting and many a bombing duel. The assault battalions were (on the left) 1/6th ahead of 1/8th Bns Royal Warwickshire Regiment (both on temporary secondment from 48th (South Midland) Division), (in the centre) 1st Bn Rifle Brigade ahead of 1st Bn Somerset Light Infantry, and (on the right) 1st Bn East Lancashire Regiment ahead of 1st Bn Hampshire Regiment. The survivors of these six battalions, joined later by 10th Brigade’s 2nd Bn Seaforth Highlanders, managed to hold the Quadrilateral for the rest of the day, but losses to officers were high and included the Brigade commander Charles B. Prowse [no convenient biography] (1/Hants lost all its officers and so had no-one left to write up its War Diary). When the 1/6th RWR were allowed to withdraw after dark they numbered only 95 men out of 850 (and 70 of those were wounded). The Quadrilateral was ploughed over after the war but can be roughly located by looking out across the fields to the east from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s Serre Road No. 2 Cemetery [CWGC map, etc.].

The Quadrilateral will be the only one of VIII Corps’ objectives to be taken and held for any length of time, but on its own it has no military value to the British because it faces the wrong way, and as such will be abandoned overnight. The outcome in the Serre sector as a whole is therefore no sustainable advance at a cost to 31st and 4th Divisions of 3599 and 4692 casualties, respectively [sub-thread continues at next entry ...], [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

RESEARCH ISSUE - COULD IT HAVE BEEN DONE DIFFERENTLY: It is now more than a hundred years since we introduced the technical debate as to whether Britain's New Army would have been better off defaulting to the "rush-and-drop" tactics of the skirmish line rather than to the costly-but-controlled "chorus line" tactic used on the Somme [readers wishing to refresh their memory click here and scroll to 1799 (THE BIG THING ABOUT SKIRMISHING)]. At issue, it will be recalled, is whether the newly raised troops of the New Army (and, indeed, the now-watered-down ranks of the Old) yet possessed the battlefield skills to be trusted neither to go to ground nor simply to run away immediately they came under fire. Should they, or should they not, simply emulate the legions of old and be sent forward in highly visible, but tightly cohered, formations? Here is how this thinking made its way onto the battlefield on 1st July 1916. Firstly, the problem as perceived by the British high commanders ...

"... a very large part of the troops to be engaged are new troops with little experience, and amongst whom the standard of discipline, leadership, and tactical training of company commanders is not what obtained in our troops a year ago, and amongst whom, therefore, disorganisation will appear more quickly" (Plan of Attack, 19th April 1916; Appendices to the Official History, p77)1.

The solution was a detailed set of recommendations as to how a hundred thousand assault troops might be marched to the top of a hill with some hope of getting enough of them there in one piece to achieve something, thus (heavily abridged) ...

"The attack must aim at continuity and must be driven home without intermission, so that the attack gradually works forward till the endurance of the enemy is broken down. Every attacking unit must be given a limited and clearly defined objective, which it is to capture and consolidate at all costs [...] The conditions of every attack vary, however, and a special solution must be found for each individual problem. [...] The depth of the assaulting column depends on the distance of the objective, and on the opposition that has to be overcome in reaching it. Its strength must be calculated so as [...] to enable the objective to be held when gained. The distance apart of the lines will usually be regulated by the rate at which the successive lines can be formed up and moved forward over the parapet. The men in each line should be extended at two or three paces interval. In this connection [...] experience has shown that to
capture a hostile trench a single line of men has usually failed [...] and four or more lines have usually succeeded. [...] Officers and men in action will usually do what they have been practised to do [... however situations will constantly arise when there is no officer or non-commissioned officer present with groups of men, and the men must realise that, in such a case, one man must assume leadership on the spot and the remainder act under his control” (Supporting Memoranda, 8th May 1916; Appendices to the Official History, pp126-128)¹.

With all this in mind Sir William Robertson’s [9th June<>1st July (Nightfall)] official instructions on the “form of attack” to be adopted were as follows...

“...The assaulting troops must push forward at a steady pace in successive lines, each line adding fresh impetus to the preceding line. Although a steady pace [...] is recommended, occasions may arise where the rapid advance of some lightly equipped men on some particular part of the enemy’s defences may turn the scale. [...] All assaulting troops must advance irrespective of what the troops are doing on their flanks, but they must take proper steps to guard their exposed flanks [...]. Each line of assaulting troops must leave its trenches simultaneously and make the assault as one man” (Tactical Notes, May 1916; Appendices to the Official History, p134)¹.

¹Locate by browsing with keywords <ISBN 1845747305>

********** THE CAMERAS ROLL **********

1916 [Saturday 1st July] The Somme Campaign [VIII - Day #1 (Beaumont-Hamel/The Hawthorn Redoubt)]: [Continued from preceding entry] Counting from the north Beaumont-Hamel [map, etc.] is the third of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line (and the second allocated to VIII Corps). The Hawthorn Ridge Redoubt is a heavily prepared deep entrenchment on Hawthorn Ridge [much as the Redan Ridge above, but a mile further south], and the task of taking it, and Beaumont-Hamel village beyond it, has been allocated to De Lisle’s 29th Division. Again the infantry attack is preceded by the blowing of a mine (albeit here slightly earlier than elsewhere) ...

NESTED SUB-THREAD The (Silent) Cinema at War [TBA - A Familiar Image]: [Nested sub-thread continued from TBA] Malins’ [=8th May] newsreel camera is rolling at the moment that the 18-ton mine under the Hawthorn Redoubt is blown at 0720hr [see it go]. Here is how Malins himself will describe the occasion in his 1920 war memoirs "How I Filmed the War" ...

"...Time: 7.19 a.m. My hand grasped the handle of the camera. I set my teeth. My whole mind was concentrated upon my work. Another thirty seconds passed. I started turning the handle, two revolutions per second, no more, no less. I noticed how regular I was turning. (My object in exposing half a minute beforehand was to get the mine from the moment it broke ground.) I fixed my eyes on the Redoubt. Any second now. Surely it was time. [...] The horrible thought flashed through my mind that my film might run out before the mine blew. [...] Then, for all the world like a gigantic sponge, the earth rose in the air to the height of hundreds of feet. Higher and higher it rose [etc.] and from that second I was cold, cool, and calculating. I looked upon all that followed from the purely pictorial point of view, and even felt annoyed if a shell burst outside the range of my camera” (Malins, 1920, p94 online). [Nested sub-thread continues at TBA ...

Now no longer in any doubt as to the British intention, the waiting German artillery immediately opens up on the British assembly trenches, where 86th Brigade is about to advance through the still smoking rubble of the newly blown Hawthorn Crater [clearly visible on any satellite image of Beaumont-Hamel as a solid circle of trees 1600 feet west of the village centre] in a frontal attack on Beaumont-Hamel, and 87th Brigade is about to attack an area known
as "Y-Ravine" to the south of the village. 88th Brigade is a mile behind the British front line and will move forward as best it can into the trenches vacated.

CAMEO - 86TH BRIGADE AT HAWTHORN CRATER, 0730HR 1ST JULY 1916: Unfortunately for 86th Brigade the Germans facing them from behind Hawthorn Crater had fully ten minutes between the exploding of the mine and the attack proper to man their defences. As a result the four participating battalions spend an hour struggling forward against concentrated counter-fire to the crater lip, only to be forced back to their starting positions later in the day. The brigade as a whole returns 1865 casualties out of its initial 3601 headcount (52%).

CAMEO - 87TH BRIGADE AT Y-RAVINE, 0730HR 1ST JULY 1916: The two spearhead battalions in 87th Brigade's assault on the German line south of Beaumont-Hamel were (on the left) 2nd Bn South Wales Borderers [1st July<=1st August], and (on the right) 1st Bn King's Own Scottish Borderers [Wikipedia factsheet]. These and the two supporting battalions were systematically reduced to straggler status by defensive machine-gun and rifle fire. 2/SWB returned 446 casualties out of an initial 645 headcount (69%); 1/KOSB 570 out of 856 (67%).

Following the destruction of the two spearhead brigades it is decided to commit two of 88th Brigade's four battalions in a renewed attempt to take Y-Ravine ...

CAMEO - 88TH BRIGADE AT Y-RAVINE, 0915HR 1ST JULY 1916: The two battalions thus nominated were 1st Bn Royal Newfoundland Regiment [<=1915 (20th September)], commanded by Arthur L. Hadow [no convenient biography] and 1st Bn Essex Regiment [Wikipedia factsheet], commanded by Arthur C. Halahan [no convenient biography].

ASIDE: The Newfoundlanders may or may not have been spurred on by the fact that they were "on a promise", a society beauty back home having sworn to marry the first member of the battalion to win a Victoria Cross!

As it happened both battalions struggled to make their way forward to the jumping-off trench through the swell of wounded coming back down the communications trenches, and so failed to launch a coordinated attack. Here is one of the published histories of what happened then ...

"As soon as they appeared in the open the German machine-gunners spotted them and opened fire. No artillery bombardment kept the Germans' heads down; no other targets distracted them [...]. As the Newfoundlanders bunched together to get through the narrow gaps in [their own!] wire, the German machine-gunners found their best killing ground. Dead and wounded men soon blocked every gap, but those still not hit struggled on, having to walk over their comrades' bodies. [...] Those who survived to reach Nomansland continued towards the German trenches, but they had no chance [and were cut] down. [...] Only a handful of Newfoundlanders reached the German wire. There they were shot. The attack had lasted forty minutes" (Middlebrook, 1971, p189).

1/Essex followed at around 1050hr, but - though they took heavy early casualties - their greater regular army experience allowed them to go legitimately to ground while still a fighting force. Casualties for the two battalions are 684 out of 780 (88%) and 216 out of 841 (26%), respectively. The land over which this battle was fought was purchased in 1921 by the people of Newfoundland and is today's much visited Newfoundland Memorial Park [Wikipedia factsheet: YouTube virtual visit].

CAMEO - 2/MONS AT BEAUMONT-HAMEL, 1ST JULY: 2nd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment [<=23rd June] was the attached pioneer battalion for 29th Division as a whole, and as such provided small working parties for each of the assault battalions. 176 men (out of the 680 available) were thus distributed amongst - and advanced with - the 12 brigaded assault battalions, suffering comparable casualties (100 out of 176 (57%)).
Taking the sector as a whole, therefore, the day's outcome is the now familiar pattern of little gain for the loss of 5240 casualties - the second highest after 34th Division [see next entry but one] [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

THE FOLLOWING ENTRY DESCRIBES THE EVENTS OF 1ST JULY IN THE FOURTH ARMY SECTOR ALLOCATED TO MORLAND’S X CORPS

1916 [Saturday 1st July] The Somme Campaign [IX - Day #1 (Thiepval/The Schwaben and Leipzig Redoubts)]: [Continued from preceding entry] Counting from the north Thiepval [map, etc.] is the fourth of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line.

GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE: Geographically speaking, Thiepval is the northernmost hilltop village on the 250-foot-high Pozières-Bazentin Ridge, a 10-mile-long by 2-mile-wide hogsback which lies across the main Albert-Papaume highway with its long axis running west-north-west to east-south-east. For most of its length the Germans had their third line of defence on its crest, but at Thiepval the German firing line was at the top of the hill and the British firing line skirted Thiepval Wood at the bottom of the hill. From here the front ran southward for a mile until it was level with the riverside village of Authuille [map, etc.], whereupon it started to bulge eastward into Nab Valley, a short horse-shoe shaped valley overlooked on three sides. Although overlooked, the wooded valley floor - Authuille Wood - provided the British with some much-needed cover. Further down the hogsback, more or less in a straight line, are the villages of Pozières, Contalmaison, Bazentin-le-Petit, Bazentin-le-Grand, Longueval, Ginchy, and Guilmont.

The Schwaben Redoubt [Wikipedia factsheet] is a large triangular trench and dug-out system 500 yards north of Thiepval village, and the task of taking it has been allocated to Nugent’s 36th (Ulster) Division. Three brigades are available for the assault, namely (on the left) 108th Brigade and (on the right) 109th Brigade), with 107th Brigade in reserve.

CAMEO - 109TH BRIGADE AT THIEPVAL, 1ST JULY 1916: The attack in the direction of the Schwaben Redoubt was spearheaded by (on the left) 10th and (on the right) 9th Bns Royal Inniskilling Regiment, with 14th Bn Royal Irish Rifles and 11th Bn Royal Inniskilling Regiment in support. The attack began well, thanks to a quick rush from part-way into Nomansland catching the German front line fighters in their dug-outs. The German firing trench and then the redoubt itself both fell in minutes, with many Germans taken prisoner-of-war. The Brigade then fought its way forward, reaching the support line at around 1000hr; making such good progress, indeed, that they started to take casualties from the tail end of their own pre-planned artillery barrage. By now, however, it was becoming apparent that neither of the flanking attacks had made any progress and after a day holding out against heavy counter-attacks the Brigade was ordered to fall back to its starting positions under cover of darkness. The site of the Schwaben Redoubt was chosen for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s Mill Road Cemetery [CWGC factsheet (note how the headstones had to be set flat for safety’s sake, so unstable was the ground at this point)] and the 1921 Ulster Memorial Tower [Wikipedia factsheet], and, as such, is regularly visited by modern battlefield tours.

CAMEO - 3/MONS AT THIEPVAL, 1ST JULY: 3rd Bn Monmouthshire Regiment [1st July <= 1st August] was the resident pioneer battalion for Perceval’s 49th (West Riding) Division, presently held in X Corps reserve. However elements of it had been sent forward to assist the Ulstermen, and took casualties accordingly.

The Leipzig Redoubt [Wikipedia factsheet] is a large heavily fortified salient on the hilltop a mile south of Thiepval village, and the task of taking it has been allocated to Rycroft’s 32nd Division. Three brigades are available for the assault, namely (on the left, attacking the west-facing aspect of the redoubt) 96th Brigade and (on the right, attacking its south-facing aspect) 97th Brigade, with 14th Brigade in reserve.
The western attack on the Leipzig Salient was spearheaded by 16th Bn Northumberland Fusiliers and 2nd Bn Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, with 15th and 16th Bns Lancashire Fusiliers (respectively the 1st and 2nd "Salford Pals") in support. All battalions suffer devastating casualties and the attack soon grinds to a halt. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Thiepval Memorial now towers over the valley at this point.

Under the overall command of James B. Jardine [Wikipedia biography] the southern attack on the Leipzig Salient was spearheaded by (on the left) 16th Bn Highland Light Infantry and (on the right, opposite the "nose" of the salient) 17th Bn Highland Light Infantry, with 2nd Bn King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and 11th Bn Border Regiment in support. 14th Brigade gives supporting fire from in front of Authuille Wood further to the right. Again all battalions suffer heavy casualties and this attack, too, soon grinds to a halt.

The day's outcome is a permanent advance of zero yards at the cost of 5104 36th Division casualties and 3949 32nd Division casualties. [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

THE FOLLOWING ENTRY DESCRIBES THE EVENTS OF 1ST JULY IN THE FOURTH ARMY SECTOR ALLOCATED TO PULTENEY'S III CORPS

1916 [Saturday 1st July] The Somme Campaign [X - Day #1 (Ovillers/La Boiselle)]: [Continued from preceding entry] Counting from the north Ovillers [map, etc.] is the fifth, and La Boiselle [map, etc.] the sixth, of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line. Between them, running diagonally from south-west to north-east, is the main highway between Albert and Bapaume [the modern D929]. The task of taking these villages has been allocated to Hudson's 8th Division and Ingouville-Williams' 34th Division, respectively. 8th Division's attack at Ovillers is made by the division's three brigade's in line abreast, 70th Brigade on the left, 25th in the centre, and 23rd on the right.

70th Brigade begins the battle south of the Leipzig Salient, attacking along the southern slope of Nab Valley from Authuille Wood. The Brigade's objectives are the first and second German lines at this point, thereby threatening Pozières [map, etc.] a mile and a half behind the lines. The attack is spearheaded by (on the left) 8th Bn York and Lancaster Regiment and (on the right) 8th Bn King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, with 11th Bn Sherwood Foresters and 9th Bn York and Lancaster Regiment in support. The lead battalions get half way across Nomansland only to be pinned down by well-directed German machine-gun and artillery fire.

It will subsequently emerge that the deadly efficiency of the German defensive fire may well have been due to a Moritz listening post ...

ASIDE: For more on the listening post war see the entries at 1915 (30th July) and 1915 (22nd September).

... having gratefully taken dictation of the entire British battle plan¹ for this sector the previous day. Here is how the intelligence officer Charles E. Montague [Wikipedia biography> 1924] will subsequently explain this fatal lapse in security ...

"When the war opened the Germans had good apparatus for telephonic eavesdropping. We had, as usual, nothing to speak of. [...] At the instant fixed for the attack our front at the spot was smothered under a bombardment which left us with no men to make it. A few days later, when we took Ovillers, we found the piece of paper on which the man with the German 'listening set' had put down, word for word, our orders for the first assault" (Disenchantment, 1924, p108).
34th Division's attack is on a mile-wide front extending from north of the aforementioned Albert-Bapaume highway, past La Boiselle itself, and then south-eastward to "Sausage Valley" beyond. The attack on the left is made by 102nd (Tyneside Scottish) Brigade, and that on the right by 101st Brigade. The division's third brigade, 103rd (Tyneside Irish) Brigade, follows in support, to the beat of a drum. As at Beaumont-Hamel the infantry attack is preceded by the blowing of mines at 0728hr, specifically at Y Sap (17 tons of Ammonal) and - the biggest of the day - Lochnagar (26 tons of Ammonal).

********** "IS IT A DRUG OR AN EXPLOSIVE?"1 **********

ASIDE - AMMONAL: [Readers unfamiliar with the notion of brisance should pre-read the entry at 1832
(ASIDE)] Ammonal is a low-brisance/high-push mixture of Ammonium Nitrate and powdered Aluminium. The nitrate contains spare oxygen atoms and the Aluminium burns in oxygen at high temperature. The nitrate percentage varies from 65% up to 95% according to need, and other additives are possible. The composition of mining Ammonal was typically 65:17, supplemented by 15% T.N.T. and 3% charcoal (mainly to absorb moisture contamination). It looked like salmon past, smelled like marzipan, "and, when it went off, sounded like the Day of Judgement" (Robert Graves, 1929, p161).

1Ammonal had been a mining explosive prior to its first use at Ypres the previous year [{<=1915 (19th July)}]. The above question was reportedly asked by a puzzled quartermaster when asked for two tons of what he had been informed was a sexual bromide (Bridgland and Morgan, 2003, p143).

All three brigades are simultaneously engaged by machine-gun and artillery, suffering heavy casualties, nevertheless by 0800hr the depleted battalions have penetrated up to 500 yards either side of the village2, where they spend the rest of the morning fighting off German counter-attacks.

CAMEO - 101ST BRIGADE AT LA BOISELLE, 1ST JULY 1916: The spearhead battalions south of the Albert-Bapaume road are 15th and 16th Bns Royal Scots, with 10th Bn (Grimsby Chums) Lincolnshire Regiment and 11th Bn Suffolk Regiment in support. The deepest penetration is along Sausage Valley, where a handful of the Grimsby Chums, commanded by Harold P. Hendin [no convenient biography], find themselves cut off behind enemy lines ...

"South of La Boiselle, the Grimsby Chums managed to beat the Germans to the Lochnagar crater. They lined the lip nearest to the Germans and consolidated this important foothold in the German line. Gradually, wounded and lost men from many units found their way in from the naked expanse of Sausage Valley and took shelter in the crater. [...]" 2nd Lieut. H. P. Hendin was actually the only officer of the 10th Lincolns to get into the enemy trenches; he reached their third line with five men and hung on there. He beat off several counter-attacks with his small party and other men he had gathered together" (Middlebrook, 1971, p135/p144; the nested quotation is from the war diary kept by the battalion's adjutant Walter A. Vignoles [no convenient biography]).

Taking the sector as a whole, therefore, the day's outcome is no permanent gain, despite 8th Division suffering 5400 casualties (including six of its 12 lieutenant-colonels), and 34th Division 6380 (including seven of its 12 lieutenant-colonels and one of its three brigadiers), the heaviest of any division on the day by more than a thousand [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1ASIDE: Farrar-Hockley (1964) tells it slightly differently, referring not to intercepted orders but to "the tail end of Rawlinson's message to all ranks before the attack" (p141). Whatever the truth, the German response was more than adequate.
The Somme Campaign [XI - Day #1 (Fricourt)]: Counting from the north Fricourt is the seventh of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line.

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE:** As previously noted, Fricourt was the last village-bastion on the generally north-south run of the Western Front north of the Somme. A mile south of the village the trenches curved around to the south-east toward Bois Français. The attack on Fricourt has been allocated to Campbell's 21st Division, whose advance is ushered in at 0728hr by the detonation of three mines - known as the Triple Tambour - in the already well-mined approaches to Fricourt village (in fact one of these may well have misfired). The division's attack is then made by (on the left) 64th Brigade, (in the centre) 63rd Brigade, and (on the right, loaned in from Pilcher's 17th (Northern) Division) 50th Brigade. The division's third brigade, 62nd, follows in support. It is also convenient to treat 7th Division's 22nd Brigade's attack on the far right at Bois Français as part of the attack at Fricourt.

**CAMEO - 64TH, 63RD, AND 62ND BRIGADE NORTH OF FRICOURT, 1ST JULY 1916:** 64th Brigade's attack on the left north of Fricourt was spearheaded by 9th and 10th Bns King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, with 15th Bn Durham Light Infantry and 1st Bn East Yorkshire Regiment in support. The assault battalions had taken up position in Nomansland prior to zero hour and - the wire at this point having been efficiently cut - quickly overran the German firing trench. However upon reaching the Fricourt-Contalmaison road (= the modern D147, north of the village) they were forced to dig in because the ongoing disaster to 34th Division (= preceding entry) further north had presented them with an unguarded left flank. 63rd Brigade's attack on the right north of Fricourt was spearheaded by 8th Bn Somerset Light Infantry and 4th Bn Middlesex Regiment, with 8th Bn Lincolnshire Regiment and 10th Bn York and Lancaster Regiment. The two assault battalions faced harder going than on their left, and were forced back into their jumping-off trenches to regroup. The full brigade then tried again, and by late morning, despite heavy casualties, had taken station north of the village, to the right of 64th Brigade. 62nd Brigade was duly sent in to help consolidate the ground gained.

**CAMEO - 50TH BRIGADE AT FRICOURT, 1ST JULY 1916:** The attack on Fricourt village was spearheaded by 10th Bn West Yorkshire Regiment and 7th Bn Yorkshire Regiment.
Regiment (the Green Howards), with 7th Bn East Yorkshire Regiment and 6th Bn East Dorsetshire Regiment in support. One of 10/W. Yorks' officers Philip Howe [no convenient biography but see https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/1986588] will survive the war and until his death in 1986 will contribute to many of the post-war histories. Leading his platoon he crossed three unmanned German trenches to "Lonely Trench", his allocated objective on the north-eastern outskirts of Fricourt. Here he was joined by a wounded fellow officer and the remnants of a second platoon, making 22 men in all. Of the rest of the battalion there was no sign. What had happened, he later learned, was that the rest of the battalion had got past the German firing trench with ease because the defenders were still down in their dug-outs. These then came up behind them while they were half-way across to the support trench, catching them in a murderous cross-fire. At 710 casualties out of 750 or so, 10/W. Yorks' losses were the highest of any battalion on 1st July (and "probably" (Middlebrook, 1971, p268) for the war as a whole). Howe's party held out until relieved by 63rd Brigade early in the afternoon.

**CAMEO - 22ND BRIGADE AT BOIS FRANÇAIS, 1ST JULY 1916:** 22nd Brigade's attack east of Fricourt was spearheaded by 20th Bn Manchester Regiment and part of 1st Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers [1st July<=1st August] (Sassoon's [25th May<=4th July] unit), with the rest of 1/RWF, 2nd Bn Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and 2nd Bn Royal Irish Regiment in support. From the outset the assault companies took heavy casualties from enfilading fire machine-gun fire, and eventually the attack is abandoned for the day.

The day's outcome in this sector is thus a significant dent in the German defences north of Fricourt, but stalemate at the village itself. 21st Division and 17th Division's 50th Brigade will record 4256 and 1155 casualties on the day, respectively [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 1st July] **The Somme Campaign [XII - Day #1 (Mametz/Mansell Copse/Danzig Alley)]:** [Continued from preceding entry] Counting from the north Mametz [map, etc.] is the eighth of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line (and the second allocated to XV Corps).

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE:** [Continued from preceding entry] ... the front then ran eastward to pass between the village of Mametz and Mansell Copse [using the Mametz maplink (immediately above), Mansell Copse is the small rectangular wood on the D938 a mile to the south of the village centre] to a stretch of firing line known as Bulgar Trench [east-north-eastward from Mansell Copse to the farmland marked as Vallée de Carnoy on Google maps]. Half a mile further north Danzig Alley [roughly the line of the D64] was a major support line trench system running east-north-eastward out of Mametz toward Montauban [=next entry], and is nowadays the site of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Danzig Alley Cemetery [CWGC map, etc.]. Further north again Bunny Trench and Fritz Trench converged to form a north-pointing triangle with Danzig Alley as its base [leave Mametz by its only north-bound road and when that road forks after 600 yards turn and hold your arms 45 degrees either side of your line of sight; your right arm will then be pointing down Bunny Trench and your left down Fritz Trench].

The task of taking Mametz has been allocated to Watts' 7th Division (presently over-strength at four brigades rather than the usual three), whose advance is assisted at selected points by Russian saps [roofed trenches dug in secret] giving cover out into Nomansland. The division's attack is made by (on the left) 22nd Brigade, (in the centre, facing the village itself) 20th Brigade, and (on the right, hoping to push through to Mametz Wood) 91st Brigade. 21st Brigade hovers in support.

**CAMEO - 22ND BRIGADE AT BOIS FRANÇAIS, 1ST JULY 1916:** 22nd Brigade's attack at Bois Français has already been dealt with as part of the operations at Fricourt [=preceding entry].

********** "THE DEVONSHIRES HELD THIS TRENCH" **********

**CAMEO - 20TH BRIGADE AT MANSELL COPSE, 1ST JULY 1916:** 20th Brigade's frontal attack at Mametz was spearheaded by 9th Bn Devonshire Regiment and 2nd Bn Gordon Highlanders, with 8th Bn Devonshire Regiment and 2nd Bn Border Regiment
in reserve. 9/Devons were immediately caught in the open by a cleverly concealed machine-gun nest on the perimeter of the village cemetery, breaking their coherence and diverting the line of advance round to the north-west, where it made some progress in behind the German defenders at Bois Français. The Gordon Highlanders also made progress in the eastern approaches to the village, working alongside the left flank of 91st Brigade. On 4th July the surviving Devons laid out as many of their dead as they could recover - 160 in all, including - true to premonition - the aforementioned William Hodgson - in one of their jumping-off trenches and then collapsed it on top of them to create a mass grave. This they then topped with a panel reading: "THE DEVONSHIRES HELD THIS TRENCH. THE DEVONSHIRES HOLD IT STILL". The site was later re-laid as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Devonshire Cemetery [CWGC map, etc.]. The nearby Gordon Cemetery [CWGC map, etc.] holds the remains of 99 of the Gordon Highlanders.

**CAMEO - 91ST BRIGADE AT BULGAR TRENCH/DANZIG ALLEY, 1ST JULY 1916**: 91st Brigade's attack on Bulgar Trench was spearheaded by 22nd Bn Manchester Regiment and 1st Bn South Staffordshire Regiment, with 21st Bn Manchester Regiment and 2nd Bn Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment in reserve. By 0800hr they had overrun the German defences on the outskirts of Mametz village. The support battalions then followed them forward at 0930hr and by mid-afternoon had successfully taken both the village and Danzig Alley. The rest of the day was then spent clearing and consolidating the triangular system north of the village where Bunny Alley and Fritz Trench converged.

The day's outcome for the division as a whole is an advance of a mile or so on the right and the capture of Mametz village. Moreover the defenders of Fricourt/Bois Français, being now by-passed on both sides, will abandon their positions overnight 1st/2nd July. 7th Division will record 3380 casualties on the day [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

**THE FOLLOWING ENTRY DESCRIBES THE EVENTS OF 1ST JULY IN THE FOURTH ARMY SECTOR ALLOCATED TO CONGREVE'S XIII CORPS**

1916 [Saturday 1st July] The Somme Campaign [XIII - Day #1 (Montauban-de-Picardie)]: Counting from the north Montauban-de-Picardie [maplink at 19th April] is the ninth (and last) of the nine German fortified villages on or just behind the 18-mile-long German front line.

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE**: Leaving Bulgar Trench [<=preceding entry] the front ran eastward past a strongpoint at Kasino Point [find Carnoy map, etc., then follow the Grande Rue half a mile northward out of the village whereupon Kasino Point would have been in the fields to your left] to a stretch of firing line known as Breslau Trench [as for Kasino Point, but look right instead of left]. After half a mile Breslau Trench turned to the south-east and became Silesia Trench [from the top of the long than wood now marked as La Longue Haur down not quite as far as the northern tip of Maricourt Wood (by which time you have crossed into the French sector)]. Half a mile north of Kasino Point was the one-mile-long Pommiers Trench and its supporting Redoubt [again use the Mametz maplink; the Pommiers Redoubt would have been just south of the D64 three-quarters of a mile to the east of the village centre]. From the Pommiers Redoubt a long communication trench known as Montauban Alley ran east-north-eastward to the northern outskirts of Montauban itself. Half-way between Silesia Trench and the village was Glatz Redoubt [come south out of Montauban on the road to Maricourt, stop after 500 yards, and Glatz Redoubt would have been off in the field to your left]. From Glatz Redoubt Dublin Trench ran off toward the south-east, 500 yards east of Montauban [and clearly visible on Google Maps] is Bernafay Wood, and half-way between the south-western corner of this wood and Dublin Trench was the Briqueterie, the ruins of which can still be seen from the road [pop-up marker on D197 300 yards south of cross-roads].

The task of taking Montauban has been allocated to (on the left) Maxse's 18th (Eastern) Division and (on the right) Shea's 30th Division. Within 18th Division's sector the attack is made by (on the left) 54th Brigade, (in the centre) 53rd Brigade, and (on the right) 55th Brigade.
CAMEO - 54TH AND 53RD BRIGADES AT KASINO POINT, POMMIERS TRENCH AND REDOUTT, AND MONTAUBAN ALLEY (WEST), 1ST JULY 1916: 54th Brigade's attack at Kasino Point was spearheaded by 11th Bn Royal Fusiliers and 7th Bn Bedfordshire Regiment, with 6th Bn Northamptonshire Regiment and 12th Bn Middlesex Regiment in support.

RECOMMENDED READING: 7/BEDS' battalion diary is online, if interested.

To their right 53rd Brigade's attack on the western end of Breslau Trench was spearheaded by 6th Bn Royal Berkshire Regiment and 10th Bn Essex Regiment, with 8th Bn Norfolk Regiment and 8th Bn Suffolk Regiment in support. The mine at Kasino Point was detonated several minutes late, inflicting casualties on attackers and defenders alike. The assault battalions then fought their way forward toward Pommiers Trench, taking it, and Maple Trench beyond it, and the redoubt itself, by mid-morning. During the afternoon the attack continued as far as the western extreme of Montauban Alley, which was duly taken and consolidated.

CAMEO - 55TH BRIGADE AT BRESLAU TRENCH AND MONTAUBAN ALLEY (CENTRE), 1ST JULY 1916: 55th Brigade's attack against the Breslau Trench system was delivered by 7th Bn Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment and 8th Bn East Surrey Regiment, with 7th Bn (The Buffs) East Kent Regiment and 7th Bn (Queen's Own) Royal West Kent Regiment in support. The going was particularly hard in the maze of trenches known (not inappropriately) as "the Warren". One of 8/E. SURREYS' company commanders, Wilfred P. Nevill [Wikipedia biography=dies this day], had purchased four footballs - one for each of his platoons - when last on leave, and now offered a prize to whichever platoon could kick their ball as far as the German parapet (Middlebrook, 1971). Nevill kicked off, but his death prevented there being any awards ceremony (he is buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Carnoy Cemetery [CWGC map, etc.]). By 1715hr the brigade had crossed the Mametz-Montauban road [= the modern D64] just outside Montauban, whereupon it proceeded to clear the central section of Montauban Alley.

Within 30th Division's sector the attack is made by (on the left) 21st Brigade and (on the right) 89th Brigade, with 90th Brigade in support.

CAMEO - 21ST BRIGADE AT SILESIA TRENCH (WEST) AND GLATZ REDOUTT, 1ST JULY 1916: 21st Brigade's attack at the western end of Silesia Trench was spearheaded by 18th Bn King's Liverpool Regiment and 19th Bn Manchester Regiment, with 2nd Bn Yorkshire Regiment and 2nd Bn Wiltshire Regiment in support. The attack met light resistance (many of the defenders having been caught in their dug-outs) and by 0830hr had penetrated as far as the Glatz Redoubt.

CAMEO - 89TH BRIGADE AT SILESIA TRENCH (EAST), DUBLIN TRENCH, AND THE BRIQUETERIE, 1ST JULY 1916: 89th Brigade's attack at the eastern end of Silesia Trench was spearheaded by 20th and 17th Bns King's Liverpool Regiment, with 19th Bn King's Liverpool Regiment and 2nd Bn Bedfordshire Regiment in support. The attack met light resistance in its advance to Dublin Trench (the eastern end of this trench fell to the French 39th Division at around the same time). In the afternoon sufficient support was brought up to allow 20/King's to detach its D-Company for a successful attack on the Briqueterie Redoubt, which duly fell at 1235hr. The rest of the day was spent consolidating on Dublin Trench as a perimeter.

CAMEO - 90TH BRIGADE AT MONTAUBAN AND MONTAUBAN ALLEY (EAST), 1ST JULY 1916: 90th Brigade advanced out of La Longue Haie in the wake of, and then (in textbook fashion) passed through, 21st Brigade. Their objective was the village of Montauban itself, and the attack was spearheaded by 16th and 17th Bns Manchester Regiment, with 18th Bn Manchester Regiment and 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers in support. By 1005hr they had fought their way into Montauban village. They then spent the rest of the day clearing and consolidating along Montauban Alley, just north of the village.

The day's outcome in this sector is thus an impressive one- to two-mile sector-wide advance, complete with the capture of Montauban village. 30th Division and 18th
1916  [Saturday 1st July] The Somme Campaign [XIV - Day #1 (At Nightfall)]: [Continued from preceding entry] The situation as night falls after the first day of fighting on the Somme may be summarised as follows ...

1. From Gommecourt down to Bois Français there has been no gain, save for the salient created immediately north of Fricourt.

2. After Bois Français all objectives have been taken, including the villages of Mametz and Montauban and the Pommiers and Briqueterie redoubts.

3. From Montauban to Curlu the French XX Corps has also advanced between one and two miles.

4. Many of the day's wounded are still out in Nomansland, hidden in undergrowth or craters. The most serious cases will generally bleed to death or die of thirst over the ensuing 72 hours. Others are lying low awaiting nightfall and will then either make their own way back to their lines or be recovered by patrols.

5. Many more wounded are backed up at Casualty Clearing Stations, for there has been a major SNAFU in the number of ambulance trains available to transport them back to the (far better equipped) Base Hospitals.

6. The 40-or-so assault brigades are largely spent forces, and are due to be rotated out of the line as soon as the reserve divisions can get up to replace them [details in the next entry].

7. Everywhere is unrelenting confusion, of the sort seen in any large organisation which has suddenly been given far too many things to do (and all of them urgent), but with too few hands and minds to do them with (many of them "covering" for dead/wounded absentees, and all of them exhausted). Nobody knows what is to happen next, leaving the artillery with little idea of its targeting priorities. Even more worryingly G.H.Q. as yet has no idea of - and consistently under-estimates - the body count.

Fortunately the divisional rotations have been pre-planned and go ahead automatically during the night 1st/2nd July, as follows ...

At Gommecourt and Serre major operations are ceased. The Quadrilateral is abandoned in the early hours of 2nd July, the survivors of its five-battalion garrison numbering only 78.

At Beaumont-Hamel De Lisle's 29th Division is reorganised in situ.

At Thiepval Nugent's 36th (Ulster) Division is replaced by Percival's 49th (West Riding) Division and Rycroft's 32nd Division is replaced by Bainbridge's 25th Division.

At Ovillers/La Boiselle Hudson's 8th Division is replaced by Scott's 12th (Eastern) Division. Ingouville-Williams' 34th Division remains in the line but has to be bolstered by elements of Bridges' 19th (Western) Division.

At Fricourt Campbell's 21st Division remains in the line but has to be bolstered by elements of Pitcher's 17th (Northern) Division.

At Mametz Watts' 7th Division remains in the line.

At Montauban-de-Picardie sector Maxse's 18th (Eastern) Division and Shea's 30th Division remain in the line, reinforced by advanced elements of Furse's 9th (Scottish) Division.
Finally at 2200hr Sir William Robertson [1st July (Serre)<=5th July] approves a number of objectives where he feels the momentum of the offensive might profitably be maintained the following day. High on his list of priorities are Ovillers/La Boiselle, Fricourt, Contalmaison [map, etc.], and the Pozieres-Bazentin Ridge [<=1st July (Thiepval)] "in the direction of Longueval [map, etc.]". The rest of the night accordingly sees a lot of moving into position [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

**RESEARCH ISSUE - THE CRITICAL MISCALCULATION:** In the entry at 1st July (Serre) we gave several extracts from G.H.Q.’s detailed planning documents. These documents - Appendices 16 to 18 of the source cited - run to some 30,000 words, and cover everything from preliminary intelligence gathering to how to consolidate a village or a wood once it has been taken. Time and again they emphasise the concept of the continuous attack, that is to say, of wave following wave in a "continuous forward flow" (p126). We also drew attention to G.H.Q.’s rule of thumb that a four-wave assault would normally suffice. There were even diagrams (p135) of how to break a four-company battalion down into four-wave or eight-wave structures. And yet nowhere had these preparations come anywhere close to working against intact machine-gun nests.

1916 [Sunday 2nd-3rd July] **The Somme Campaign [XV - Days #2 to #3 (All Sectors, North to South)]:** [Continued from preceding entry] The following local actions take place on 2nd/3rd July ...

In the Ovillers sector Scott’s 12th (Eastern) Division launches a full-scale assault on 3rd July, but is driven back by a strong German counter-attack, losing some 2400 men on the day.

In the La Boiselle sector Bridges’ 19th (Western) Division launches a single-brigade assault which succeeds in forcing its way through the western half of the village. Ingouville-Williams’ 34th Division is replaced by Babington’s 23rd Division overnight 2nd/3rd July.

In the Fricourt sector the German defenders pull out most of their garrison during the night 1st/2nd July, having judged it a lost cause. Pilcher’s 17th (Northern) Division then successfully dislodges the rear-guard during 2nd July.

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE:** The capture of Fricourt moved the L-angle of the old front line a mile to the east. All Germans east of Fricourt were now automatically also north of Bunny Trench at Mametz. The key objective remained the Pozieres-Bazentin Ridge [<=1st July (Thiepval)], but in front of the ridge were strong defensive positions in and around Contalmaison [maplink at 1st July (Nightfall)] and Mametz Wood [map, etc.]. The latter, indeed, was about to become, in the words of one brigadier, Haig’s "springboard" for a breakthrough toward Bapaume (Hughes, 1982/1990, p91). Five smaller woods needed to be cleared before either of the larger objectives could be attempted. The first four of these - Bottom Wood, Shelter Wood, Quadrangle Wood, and Acid Drop Copse - were to the west/south-west of Mametz Wood [find Vallée de la Fournaise and Bottom Wood is the long thin wood running off to the west; Shelter Wood is the rectangular wood in the field above it; Quadrangle Wood is the small stand of trees on the opposite side of the (unnumbered) Contalmaison-Mametz road 400 yards north of the eastern end of Bottom Wood; and Acid Drop Copse is the even smaller stand on the right half a mile further up the road], and the fifth - Caterpillar Wood - was to the south-east [ditto, but start at the Vallée du Bois and look for the caterpillar-shaped stand of trees running off to the south-east]. Between Bottom Wood and Caterpillar Wood White Trench ran along "Fusilier Ridge" - the southern rim of Vallée Wagnon [ditto, clearly marked]. Queen’s Nullah was the codename for Vallée de la Fournaise [ditto, clearly marked], immediately behind Fusilier Ridge at its western end.

In the Mametz sector Watts’ 7th Division’s 91st Brigade pushes forward on 2nd July to consolidate on the high ground at White Trench, using the dead ground at Queen's Nullah as a forward command post. The following day 17th Division takes Bottom Wood and 21st Division takes Shelter Wood. 21st Division will be rotated out overnight 3rd/4th July.
In the Montauban-de-Picardie sector Furse's 9th (Scottish) Division moves forward through Shep's 30th Division and attacks Bernafay Wood [maplink at 1st July (Montauban)] at 2100hr 3rd July, capturing it with only six casualties. Eyes now turn toward the next obstacle, namely Trones Wood [half a mile further east]. 30th Division will be rotated out overnight 2nd/3rd July.

Planning for a coordinated attack on Contalmaison, Mametz Wood, and Trones Wood now begins in earnest [sub-thread continues at 4th July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Tuesday 4th July] Economics, Social Confrontation, and War [II - America Against Preparedness (Activism in Seattle)]: [Continued from 28th May] After three months of beatings and the like at the hands of the "deputies" - the local strike-breakers [<=28th May] - Seattle's activists host "an historic convocation of loggers" (O'Connor, 1964, p31) on behalf of the I.W.W. [= Industrial Workers of the World]. One James Rowan [no convenient biography but see the Wikipedia factsheet for the I.W.W.] is brought in from Chicago to speak, only to be promptly jailed for his impertinence [sub-thread continues at 22nd July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 AMERICAN NEUTRALITY] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1916 [Tuesday 4th July] The Somme Campaign [XVI - Sassoon at Mametz Wood]: [Continued from 3rd July] [Readers unfamiliar with the Boys' Own phenomenon in late Victorian Britain should pre-read the entry at 1879 (19th January)] During 7th Division's ongoing effort against Mametz Wood [<=2nd July] Sassoon [1st July (Fricourt)<=>5th July] is involved in a 1st Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers [1st July<=>5th July] attack on The Quadrangle [maplink at 2nd July].

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE:** The aforementioned Quadrangle Wood [<=2nd July] stood in the middle of a much larger trench system known as "The Quadrangle", which extended from Contalmaison [maplink at 1st July (Nightfall)] in the north-west to Mametz Wood in the east and Bottom Wood to the south. Quadrangle Trench/Kaisergraben [= Kaiser Trench] was the longest single trench, running southward out of Contalmaison before turning eastward after half a mile and making its way across to the outer, western, screen of Mametz Wood at La Valléette (these trees mark the track of a light railway, now long gone). The fortification line then continued across the railway toward the main body of said wood, but this final section was now code-named Wood Trench. Quadrangle Support/Wood Support ran broadly parallel to Quadrangle Trench/Wood Trench, but a quarter of a mile further north. The eastern tails of Wood Support and Wood Trench are then T-junctioned into Strip Trench, a north-south trench running down the treeline all the way to the lane across the south of the wood, and capable therefore of enfilading any advance into the Quadrangle. Pearl Alley was a two-mile-long communication trench which joined Quadrangle Trench just south of Contalmaison and the rang diagonally off to the north-east until it reached Bazentin-le-Petit Wood [maplink at 14th July] Quadrangle Alley was a 600-yard-long communication trench running from Quadrangle Trench as it passed across the top of Bottom Wood to the railway line where it disappeared into Mametz Wood at its mid-left angle.

At one point in this engagement Sassoon finds himself in Wood Trench together with fellow fusiliers Vivian F. Newton [no convenient biography] and James? Gibson [no convenient biography], where - very much in harm's way - he performs with Boys' Own daring (and no little Boys' Own immortality) [Sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

**RESEARCH ISSUE - THE EXHILARATION OF COMBAT:** Sassoon incorporates these experiences into his "Memoirs of an Infantry Officer" (Sassoon, 1930 [=1930]), dramatising Newton as the character "Fernby" and Gibson as "Kendle". His account also brings out the exhilaration of combat, thus ... "Being in an exploring frame of mind, I took a bag of bombs and crawled another sixty or seventy yards with Kendle close behind me. [...] We stared across at [Mametz Wood]. From the other side of the valley came an occasional rifle-shot, and a helmet bobbed up for a moment. Kendle remarked that from that point anyone could see into
the whole of our trench on the slope behind us. I said we must have our strong post here and told him to go back for the bombers and a Lewis gun. I felt adventurous and it seemed as if Kendle and I were having great fun together. Kendle thought so too. The helmet bobbed up again. ‘I’ll just have a shot at him,’ he said, wriggling away from the crumbling bank which gave us cover. At this moment Fernby appeared with two men and a Lewis gun. Kendle was half kneeling against some broken ground; I remember seeing him push his tin hat back from his forehead and then raise himself a few inches to take aim. After firing once he looked at us with a lively smile; a second later he fell sideways. A blotchy mark showed where the bullet had hit him just above the eyes. The circumstances being what they were I had no justification for feeling either shocked or astonished by the sudden extinction of Lance-Corporal Kendle. But after blank awareness that he was killed all feelings tightened and contracted to a single intention - to ‘settle that sniper’ [...]. If I had stopped to think, I shouldn’t have gone at all. As it was, I discarded my tin hat and equipment, slung a bag of bombs across my shoulder [...] and set off at a downhill double. While I was running I pulled the safety-pin out of a Mills’ bomb; my right hand being loaded, I did the same for my left. [...] Just before I arrived at the top [of the opposite slope] I slowed up and threw my two bombs. Then I rushed at the bank, vaguely expecting some sort of scuffle with my imagined enemy. [...] Fortunately for me, they were already retreating. It had not occurred to them that they were being attacked by a single fool; and Fernby, with presence of mind which probably saved me, had covered my advance [...] with his Lewis gun. I slung a few more bombs, but they fell short [...] Idiotically elated, I stood there [...] and emitted a series of ‘view-halloas’ [...] Having thus failed to commit suicide, I proceeded to occupy the trench - that is to say, I sat down on the fire-step, very much out of breath, and hoped to God the Germans wouldn’t come back again” (pp65-66). [THREAD = THE TRUE CAUSES OF WAR]

RESEARCH ISSUE - TO BOTTLE UP OR TO PRATTLE ON: There has been little or no research into the personality differences between those survivors whose battlefield experiences were “never talked about” (often for the rest of their lives) and those less taciturn types who - like the Ancient Mariner (<=1798 (Survivor Syndrome)) - became driven men. The answer probably lies in some as-yet-unexplained pre-disposition in one’s selection of psychological “Defense Mechanisms” - compare, for example, Repression and Rationalisation in the Companion Resource.

1916 [Wednesday 5th July] The Somme Campaign [XVII - 38th (Welsh) Division Moves Forward]: [Continued from preceding entry; previously threaded as 38th (Welsh) Division at War <=26th June] After its baptism of fire further north [7th January-26th June] 38th (Welsh) Division [26th June<=7th July] takes over the front between Bottom Wood [maplink at 2nd July] and Caterpillar Wood [ditto]. That night their commanding officer Philips [29th June<=7th July] issues a message of encouragement to his men. Here is an indicative extract ...

"Your fellow countrymen at home are following your career with interest and admiration. I always believed that a really Welsh Division would be second to none. You have more than justified that belief" (quoted in Hughes, 1982/1990, p69).

As it happens, one of the battalions being relieved is 1st Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers [4th July<=1st August], and one of their subalterns - Sassoon [4th July<=16th October] - watches the new boys’ arrival, and is distinctly unimpressed. He is, however, much less of a politician than Philips ...

"... they were unseasoned new army troops. Our little trench under the trees was inundated by [...] a panicky rabble. They were mostly undersized men [...] it was going to be a bad look-out for two such bewildered companies” (Sassoon, Memoirs of an Infantry Officer, 1930, p69) [sub-thread continues at next entry ...].

Meanwhile Pilcher’s 17th (Northern) Division’s 52nd Brigade launches a successful 2000hr attack on Quadrangle Trench [maplink at 4th July] [sub-thread continues at next entry ...], [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]
The Somme Campaign [XVIII - High-Level Hindsight]: [Continued from preceding entry] The Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir William Robertson [1st July (Nightfall) <= 12th September] confides in a letter to Kiggell [<= 29th June] that with the benefit of hindsight the Somme Offensive had been on too wide a front for its own good, the artillery having been spread too thinly.

**ASIDE:** Readers will recall [<= 29th June] (a) that the breadth and scope of the Somme Offensive had been set politically and militarily to take pressure off the French at Verdun, and (b) that the depth of the Day #1 objectives had been forced upon Fourth Army, much against their instincts, by Haig [29th June <= 9th July].

The following day Lloyd George [4th January <= 9th July] replaces Kitchener [<= 5th June] as Secretary of State for War (although Robertson continues to report to the War Cabinet directly) [sub-thread continues at 7th July ...].

********** "ALAS ALAS SAID COLONEL TALABOLION"**********

The Somme Campaign [XIX - The First Battle of Mametz Wood]: [Continued from 5th July] This attempt to capture Mametz Wood [maplink at 2nd July] is made by (from the south-west) Pilcher's 17th (Northern) Division and (from the south-east) Philips' 38th (Welsh) Division [5th July <= 9th July] against elements of 163rd Infantry Regiment [Wikipedia factsheet].

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE:** Mametz Wood had/has a number of distinguishing features. In addition to those already noted [at 2nd July and at 4th July] we now need to add the "Hammerhead" [start at the Dragon Memorial, look to the north-west, and the Hammerhead is only a hundred yards away], the hammerhead-shaped south-eastern bulge of the wood, and Flatiron Copse [half a mile up the lane to your right, around what is nowadays the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Flatiron Copse Cemetery [CWGC map, etc.].

In 17th Division's sector the approach to Mametz Wood is barred by the killing ground in front of Quadrangle Support [maplink at 4th July] ...

**CAMEO - 17TH DIVISION AT THE QUADRANGLE, 7TH JULY:** 17th Division’s attack on Quadrangle Support was delivered by (on the left) 52nd Brigade and (on the right) 50th Brigade. 51st Brigade was in support. The attack began at 0200hr after a 35-minute bombardment but the assault battalions were then immediately held up by uncut wire and hand-to-hand fighting in Nomansland. Eventually some progress was made on the left toward Contalmaison [maplink at 1st July (Nightfall)] only to be driven back by a German counter-attack. At 0800hr fresh battalions launched a daytime attack but were driven to ground by enfilade fire from Strip Trench [maplink at 4th July] on the right. A third attack at 2000hr similarly failed.

In 38th Division's sector the objective is the south-eastern corner of Mametz Wood, namely the Hammerhead, and the attack is delivered by 115th Brigade commanded by Horatio J. Evans [National Library of Wales entry => 9th July] ...

**CAMEO - 115TH BRIGADE AT THE HAMMERHEAD, 7TH JULY 1916:** 115th Brigade's attack at the Hammerhead was spearheaded by 16th (Cardiff City) Bn Welch Regiment and 10th (1st Gwent) Bn South Wales Borderers, with 11th (2nd Gwent) Bn South Wales Borderers and 17th Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers in support. Here is a (heavily compressed) account of the action in the words of senior brigade officer Llewelyn Wyn Griffith [Wikipedia biography => 10th July] (note the red highlighted accusation of military incompetence) ...

"At [0800hr] the artillery began its bombardment of Mametz Wood. A thousand yards away from where I stood, our two battalions were waiting. I read the orders again. The attack was to be carried out in three stages, beginning at [0830hr], reaching in
succession three positions inside the Wood, under the protection of an artillery barrage. Smoke screens were to be formed here and there. Everything sounded so simple and easy. A few minutes later all our telephone wires to the battalions were cut by the enemy’s reply to our fire. There was no smoke screen, for some reason never explained - perhaps someone forgot about it. This was the first departure from the simplicity of the printed word. Messages came through that our fire had not masked the German machine guns in Mametz Wood, nor in the wood near Bazentin [Bazentin-le-Petit Wood?? - Ed.]. The elaborate time-table suddenly became a thing of no meaning. [...] A message arrived from the Division. In twenty minutes’ time, the artillery would begin another bombardment of the edge of the Wood, and under cover of this we were to renew the attack - in twenty minutes. We were a thousand yards away from the battalions, with no telephone communication; there were maps at Divisional Headquarters, they knew where we were, they knew where the battalions were, and they knew that our lines were cut. [...] With all the hours of the clock to choose from, some mastermind must needs select the only hour to be avoided. He did not ask himself whether the order could reach its ultimate destination in time [...] Every attempt to move near the Wood was met by a burst of frontal and enfilade machine-gun fire. [...] Later, another order came from Divisional Headquarters. We were to attack again, to make a third effort to penetrate this wall of lead. [Evans] called me to accompany him, and we set out for Caterpillar Wood [...] passing a stream of ‘walking wounded’ making their way out. [...] Wounded men were crawling back from the ridge, men were crawling forward with ammunition. No attack could succeed over such ground as this, swept from front and side by machine-guns at short range. [...] We were caught in a trap, unable to advance, unable to withdraw without being observed. [...] The time was drawing near for the renewal of the attack, for another useless slaughter. Casualties in officers had been extremely heavy, and the battalions were somewhat disorganised” (Wyn Griffith, 1931/1981/2010, pp102-104).

Wyn Griffith then informs Evans that there is an artillery observers' telephone close by ...

“Ten minutes later I sat in the trench while [Evans] spoke on the telephone, tersely describing the utter folly of any course of action other than a gradual withdrawal under cover of outposts, and quoting figures of our casualties. He was arguing with determination. There was opposition, but he won. [...] It was nearly midnight when we heard that the last of our men had withdrawn ...” (ibid., pp105-106).

**ASIDE - WHY ONLY ONE BRIGADE?:** We have so far [July 2015] been unable to determine whether Major-General Philipps’ decision to attack with only one brigade was a matter of necessity (for example, the need to meet an externally set deadline before fully in position) or choice. Hughes (1982/1990) points out (p97) that by this point in the Somme Offensive sheer pressure of work at corps level and above was shifting the burden of scheduling brigade-sized operations down onto divisional staff.

After dark 115th Brigade rotates with 113th Brigade, commanded by Llewelyn A. E. Price-Davies, V.C. [Wikipedia biography=>10th July] [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1**ASIDE:** This phrase from Hughes (op. cit., p73), who uses it as a chapter epigraph. He got it, in turn, from David Jones (In Parenthesis, 1937, p138), who was there on the day and was fond of poeticising officers’ overheard conversations.

**RECOMMENDED READING:** For its precision and helpful graphics we like Renshaw’s (1999) “Mametz Wood” [Amazon entry], pages 1-72 of which will bring readers up to speed with events so far.

1916 [Friday 7th-11th July] The Somme Campaign [XX - Miscellaneous Actions (Ovillers, Contalmaison)]: [Continued from preceding entry] In the Ovillers sector Scott’s 12th (Eastern) Division gains ground south of the village on 7th July. In the Contalmaison sector Babington’s 23rd Division makes some progress into Contalmaison village only to be
forced out again by a German counter-attack. Babington tries again on 11th July, and this time the village falls. And in the Trones Wood sector Shea's 30th Division and Furse's 9th (Scottish) Division fight forward on 8th July to the south-eastern perimeter of the wood. They regroup and try again on 9th July, this time taking its southern half [sub-thread continues at 9th July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Sunday 9th July] The Somme Campaign [XXI - Heads Roll]: [Continued from 7th July] Following the failure of 17th (Northern) Division and 38th (Welsh) Division [7th July<=10th July] to make progress at the Quadrangle and the Hammerhead, respectively, on 7th July, the two divisions' commanding officers - Pilcher [<=7th July] and Philipps [dito] - are replaced (by Sir)919 Philip R. Robertson [Wikipedia biography] and Watts [29th June<=10th July], respectively. The grounds for these dismissals are that these two major generals have failed to drive their respective units forward with sufficient "determination".

**ASIDE:** The accusation would have been based on rear-echelon incompetence, rather than front-line cowardice. The 17th Division's divisional history (Atteridge, 1929) records, but does not attempt to explain, Philipps' departure. 38th Division's history (Munby, 1920) makes no mention of the matter at all. Haig's <=5th July views on the matter may be seen in his diary entry for 9th July ... "We then visited HQ XV Corps at Heilly and saw [Horne <=29th June]. He was very disappointed with the work of the 17th Division (Pilcher) and 38 Welsh Division (Philipps). Both these officers have been removed. In the case of the latter division, although the wood had been most adequately bombarded the division never entered the wood, and in the whole division the total casualties for the 24 hours are under 150!" (Sheffield and Bourne, 2005, p201). Sheffield, G. and Bourne, J. (Eds.) (2005). Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters, 1914-1918. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

In the Mametz Wood sector, meanwhile, Philipps' sacking causes a renewed attack on the wood to be cancelled at the last minute, thus ...

"At noon on the 9th the battalion [= 15th Bn (London Welsh) Royal Welsh Fusiliers] moved forward to take part in a general attack on Mametz Wood [...] Beyond the village [= Mametz] they entered Fritz and Danzig trenches and awaited orders to attack. For two hours they waited [...] until at 1430hr word was passed along that the assault was cancelled. The reason, which they did not know, was their division had to wait for the replacement of its commander, Major-General Ivor Philipps. He and another divisional commander were being replaced for a failed assault on the wood three days earlier, which had cost the division four battalions. Neither of the sacked divisional commanders had authorised the catastrophic plan of attack, but Rawlinson and Haig required scapegoats" (Dilworth, 2012, p107).


******* BRWYDR BEIRDD *******

1916 [Monday 10th-11th July] The Somme Campaign [XXII - The Second Battle of Mametz Wood]: [Continued from 9th July] This two-day-long battle is a second attempt to capture the tactically important Mametz Wood [maplink at 2nd July]. It is fought between 38th (Welsh) Division [9th July<=1st August], presently under the temporary command of Watts [<=9th July], and elements of 3rd Guards Division's elite Lehr Infantry Regiment [Wikipedia factsheet].

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE:** Vallée Wagnon [start point] is a one-mile-long shallow valley starting north of Caterpillar Wood [maplink at 2nd July] and running off to the west-south-west [it follows the line of the track marked Les Anglees]. The 30-foot-high southern rim is tree-lined
because it rises too steeply to be cultivated. The Dragon Memorial [maplink at 7th July] is at the top of this rim, squarely opposite the Hammerhead.

The attack is delivered by (on the left) Price-Davies' [<=7th July] 113th Brigade and (on the right) [Sir] Thomas O. Marden's [Wikipedia biography] 114th Brigade, with Evans' [<=9th July] 115th Brigade in support. Hughes (1982/1990) will later set the scene as follows ...

"The morning of 10 July was fair and bracing. By [0300hr] the leading battalions of the 38th Division were in position [...] waiting, nervously, for zero hour. They were to attack in parallel lines, or 'waves', as they had practised in manoeuvres, with bayonets fixed and rifles held in the high port position, four paces between each man, 100 yards between each line, the 16th RWF leading for the 113th Brigade with 14th RWF close behind; and the 13th and 14th Welsh, side by side, leading on the 114th Brigade front" (p104).

At 0415hr the first wave goes over the top and the second wave moves forward into the space thereby vacated (moving up, specifically, from Bunny Trench [maplink at 1st July] to Queen's Nullah [maplink at 2nd July]). Here (it being standard German practice to shell the enemy's reinforcement areas at this stage of an attack) they are exposed to spoiling fire, as one eye-witness will later recall ...

"He's getting it now more accurately and each salvo brackets more narrowly and a couple right in, just as 'D' and 'C' are forming for the second wave. Wastebottom [true identity not known] married a wife on his Draft-leave but the whinnying splinter razored diagonal and mess-tin fragments drove inward and toxined underwear. He maintained correct alignment with the others, face down, and you never would have guessed. [...] Talacryn [true identity not known] doesn't take it like Wastebottom, he leaps up and says he's dead, a-slither down the pale face - his limbs a-girandole at the bottom of the nullah, but the mechanism slackens, unfed, and he is quite still. Which leaves five paces between you and the next live one to the left" (David Jones, In Parenthesis, pp157-158).

****** "THE FORCING OF THE GROVES"! ******

CAMEO - 113TH (ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS) BRIGADE AT VALLÉE WAGNON (LEFT), 0415-0900HR, 10TH JULY: 113th Brigade's attack at the Strip Trench (i.e., western) end of the Vallée Wagnon treeline was spearheaded by 14/RWF and 16/RWF in line astern, followed shortly afterward by 15/RWF (London Welsh), with 13/RWF in reserve. In the event the first wave was unable to break into the wood, but as the other battalions came up from behind the survivors were rallied and managed to bomb their way forward up behind Strip Trench [maplink at 4th July] and by 0900hr had engaged the German second line of defence, an east-west ride a quarter of a mile into the trees.

CAMEO - THE DEATH OF 15/RWF'S LIEUTENANT REES, ca.0446HR 10TH JULY: David Jones witnessed at close hand, and was greatly moved by, the death of his platoon commander Robert G. Rees [no convenient biography but see http://www.twgpp.org/information.php?id=1608495], working it into his 1937 memoirs, thus ...

"Mr. Jenkins [= Rees] half inclined his head to them - he walked just barely in advance of his platoon and immediately to the left of Private Ball [= Jones]. He makes the conventional sign and there is the deeply inward effort of spent men who would make response for him, and take it at the double. He sinks on one knee and now on the other; his upper body tilts in rigid inclination this way and back; weighted lanyard runs out to full tether, swings like a pendulum and the clock run down. Lurched over, jerked iron saucer over tilted brow, clamped unkindly over lip and chin nor no ventaille [= the face protection on mediaeval armour] to this darkening, and masked face lifts to grope the air, and so disconsolate; enfeebled fingering at a paltry strap - buckle holds, holds him blind against the morning" (In Parenthesis, pp165-166). [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES]
114th Brigade at Vallée Wagnon (Right), 0415-0900HR, 10th July: 114th Brigade's attack at the Hammerhead end of the Vallée Wagnon treeline was spearheaded by (on the left) 14/WELCH (Swansea) and (on the right) 13/WELCH (2nd Rhondda), with 10/WELCH (1st Rhondda) and 15/WELCH (Carmarthen) in support. 13/WELCH's line of advance takes them right across the anvil face of the Hammerhead, exposing them to heavy short-range machine-gun fire and inflicting heavy casualties. There was then fierce hand-to-hand fighting on the treeline, but again, as fresh companies arrive to help, the Germans are gradually driven back to their second line of defence.

CAMEO - THE WOUNDING OF 13/WELCH'S SERGEANT TOM PRICE, 0500HR, 10TH JULY: The Rhondda Remembers website [take me there] contains details of the wounding of Sergeant Tom Price, 13th Bn (2nd Rhondda) Welch Regiment, in this attack.

115th Brigade joins the attack at 1440hr, sending 17th Bn Royal Welch Fusiliers in on the left and 10th Bn (1st Gwent) South Wales Borderers in on the right. The combined force then fights its way forward until by 1830hr it is almost to the northern edge of the wood, where heavy machine-gun fire from the open ground beyond the wood keeps them from making further progress. They fall back some 200 yards and consolidate. Fighting will then continue overnight and throughout the following day, and it will not be until 0400hr on 12th July that the division starts to be progressively relieved by Campbell’s 21st Division. That same day their new major-general, Blackader [<=29th June] arrives to take command [sub-thread continues at 14th July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1ASIDE: This phrase from David Jones (1937, p169) [fuller extract at (3) below].

RECOMMENDED READING: The second half of Renshaw (op. cit. [<=7th July (ASIDE)]) covers the above events. The work is particularly recommended for its account (pp131-134) of the murmured accusations surrounding Philipps' dismissal.

ASIDE - POST-WAR WRITINGS CONCERNING MAMETZ WOOD: Here, in the sequence they were published, are some of the works which make reference to this battle ...

(1) Robert Graves [Wikipedia biography] (Poem: "A Dead Boche", 1918; Memoir: "Goodbye to All That", 1929): Graves' battalion passed by the wood a few days after the battle and he took the opportunity to inspect the battlefield. His first oeuvre is the short poem "A Dead Boche" (1918 [full text online at http://www.bartleby.com/120/19.html]). The imagery of the poem then reappears in his 1929 Memoir "Goodbye to All That", thus ...

"It was full of dead Prussian Guards Reserve, big men, and dead Royal Welch and South Wales Borderers of the New Army battalions, little men. Not a single tree in the wood remained unbroken. [...] I passed by the bloated and stinking corpse of a German with his back propped against a tree. He had a green face, spectacles, close-shaven-hair; black blood was dripping from the nose and beard. I came across two other unforgettable corpses: a man of the South Wales Borderers and one of the Lehr Regiment had succeeded in bayoneting each other simultaneously" (Robert Graves, Goodbye to All That, p175).

(2) Wyn Griffith [7th July<=15th July (Malingering)] (Memoir: "Up to Mametz", 1931): Wyn Griffith had to pass through the litter of 113rd and 114th Brigades when 115th Brigade was sent forward, and was duly shaken, thus ...

"The enemy was shelling the approach from the south with some determination, but I was fortunate enough to escape injury and to pass on to an ordeal ever greater. Men of my old battalion [= 15th Bn (London Welsh) Royal Welch Fusiliers] were lying dead on the ground in great profusion. They wore a yellow badge on their sleeves, and without this distinguishing mark it would have been impossible to recognise the remains of many of them. I felt that I had run away. [...] Heavy shelling of their southern had beaten down some of the young growth, but it had also thrown trees and large branches into a barricade. Equipment, ammunition, rolls of barbed wire, tins of food, gas helmets, and rifles were lying about everywhere. There were more corpses than men, but there were worse sights than corpses. Limbs and mutilated trunks, here and there
a detached head, forming splashes of red against the green leaves, and [...] one tree held in its branches a leg, with its torn flesh hanging down over a spray of leaf. [...] So tenacious in these matters is memory that I can never encounter the smell of cut green timber without resurrecting the vision of the tree that flaunted a human limb" (pp107-108).

(3) **David Jones** *(Poeticised Memoir: "In Parenthesis", 1937):* *In Parenthesis* is a private soldier's flashbulb memories, jotted down under survivor syndrome compulsion over 20 years and then finally assembled as a Modernist long poem. There is no little delight to be had in reverse engineering the words back into their original sense-images. Here are two typical examples (the poet's words are in black, the present author's guessed at re-perceivings, in the style of the side-commentary in the Ancient Mariner, are square-parenthesised in red)

"It slackened a little and they try short rushes and you find yourself alone in a denseness of hazel-brush and body high bramble and between the bright interstices and multifarious green-stuff, grey textile, scarlet-edged goes and comes [...] His light stick-bomb winged above your thorn-bush, and aged oak-timbers shiver and leaves shower like thrown blossom for a conqueror. You tug at rusted pin - it gives unexpectedly and your fingers pressed to released flange. You loose the thing into the underbrush. Dark-faceted iron oval lobs heavily to fungus-cushioned dank, wobbles under low leaf to lie, near where the heel drew out just now; and tough root-fibres boomerang to top-most green filigree and earth clods flung disturb fresh fragile shoots that brush the sky. You huddle closer to your mossy bed and make yourself scarce. You scramble forward and pretend not to see, but ruby drops from young beech-sprigs are bright your hands and face. [...] So double detonations, back and fro like well-played-up-to service at a net, mark left and right the forcing of the groves" (pp168-169). *[The opposing forces stalk each other with grenades in the dense undergrowth.]*

"Fair Balder falleth everywhere" (p177). *[A blown up soldier's body parts rain down all around the narrator.] [This is perhaps the source of the severed leg which so troubled Wyn Griffith at (2) above.]*

1 Rhyming slang for "cunts" (rhyme the "Maria" with "higher", not "ear").


(6) **Thomas Dilworth** *(University of Windsor biography)* *(Biography: "David Jones in the Great War", 2012):* Dilworth, too, corresponded with and interviewed David Jones and gives valuable background insights into how the troubled soldier's memories became "In Parenthesis". The resulting biography is one of the few works (a) to mention Jones' period in psychotherapy in the late 1940s, and (b) to note (p204) the parallel between Jones and the Ancient Mariner [*=1798 (Survivor Syndrome)*], both of whom frequently repeated their tales. Here are the circumstances surrounding Jones' wounding, thus ...
"It was probably after midnight when he was sent in a north-westerly direction to help clear a portion of the wood. While advancing in pitch darkness, he was suddenly slammed hard in the left leg and went down. [...] Unable to stand to walk, discarding his pack but keeping his gas-mask and rifle, he began crawling [...] Before long he met a Welsh corporal from his battalion, who hoisted him onto his back and carried him. [...] They took him to a forward dressing-station [...] where his wound was cleaned and bandaged. He had been shot in the calf muscle half an inch behind the bone. The medical orderly exclaimed, 'What a beautiful blighty!' [...] After [the bullet's] extraction, the orderly gave it to him [...] which he kept to give to his father" (pp116-117).


1916 [Monday 10th-11th July] Irish Home Rule [XLV - The Easter Rising (The Partition Debate)]: [Continued from 29th June] On 10th July Prime Minister Asquith [25th May<=>24th July] updates the House of Commons concerning progress with the partition proposals [<=17th June]. Specifically "the six counties, Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone, and the three Parliamentary boroughs, Belfast, Londonderry, and Newry" (Hansard, 84:57-64) would be excluded from the revised Home Rule Bill. The arch-Unionist Sir Edward Carson [1915 (19th October)<=>24th July] specifically seeks reassurance (a) that the exclusion could only be reversed by a future Bill, and (b) that the present Bill will specify how the six counties are going to be governed in the meantime. He is reassured on both counts. On the following day, in the House of Lords, Gilbert Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby, 2nd Earl of Ancaster [Wikipedia biography] welcomes the publication of the fresh-off-the-presses Hardinge Report [<=18th May], but uses the occasion to engage in some party-political point-scoring. Most of the Report's criticisms, he observes, should be laid at the door of the ruling Liberal Party, who had failed, for example, to suppress "seditious literature" and "anti-recruiting meetings", and had generally disobeyed the "cardinal rule of government which demands that the enforcement of law and the preservation of order ought always to be independent of political expediency" (Hansard, 22:609-652) [sub-thread continues at 17th July ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Tuesday 11th July] The Middle Eastern Campaigns [XVI - The Tigris Corps Rebuilt]: [Continued from 29th April] Following the Tigris Corps' failure to relieve Kut-al-Amara earlier in the year [<=6th April] Maude [<=6th April] replaces Gorringe [<=12th March] as corps commander, and is himself replaced as commander of 13th (Western) Division by Walter Cayley [no convenient biography:>=13th December]. Maude immediately sets about reinforcing, retraining, and resupplying his tattered corps and arranges improvements to the port facilities at Basra and the supply lines upriver [sub-thread continues at 13th December ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 14th July] Jean Estienne [<=1915 (9th December)] sets up a training base for French Army tank crews at Marly-le-Roi [map, etc.], 10 miles west of Paris. [THREAD = WW1 TANKS]

1916 [Friday 14th July-3rd September] The Somme Campaign [XXIII - Phase Two (Overview and the Battle of Bazentin Ridge)]: [Continued from 10th July] This seven-week-long phase of the offensive is fought for control of the Pozières-Bazentin Ridge [maplink at 1st July], initially between (to the west) Bazentin-le-Petit [see inset below] and (to the east) Longueval [map, etc.].

GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE: Contemporary maps show Bazentin-le-Petit village to the north-east of Bazentin-le-Petit Wood [maplink at 4th July], but nowadays this Googles simply
The attack is delivered by Pulteney's III Corps, Horne's XV Corps, and Congreve's XIII Corps. On the left, in III Corps' Contalmaison sector, Ingouville-Williams' 34th Division and Strickland's 1st Division anchor the left flank by attacking in the direction of Pozières [maplink at 1st July]. In the centre, in XV Corps' Mametz Wood sector, Campbell's 21st Division and Watts' 7th Division attack in the direction of the Bazentins. On the right, in XIII Corps' Longueval sector, Haldane's 3rd Division and Furse's 9th (Scottish) Division attack northward in the direction of High Wood, while Maxse's 18th Division attacks Trones Wood [maplink at 2nd July] to anchor the far right flank. The next seven weeks will see attacks more or less as fresh divisions are directed to key points in the line. The histories will deal with these actions under separate headings, as follows ...

- The Battle of Delville Wood [=>15th July]
- The Battle of High Wood [=>20th July]
- The Battle of Pozières [=>23rd July]
- The Battle of Mouquet Farm [=>10th August]

The overall outcome of this second phase of the broader Somme Offensive is that a six-mile-wide two-mile-deep strip of the Ridge is taken, creating a flat wide salient between the German strongholds at Thiepval [maplink at 1st July] in the west and Ginchy [map, etc.] and Guillemont [map, etc.] in the east [sub-thread continues at 15th July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

********** SHELLSHOCK AS MALINGERING **********
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[Readers unfamiliar with the notion of shellshock as hysteria should pre-read the entry at 1915 (13th February); ditto for malingering at 25th January] On 15th July the R.A.M.C. Medical Officer Edward T. C. Milligan [no convenient biography] publishes a paper entitled "A Method of Treatment of 'Shell Shock'" [full text online] in which he reports beneficial effects of light chloroform anaesthesia on a case-load of patients suspected of feigning the symptoms and signs of shellshock. The thinking behind this treatment is that the anaesthesia prevents the conscious falsification of symptoms, and therefore can help screen out malingerers. Milligan's patients are ...

"... those who 'could not speak', 'could not hear', 'could neither speak nor hear', cases of loss of memory and cases obsessed by the memory picture of recent terrible experience, their minds being occupied, to the exclusion of all other things, by the bursting of shells [etc.]. Other cases which have been treated are those of loss of function, partial or complete, in one or more limbs; of inability to walk, and of neuromimetic [?] deformity of limbs. We have endeavoured to select for treatment only cases of genuine hysteria and of conscious fraud" (p73).

Milligan's treatment had involved the slow administration of chloroform, with "suggestion" started once the required suppression of consciousness had been reached and continued until the patient was fully recovered. On 12th August (his brother) William Milligan [no convenient biography], also an R.A.M.C. Medical Officer, reports "other cases" (number not stated) of "functional aphony" [= loss of voice without damage to the vocal cords], in which "chloroform hypnosis" of this sort has been effective. Patients were simply
ordered to shout while still groggy from the anaesthetic, and "as a rule" did just that
[THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]

1ASIDE: The term "neuromimetic" means mimicking/simulating the action of a nerve. In modern usage the term is used (a) of drugs which encourage distal tissues to respond as if they had been stimulated by a nerve, and (b) of artificial intelligence studies of nerve-like electronic circuits. In 1916, however, it was a common euphemism for malingering. Here are some words of background ... "An early classification informed by initial work on psychoanalysis distinguished between neuromimeses (the unconscious mimicry of disease) and hysterical malingering (the awareness and more or less voluntary imitation of disease, or conscious shamming) (F. Weber 1911). Other specialists similarly distinguished between involuntary malingering ("the exaggeration of symptoms and prolongation of incapacities") and pure, true, or voluntary malingering (purposeful simulation and deception) [...] (Hurst 1918: 28). [...] Underlying these categories of malingering, a range of causes were acknowledged [...] comparable to those identified by clinicians in the early years of the twenty-first century to understand malingering in today's militaries [citations]" (Moss and Prince, 2014, pp99-100).


RESEARCH ISSUE - NEUROMIMESIS A HUNDRED YEARS ON: So what actually did it mean if one of Milligan's patients suddenly recovered the function whose noticeable absence had got him hospitalised in the first place? Had he been "faking it", only to have been "found out"? Or had he been genuinely ill, only to have been "cured" by the treatment? And if genuinely ill, had he been physically or mentally ill? And if cured, was it indeed the immediate treatment vector - the chloroform - or some confounding variable [see the Companion Resource for definition] such as the passing of time, the receiving of attention, the presence of like sufferers, or whatever? Modern science is still pondering these questions, but has put a lot of thought into the classification scheme it now uses ...

RECOMMENDED READING - FACTITIOUS DISORDERS: No theory of military malingering can be complete without taking into account the modern theory of "factitious disorders" [Wikipedia factsheet]. Nor, indeed, can any theory of military malingering be complete without the academics involved remind themselves from time to time just what it might have been like to have been in the thick of it. Wyn Griffith [<=10th July (ASIDE #3)] gets close to the rawness - the sheer primevality - of the human fight-flight system as it collapses into a disjoined explosion-traumatised state, as this young man's did during the Battle of Mametz Wood [<=10th July] ...

"Some time later, a heavy storm of shell fire drove me into a little trench where I crouched with some men to shelter. We talked in Welsh, for they were Anglesey folk; one was a young boy, and after a thunderous crash in our ears he began to cry out for his mother in a thin boyish voice, 'Mam, Mam ...'. I woke up and pushed my way to him [...]. He said that his arm was hurt. A corporal came to my assistance and we pulled off his tunic to examine his arm. He had not been hit, but he was frightened, still crying quietly. Suddenly he started again, screaming for his mother, with a wail that seemed older than the world, in the darkness of that night. The men began to mutter uneasily. We shook him, cursed at him, threatening even to kill him if he did not stop. He did not understand our words, but the shaking brought him back" (Wyn Griffith, 1931, pp115-116).

1916 [Saturday 15th July-3rd September] The Somme Campaign [XXIV - Phase Two (The Battle of Delville Wood)]: [Continued from 14th July] This seven-week-long battle is fought on the right of the broader Battle of Bazentin Ridge [overview at 14th July] for control of Delville Wood [starting at Longueval this is the large wood immediately to the east of the village] and the approaches to Flers ...

GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE: Between Bazentin [maplink at 14th July] and Longueval [ditto] the Germans are holding a two-mile-wide shallow salient, supported by fortified villages at
On 15th July Strickland’s 1st Division attacks on the left in the direction of Martinpuich, and makes a small advance before becoming bogged down by German machine-gun fire. In the centre Lansdowne’s 33rd Division’s 100th Brigade attacks Martinpuich from the south-east, but gains nothing on the day. And on the right Furse’s 9th (Scottish) Division (now reinforced by 1st South African Brigade) attacks at Delville Wood itself, and captures all but its north-eastern corner. Fighting continues in like fashion for the next four days, whereupon the focus of attention will turn to High Wood … [sub-thread continues at 20th July ...].  

1916 [Monday 17th July] Irish Home Rule [XLVI - The Easter Rising (The Lansdowne Amendments Approved by Unionists)]: [Continued from 10th July] A meeting takes of Unionist supporters takes place in London and agrees proposals from Lord Lansdowne [25th January<=24th July] to impose two major conditions on their support for the ongoing Renegotiations [=10th July], firstly that the Six Counties should be permanently, not just temporarily, excluded from the Home Rule process, and secondly that there should be proportionate reduction in the number of Irish Members of Parliament in London1. Here is how Kendle (1992) tells the tale ...  

"On the evening of Monday, 17 July, the Imperial Unionist Association, representing seventy-six members of the House of Lords and ninety-eight MPs, met to endorse the stand taken by Lansdowne and to announce that it considered the establishment of a home rule parliament during the war ‘a serious danger to the peace of Ireland and the Imperial interest’” (p128).  

Often referred to by the histories as the "Lansdowne Amendments" these proposals are about to create a political fire-storm [sub-thread continues at 19th July ...].  

1 ASIDE: It had long been planned that all 103 Irish Members of the British House of Commons would - for continuity of implementation management - continue to sit for a transitional 10-month period after Home Rule came into effect. For constituencies outside the six counties the Members would also sit in the new Irish House of Commons (Kendle, 1992).  

1916 [Wednesday 19th-20th July] The Battle of Fromelles: This battle is fought in First Army’s La Bassée sector [maplink at 1914 (27th October)] as a synchronised adjunct to operations further south on the Somme. It is fought between Haking’s public://historicalmaps/1915-09-29/WikimediaCommons/France1915.png (<=1915 (29th November)) XI Corps and elements of Crown Prince Rupprecht’s public://historicalmaps/1915-10-16/WikimediaCommons/Rupprecht1915.png (<=1915 (25th September)) Sixth (Bavarian) Army under Gustav von Lichtenfels [no convenient biography]. Two B.E.F. divisions are involved, namely (on the left) 5th Australian Division [Wikipedia factsheet] under [Sir]1919 James W. McCoy [Wikipedia biography] and (on the right) 61st (2nd South Midland) Division [Wikipedia factsheet] under [Sir]1917 Colin J. Mackenzie [Wikipedia biography]. The focal objective is a German salient a mile to the north of the fortified village of Fromelles [map, etc.], which is itself three miles north of Aubers Ridge [maplink at 1915 (10th October)]. The Western Front at this point runs diagonally from the south-west to the north-east following the line of Layes Brook [starting at the Fromelles maplink, take the D22/D22C north-westward out of the village until you pass VC Corner Australian Cemetery, whereupon Layes Brook/Rivière des Layes runs off to either side of the road]. The salient is dominated by the Sugar Loaf [the northern bank of Layes Brook half a mile to the west of the D22C], a
well-constructed trench system with fields of fire engineered to near perfection. The artillery bombardment begins at 1000hr and the infantry attack begins at 1730hr. Within 5th (Australian) Division’s sector the attack is made by (on the left) 8th Brigade, (in the centre) 14th (New South Wales) Brigade, and (on the right) 15th (Victoria) Brigade. Within 61st Division’s sector the attack is made by (on the left) 184th Brigade, (in the centre) 183rd Brigade, and (on the right) 182nd Brigade.

**CAMEO - 61ST DIVISION AT FROMELLES, 19TH JULY:** All three brigades suffered from well-directed and timely German shrapnel fire and intact German wire. The assault battalions are quickly driven to ground with heavy casualties.

**CAMEO - 5TH (AUSTRALIAN) DIVISION AT FROMELLES, 19TH JULY:** All three brigades suffered from well-directed and timely German shrapnel fire and intact German wire, but managed to capture an 1100 yard section of the German firing trench.

The attack is abandoned following a German counter-attack in the early hours of 29th July. The overall outcome of the battle is an expensive B.E.F. defeat, with highly asymmetrical casualties - 7080 B.E.F. (of which 5533 Australian) against some 2000 German. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

************ THE END OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENTARY PARTY ************
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1916 [Wednesday 19th-22nd July] **Irish Home Rule [XLVII - The Easter Rising (Renegotiations Scuppered by the Lansdowne Amendments)]:** (Continued from 17th July) On 19th July the British Cabinet broadly accepts the Lansdowne Amendments (<=>17th July). However when on 22nd July Secretary of State for War **Lloyd George** (9th July<=>24th July) gets round to informing **John Redmond** (9th May<=>24th July) of these conditions it emerges that the Amendments are more than his (moderate) **Irish Parliamentary Party** can stomach. This turn of events is noteworthy in the present context for marking the end of effective loyalist Irish representation in Parliament. Redmond's clearest statement of his position will be in the House of Commons two days later [sub-thread continues at 24th July ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Thursday 20th-25th July] **The Somme Campaign [XXV - The Battle of High Wood]:** (Continued from 15th July) This six-day-long battle is fought as a follow-up to the Battle of Delville Wood for control of the High Wood sector of the Pozières-Bazentin Ridge [maplink at 1st July (Thiepval)]. Some progress is made but so strong are the German positions at Switch Trench at the northern treeline that the body of the wood becomes Nomansland (and will remain so until mid-September [=>15th September (Battle of Flers-Courcelette)] [sub-thread continues at 23rd July ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 21st July] **The Armenian Genocide [X - Morgenthau Replaced]:** (Continued from 23rd March) **Abraham I. Elkus** [Wikipedia biography] is appointed to replace **Henry Morgenthau Snr** [1915 (13th September)<=>21st July] as American Ambassador to Turkey. He will not actually arrive in Istanbul, however, until 2nd October [sub-thread continues at 23rd November ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD][THREAD = THE TRUE CAUSES OF WAR]

1916 [Saturday 22nd July] **Economics, Social Confrontation, and War [III - America Against Preparedness (The San Francisco Bombing)]:** (Continued from 4th July) At 1406hr, during a day of patriotic celebrations in San Francisco, a radical cell detonates a pipe bomb, killing 10 people and injuring 40 more [sub-thread continues at 5th November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 AMERICAN NEUTRALITY][THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]
1916 [Sunday 23rd July-3rd September] The Somme Campaign [XXVI - The Battle of Pozières (Overview and Early Progress)]: [Continued from 20th July] This six-week-long battle is fought on the left of the broader Battle of Bazentin Ridge [overview at 14th July] for control of the tactically important village of Pozières [maplink at 1st July]. The assault divisions are (on the left, out of Ovillers) Fanshawe's 48th (South Midland) Division and (on the right, out of Contalmaison) [Sir] Harold B. Walker's 1st (Australian) Division [Wikipedia biography]. Simultaneous attacks are made in the adjacent sector by (on the left, out of the Quadrangle) Strickland's 1st Division and (on the right out of Bazentin-le-Petit Wood) Bridges' 19th (Western) Division, both in the direction of Martinpuich [maplink at 15th July]. The battle at Pozières begins at 0030hr on 23rd July, following a three day preliminary barrage, and by the end of the day the attackers have reached the southern outskirts of the village. 1st (Australian) Division then spends the next 48 hours fighting its way up through the village to its northern outskirts (a mere 600 yards). The attack toward Martinpuich grinds quickly to a halt at all points, and is duly abandoned.

**CAMEO/RECOMMENDED READING**: A 20-year-old 7/South Lancs company commander named Roland G. Garvin [no convenient biography=⇒missing in action this day] was posted missing following the 19th (Western) Division attack on Bazentin-le-Petit Wood. When his personal effects were returned to his parents they found therein a sheaf of their letters to him. They combined these with their own collection of his letters home, and the accumulated correspondence then stayed in the family archive until 2009, when it was collated and edited as "We Hope to Get Word Tomorrow" (Pottle and Ledington, 2009).

What we have, therefore, is a valuable source of insights into the everyday thoughts and deeds, not just of the volunteer soldiers themselves but also of the parents who were destined to outlive them. [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES] Pottle, M. and Ledington, J. G. G. (Eds.) (2009). We Hope to Get Word Tomorrow. London: Frontline Books.

Overnight 25th/26th July 1st (Australian) Division is rotated with Legge's [<=7th April] 2nd (Australian) Division [<=7th April], having suffered 5286 casualties. From 29th July to 4th August 2nd (Australian) Division slowly pushes the new front line out past the "OG" [= the "Old German" line] to half a mile north of the village, in the direction of a German strongpoint at Mouquet Farm [map, etc.]. During this period it will suffer 6848 casualties, roughly a third of its strength [sub-thread continues at 10th August ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Sunday 23rd July] War in the Balkans [XIII - The Salonika Campaign (Sarrail Promoted)]: [Continued from 9th June] Sarrail [3rd April<=27th August] is made Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies in Salonika, that is to say, French, British, Serbian, Russian, and Italian [sub-thread continues at 17th August ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

**ASIDE - SARRAIL THE POLITICIAN-GENERAL**: As we shall shortly be seeing [=27th August (Venizelist Revolution)], Sarrail's military decision-making is increasingly coloured by two - perhaps three - hidden agendas, namely (1) the (far from new) stresses of Balkan diplomacy, and 2(3) the French desire to promoted their political (and economic) influence in the region. Palmer (1965) sets the scene ...

"Throughout his life Maurice Sarrail possessed an insatiable appetite for political intrigue [...] and w[ith] Greece divided between the rival champions of the King and Venizelos [he] had every opportunity to exercise his talent for meddling in political affairs. And by the autumn of 1916 his British allies had become firmly convinced that he was permitting his devotion to republican principles to warp his judgement and distract him from military matters. There was, moreover, another aspect of Salonika's past which lingered on amid the present muddle and confusion. The city had flourished as a trading community [...] and there was no doubting the willingness
of its merchants to back whatever regime brought business to the town ..." (pp92-93).

"After considerable negotiations and after many changes had been made, it was agreed by [Sir Edward Carson [10th July to 6th December]] on the one side, and by me upon the other, to recommend [the Headings [17th June]] proposals to our friends. [...] Having obtained the consent of our followers to this agreement, we returned to London. The very day that I arrived back in London I was faced with an entirely new proposal which had been put forward by Lord Lansdowne - a proposal, mark you, that formed no part whatever of the agreement. But like a bolt from the blue [12th July] [Lord Lansdowne [17th July]] made a speech in the House of Lords in which he declared that the Bill which was to be introduced would make certain structural alterations in the Acts of 1914 - these are his words - 'which would be permanent and enduring'. [...] I will not bandy words about breaches of faith or violations of solemn agreement but [...]. I want the Government clearly to understand that they have entered upon a course which is bound to increase Irish suspicion of the good faith of British statesmen, a course which is bound to inflame feeling in Ireland, and is bound to do serious mischief to those high Imperial interests which we are told necessitated the provisional settlement of this question. [...] And I warn the government that if they introduce a Bill on [these new lines] my Friends and I will oppose it at every stage" (Hansard, 84:1427-1470).

The Secretary of State for War Lloyd George [19th July to 6th December] replies firstly that he "cannot quite accept the accuracy" of Redmond's narrative, and secondly that he has been in the "invidious" position of trying to mediate between two historically hostile parties in Ireland, while at the same time trying to fight the Battle of the Somme: little surprise, then, that the discussions have often moved faster than the precise record. Here is his recollection ...

"There is always this difficulty. No record is kept of the interviews. They are prolonged, they are varied, they are constant. There is a good deal of argument, a good deal of talk, and if you introduce shorthand writers there they never answer their purpose, and in the end there is always failure on one side or the other to agree upon everything that has been said [...]. One party attaches very great importance to one statement that is made, another party attaches very great importance to another statement, and perhaps they do not always remember everything that has been said. [...] The argument [...] has broken down upon two points. I will deal with both. The first is the phraseology dealing with the exclusion of the six counties. I agree with [Redmond] that it was contemplated that this arrangement should be a provisional one, and that at the end of the War there should be a review of the whole situation [...] That was the idea" (ibid.).

There then follows a heated exchange concerning for how long, and how obviously, this had been the case, at the end of which Sir Edward Carson states his own recollection of events before pointing out that it would be "absolutely absurd" to set up a separate "machinery of government" for Ulster on a temporary basis. He adds that in any event "nothing is permanent to this Parliament" because Act may reverse Act
should the political support be there. All he had ever requested, he stresses, was that the six counties "be struck out of the Act", and all he now expected was that those who wished Ulster should be a permanent part of an independent Ireland should go on "to win her" if they could. At this point the nationalist argument is taken up by the Member for Cork City, William O’Brien [Wikipedia biography], leader of the small All-for-Ireland-League [Wikipedia factsheet] pressure group loosely allied to the Irish Parliamentary Party. He does not mince his words ...

"The whole question is this: that the Irish people have been asked to agree to split our ancient nation into two antagonistic states [...] Lord Lansdowne has only brought to a head, to a test, a system of deceit that has been going on in Ireland for the past two years. The Irish people have been shamelessly assured that the moment the War was over the Home Rule Act would come into operation automatically for all Ireland. [...] The real cause of the recent rebellion in Ireland was not pro-Germanism or German gold. The real cause was that you have driven all that is best and most unselfish among the young men of Ireland to despair of the constitutional movement by all your own bungling, your ignorance, your double-dealing in reference to Home Rule in this House, but, above all, by the methods by which you governed Ireland during the last six months. [...] Happily, and fortunately for England and Ireland, this particular partition plot at all events is dead and damned tonight, and millions of the Irish race will rejoice with all their hearts tomorrow at its failure" (ibid.).

Redmond's deputy in (but soon to become leader of) the Irish Parliamentary Party John Dillon [Wikipedia biography] is equally forthright ...

"We stand by [the original] pledge [...], on which we obtained the consent of our people in Ireland. [...] I am bound to say that the consequences of this breach of faith with us puts an end to all prospect of a settlement on those lines during the War. This thing cannot be attempted again. [...] You have struck a deadly blow at the whole future government of Ireland. How will you ever get the Irish people to have confidence in the terms and the words of British Ministers?" (ibid.).

Prime Minister Asquith [10th July<=31st July] closes the debate by appealing to the Nationalists to reconsider their decision, but on 27th July Cabinet formally announces that it is abandoning the revised Home Rule Bill [sub-thread continues at 31st July ...].

********** THE KAISER NUKES NEW YORK CITY **********

1916 [Sunday 30th July] German Sabotage in the U.S. [IX - The Black Tom Explosion]: A German black ops team successfully starts a number of fires in the National Dock and Storage Company's wharfing facilities on Black Tom Island [map, etc.], New York Harbour, resulting shortly afterward in a one kiloton TNT explosion [end of sub-thread].

1916 [Monday 31st July] Irish Home Rule [XLIX - The Easter Rising (The Commons Debate)]: Responding to the collapse of the Headings renegotiations [=24th July], and with that nation still under Martial Law [=24th April] and the right to trial by jury suspended under the Defence of the Realm Act, Dillon [=24th July] initiates a debate concerning the provisional arrangements for the government of Ireland. Prime Minister Asquith [24th July<=6th December] explains that there is presently no Chief Secretary of Ireland [=3rd May]. Concerned, he says, that there should be no more "experimentation" he now proposes ...

"... to appoint a Chief Secretary [...] who will, we hope, be able to spend the bulk of his time in Ireland, and who will be responsible in this House for Irish government [...] and, after much consideration, we have, we believe, found [the necessary] qualifications in [Henry E. Duke [1st Baron Merrivale]1923 [Wikipedia biography]]” (Hansard, 84:2116-2231).
The fact that Duke is both a Conservative and a life-long Unionist is not lost on the Nationalists, who are less than impressed. However the proposal also worries many Unionists as well, simply for its being a return to the status quo ante, the Member for Belfast West, Joseph Devlin [Wikipedia biography], observing as follows ...

"I have listened to the speech of the Prime Minister today with the feeling of most profound disappointment. What are people to think of a Minister [...] who came down to this House two months ago and who told us that Dublin Castle rule had broken down and that it was impossible in future? He tries to get all of us to come to a settlement, and seemingly we cannot. What is the statesmanlike alternative he offers [...]? To re-establish Dublin Castle government in a worse position than it was before. To send over a Unionist to [...] prop up Dublin Castle is to make this thing more hideous than it was before and to create a worse feeling of bitterness and harshness towards this country. A more mad thing I have never heard of in British statesmanship [...]" (ibid.).

The final word goes to the Nationalist Member for Dublin St. Patrick's, William Field [Wikipedia biography], who, with a liking for precisely defined terminology, observes that the government is not - as people generally describe it - a "Coalition Government", but actually a "Tory Coalition Government". Once one has grasped that basic fact then the everything else makes more sense ...

"If it were possible, the position of Dublin Castle today is worse than ever it was before. Anyone who lives in Ireland and has had any experience of Dublin Castle government knows that it does not command the approval of the people. Hon. Members in this House talk about democracy. They give us lessons about trust in the people. They have never trusted the Irish people. We have always been oppressed. Our advice has never been taken. The result is that the government of Ireland ever since the Union has been always against the aspirations, hopes, and interests not alone of the Irish people, but of Great Britain. The time has come when some earnest, honest, endeavour should be made to bring Ireland in practice into union with the British people. We see the result of Home Rule in South Africa. We see the result of it in Canada. Wherever Home Rule has been tried the people have responded with loyalty to the Empire" (ibid.).

The Resolution appealing for "plans for the future government of Ireland" is passed

[THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

*************** MONTHLY UPDATE, JULY 1916 ***************
*************** MONTHLY UPDATE, JULY 1916 ***************
*************** MONTHLY UPDATE, JULY 1916 ***************

1916 [Tuesday 1st August] Present Location of Welsh Units: Here is the status of the British Army's essentially Welsh units at the end of the 24th month of the war ...

UNITS FIGHTING ON THE SOMME ARE NOW HIGHLIGHTED IN RED

ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS (the ancestral 23rd Regiment of Foot [≤1881 (1st July)])
1st Bn is in France with 7th Division. 2nd Bn is in France with 27th Division. Of the twelve service battalions 13th Bn, 14th Bn, 15th Bn, 16th Bn, and 17th Bn are in France with 38th (Welsh) [New Army] Division, and were decimated at Mametz Wood on 7th-11th July. The first line territorial battalion 1/4th Bn is in France with 1st Division. The remaining three first line territorial battalions, namely 1/5th Bn, 1/6th Bn, and 1/7th Bn, are in Egypt with 53rd (Welsh) [Territorial] Division.

SOUTH WALES BORDERERS (the ancestral 24th Regiment of Foot [≤1881 (1st July)])
1st Bn is in France with 1st Division. 2nd Bn is in France with 29th Division, and was decimated at Beaumont-Hamel on 1st July. Of the nine service battalions 4th Bn is in Mesopotamia with 13th Division, whilst 10th Bn and 11th Bn are in France with 38th (Welsh) [New Army] Division, and were decimated at Mametz Wood on 7th-11th July.

THE WELCH REGIMENT (the ancestral 41st and 69th Regiments of Foot [≤1881 (1st July)])
1st Bn is in Salonika with 28th Division. 2nd Bn is in France with 1st Division. Of the twelve service battalions 8th Bn is in Mesopotamia with 13th Division, 9th Bn is in France with 19th (Western) Division, and 10th Bn, 13th Bn, 14th Bn, 15th Bn, 16th Bn, 18th Bn,
and 19th Bn are in France with 38th (Welsh) [New Army] Division, and were decimated at Mametz Wood on 7th-11th July. The WR's four first line territorial battalions, namely 1/4th Bn, 1/5th Bn, 1/6th Bn, and 1/7th Bn, are in Egypt with 53rd (Welsh) [Territorial] Division.

THE MONMOUTHSHIRE REGIMENT
2nd Bn is in France with 4th Division, and was decimated at Beaumont-Hamel on 1st July. 1st Bn is in Salonika with 28th Division. 3rd Bn is in France with 49th (West Riding) Division.

THE WELSH GUARDS REGIMENT
1st Bn [1st February =>17th August] is in France with the Guards Division.

*************** END OF MONTHLY UPDATE, JULY 1916 ****************

1916 [Wednesday 2nd August through winter 1916-1917] WW1 in the Caucasus [X - The Ottoman Counter-Offensive (The Battle of Bitlis)]: [Continued from 2nd March 1916] On 2nd August the Ottoman forces on the Armenian Front launch a major counter-offensive to retake Bitlis. The Russians take it again on 24th August, but in honesty both sides are by now too poorly resourced to make further progress during the autumn [sub-thread continues at 9th March 1917 ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD] [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = WW1 REPRISALS AND ATROCITIES] [THREAD = WW1 PROPAGANDA]

1916 [Thursday 3rd August: 0900hr] Irish Home Rule [L - The Easter Rising (Casement Executed)]: [Continued from 31st July] Following a high profile trial Casement [3rd May => executed this day] is hanged for treason at Pentonville Prison, London. The remaining members of his Irish Brigade (still in Germany, remember) now lose their potentially privileges and revert to being ordinary prisoners-of-war [sub-thread continues at 6th December ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Thursday 3rd-5th August] Egypt and the Canal Zone [III - The Battle of Romani]: [Continued from 1915 (21st October)] This battle is fought for control of the western Sinai between a Turkish column under von Kressenstein [=1915 (26th January)] and the British garrison at Romani [map, etc.], just east of Port Said, under Sir Archibald J. Murray [Wikipedia biography]. The overall outcome is a British victory followed by a Turkish-German retreat to Al Arish [map, etc.] [sub-thread continues at 23rd December ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1915 [Sunday 6th-17th August] The Italian Adriatic Front [VII - The Sixth Battle of the Isonzo River]: [Continued from 9th March] The Italians mount an offensive along the Isonzo/Soča River [maplink at 1915 (23rd June)], and capture Gorizia [map, etc.] [sub-thread continues at 14th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Thursday 10th August-3rd September] The Somme Campaign [XXVII - Late Phase Two (The Battle of Mouquet Farm)]: [Continued from 23rd July] This four-week-long battle is fought on the left of the broader Battle of Bazentin Ridge [overview at 14th July] for control of the Mouquet Farm sector of the German line two miles north of the tactically important village of Pozières [maplink at 1st July].

GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE: The German strongpoint at Mouquet Farm was situated half way along the four-mile-long Fabec Trench between the fortified villages of Thiepval [maplink at 1st July] and Courcelette [map, etc.]. It was a prime objective because a breakthrough here would have cut the supply line forward to the defenders of Thiepval thereby threatening to "roll up" the line all the way to Serre.

The assault divisions are 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th (Australian) Divisions, rotating in and out of the line every few days for rest and reinforcement. Fighting is for localised
objectives on most days and, although progress is made during the month, Mouquet Farm and Fabeck Trench remain in German hands on 3rd September. [sub-thread continues at 3rd September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

********** THE GREEKS CONTEMPLATE CIVIL WAR **********

1916 [Thursday 17th August] War in the Balkans [XIV - The Salonika Campaign (The Bulgarian Offensive)]: [Continued from 23rd July] The Bulgars launch a major offensive into Macedonia across the Struma River [map, etc.], threatening Salonika [maplink at 1915 (5th August)] itself, only 30 miles away to the south-west. Supporting attacks are also mounted on the Vardar River Front, to the north-west, not least at Lake Doiran [CWGC map, etc.] and Evzonoi/Machukovo [map, etc.]. The impact of the Bulgarian offensive is as much political as military, in that it finally brings the long-standing Royalist-Republican/Germanophile-Germanophobe confrontation in Greece to a head, as Palmer (1965) will later explain ...

"[Salonika] was soon full of rumours of atrocities committed by the Bulgars as they moved forward. There was little love lost between the Greek-speaking and Bulgarian-speaking population of Macedonia, and the decision of the invaders to arm the Bulgarian (and Turkish) villagers inevitably led to a renewal of old feuds. Reports came in of Greek homes burnt, of Greek men and women with their throats cut. The failure of the Greek Government to protect its newest citizens rankled in Salonika. Irate patriots, genuine liberals, and a handful of café-terrace demagogues set up a 'League for National Defence' to voice the general will of the Macedonian Greeks. [...] All the talk in the town was of revolution" (pp94-95) [sub-thread continues at 27th August ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Friday 18th August] The East African Campaign [XXI - The Smuts Offensive (The Columns Continue their Advance)]: [Continued from 6th May] Following three months of patient campaigning van Deventer’s [=19th April] column takes Kilosa [map, etc.] on 22nd August and Iringa [map, etc.] on 29th August. Meanwhile Hoskin’s [=19th April] column captures Morogoro [map, etc.] on 26th August [sub-thread continues at 19th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 18th-19th August] The Sunderland Raid: In its first sortie since the Battle of Jutland [=31st May] Scheer [=31st May] leads the High Seas Fleet on an abortive raid on Sunderland. The battle squadrons are out for some 24 hours but fail to make contact. [THREAD = WW1 SURFACE NAVY OPERATIONS]

1916 [Saturday 19th August] Following his haphazard and inconsistent management of the Battle of Verdun Von Falkenhayn [1915 (13th July)<=>15th September] is replaced as Chief of the German General Staff by von Hindenburg [=4th June]. [THREAD = WW1 FINANCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WARFARE]

1916 [Monday 21st August] The Low Moor Explosions: A series of picric acid explosions destroys the Low Moor Munitions Company's factory, Bradford, and kills or mortally injures 37 workers and six firefighters. For a fuller account of the incident see Blackwell (1987 online). [THREAD = WW1 FINANCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WARFARE]

1916 [Sunday 27th-31st August] War in the Balkans [XV - The Salonika Campaign (Romania Takes Sides)]: [Continued from 17th August] After two years of neutrality Romania finally enters the war on the side of the Allies, and immediately deploys her 650,000-strong army (a) to threaten the Austro-Hungarian forces in Transylvania across their southern frontier, (a) to threaten the Austro-Hungarian forces in Serbia across their northeaster frontier, and (c) to give Bulgaria the added burden of maintaining a new front
on its northern frontier. Palmer (1965) offers one possible explanation why the Romanians have taken so long to make up their minds, thus ...

"Three hundred miles to the north-east of Salonika [...] lies Bucharest, which in the early summer of 1916 was the capital of the one country in eastern Europe still untouched by war. Not that Romania's neutrality sprang from principle. As the one land link between Russia and Serbia, she had been wooed by her eastern neighbour [...] and promised the rich prize of Transylvania if she entered the war on the side of the Entente. But the Romanian prime minister [Ion C, Bratianu [Wikipedia biography]], who had no small opinion of his country's military worth, avoided committing himself, confident that with each overture from Petrograd or Paris he could raise his price higher and higher. [...] The situation was drastically changed by a series of Russian victories just north of the Romanian frontier |[<=4th June]|, the Austrians surrendering in their thousands. [...] On July 4th Bratianu informed the French Minister in Bucharest that he was prepared to enter the war provided [amongst other things] that the Bulgars were engaged by a full scale [Allied] offensive from Salonika. Negotiations thereupon began for the signing of a formal military alliance" (pp 71-72).

Eager to claim her reward, Romania immediately launches a major offensive against the Austro-Hungarian First Army in south-eastern Transylvania. However by mid-September the Austro-Hungarians will have recovered from the initial surprise and bring the Romanian advance to a halt. It will be the first in a series of costly reverses over the coming months [sub-thread continues at next entry ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Sunday 27th August] **War in the Balkans [XVI - The Salonika Campaign (The Venizelist Revolution)]:** [Continued from preceding entry] Angered at the lack of Royalist resistance at Fort Rupel three months previously |[<=26th May]|, and emboldened by the new spirit of revolution |[<=17th August]|, a Greek colonel named Emmanuel Zymvrakakis [Wikipedia biography] leads a token attack against the Royal barracks in Salonika (Palmer, 1965). The politically highly aware Sarrail [23rd July (ASIDE)|<=12th September] then adds French weight to the revolution by moving up French artillery in support, whereupon the garrison surrenders, many of their number promptly defecting to the nationalists [sub-thread continues at 30th August ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Wednesday 30th August] **War in the Balkans [XVII - The Salonika Campaign (The Venizelist Coup)]:** [Continued from 27th August] Following events in Salonika at the weekend the British Ambassador in Athens Sir Francis E. H. Elliot [Wikipedia biography] reports that Constantine I of Greece |[1915 (5th October)|<=18th November] appears to be contemplating joining the Allies (Palmer, 1965). In Salonika itself, meanwhile, the leader of the break-away, pro-Entente, Greeks, Venizelos |[1915 (5th October)|<=25th September], is finally persuaded to declare that Revolutionary Greece is at war with the Central Powers [sub-thread continues at 1st September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Friday 1st-14th September] **War in the Balkans [XVIII - The Romanian Fronts (The Constanta Offensive)]:** [Continued from 30th August] To counteract the Romanian offensive into Transylvania the senior German commander in Bulgaria von Mackensen |[5th January|<=23rd November] builds up an Army Group in north-eastern Bulgaria and launches a diversionary offensive along the Dobruja Peninsula [map, etc.] to threaten the strategic port of Constanta [map, etc.]. Faced with a war on two fronts...

GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE: With Romania's entry into the war there were suddenly three major Balkan Fronts instead of one, all running more or less east-to-west across south-eastern Europe. These were, from north to south, (1) Romania's 300-mile-long northern frontier with Austro-Hungarian Transylvania, (2) Romania's 300-mile-long southern frontier with
Bulgaria, and (3) Bulgaria's 180-mile-long southern frontier with Greece (that is to say, the Salonika Front as already described).

... (and exceptionally long fronts, at that) the Romanians fall back [sub-thread continues at 12th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Sunday 3rd-6th September] The Somme Campaign [XXVIII - Late Phase Two (The Battle of Guillemont)]: [Continued from 10th August] As Phase Two of the Somme Offensive comes to an end XIV Corps makes one final effort to fight its way forward from Trones Wood toward Guillemont [maplink at 14th July] in an attempt to push back the right wing of its salient on the Pozières-Bazentin Ridge. The assault divisions are (on the left) [Sir]1917 Geoffrey P. T. Fielding's [Wikipedia biography] 20th (Light) Division and (on the right) [Sir]1919 Reginald B. Stephens' [Wikipedia biography] 5th Division. The village is taken on Day #1 of the battle, and by 6th September an advance of up to a mile has been made [sub-thread continues at 9th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 9th September] The Somme Campaign [XXIX - Late Phase Two (The Battle of Ginchy)]: [Continued from 3rd September] This battle sees XIV Corps successfully capitalise upon its success in the Battle of Guillemont [<=3rd September] by taking the neighbouring village of Ginchy [maplink at 14th July] as well. The attack is delivered by Hickie's [<=1915 (18th December)] 16th (Irish) Division's 48th and 47th Brigades, with 49th Brigade in reserve. The attack begins at 1645hr on 9th September and by 1845hr the village has been taken [sub-thread continues at 15th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Tuesday 12th September-20th October] War in the Balkans [XIX - The Salonika Campaign (The Monastir Offensive)]: [Continued from 1st September] This three-month-long battle is fought as the counter-offensive requested by the Romanians as a condition for their recent declaration of war [<=27th August].

GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE: The Macedonian Front at this point in time ran from (in the west) the Ionian Sea opposite Corfu to (in the east) the Struma Estuary on the Aegean Sea, a distance of some 250 miles. This took it across some of the most substantial mountain ranges in southern Europe, and therefore made major tactical objectives out of the half dozen or so north-south valleys and passes. The ultimate objective of the autumn 1916 offensive was the town of Monastir/Bitola [map, etc.] in the most central of these passes, namely that between the Crna River Bend [Wikipedia factsheet] and Florina [map, etc.].

CAUTION: The town of Monastir gave/gives its name to the region as a whole, and often appears as Manastir. The town also needs to be carefully distinguished from its associated hilltop monastery some 25 miles off to the east.

The Monastir-Florina pass crossed the old Serbia-Greece border at Kenali/Kremenitsa [map, etc.], where the Bulgarian First Army under Kliment Boyadzhiev [Wikipedia biography] had created a defence line worthy of the Western Front, fixed, deep, and well protected by barbed-wire entanglements. From Kenali the front then ran eastward along the (again very well fortified) Kajmakcalan Mountains [Wikipedia factsheet] until it reached the often inaccessible Voras Mountains [Wikipedia factsheet], where only a handful of passes needed defending. It then descended to cross the valley of the River Vardar [map, etc.], before turning south-eastward and following the River Struma [map, etc.] down to its estuary. The predominantly French forces in the Monastir sector, together with the predominantly Serbian forces in the Kajmakcalans, were based 30 miles to the south of the old frontier, around Lake Ostrovo [map, etc.]. The predominantly British forces in the Vardar-Struma sector were based around the tactically important rail-head at Kiliks [map, etc.], 20 miles north of Salonika itself.

The offensive begins on 12th September with simultaneous attacks along the front. In the Monastir sector the French Salonika Army under Victor Cordonnier [Wikipedia
attacks toward Florina, while the Serbian First Army under Zivojin Mišić attacks northward into the Kajmakcalans. The French advance makes some progress, taking Florina on 17th September, while the Serbs, despite strong Bulgarian resistance, succeed in occupying the Kajmakcalans by the end of the month. On 26th September the Germans, responding to these set-backs, move Arnold von Winckler’s Eleventh [German] Army to stiffen the defences around Monastir. The main French assault toward Monastir is launched on 6th October in the Kenali/Kremenitsa sector, but the Bulgarian defences inflict such heavy casualties upon the attackers that on 20th October Sarrail [27th August<=9th October] relieves Cordonnier of his command, replacing him temporarily by Paul Leblois and then more permanently by Grossetti [1914 (7th November)], one of the heroes of the Battle of the Marne. On the right, meanwhile, between the rivers Vardar and Struma, the burden of the offensive falls on the British Salonika Army ...

ASIDE - THE BRITISH SALONIKA ARMY: At this point in time the British Salonika Army contained five infantry divisions and a number of supporting cavalry units under the overall command of George F. Milne [1st Baron Milne] [Wikipedia biography] of December. The army was organised into two corps, as follows: XII Corps (22nd and 26th Divisions) under Sir Henry F. M. Wilson [Wikipedia biography] and XVI Corps (10th (Irish), 27th, and 28th Divisions) under Sir Charles J. Briggs [Wikipedia biography]. Milne has been instructed by Sir William Robertson [5th July<=20th October] to keep the British out of costly major offensives.

Milne directs Wilson’s XII Corps to advance on a 10-mile-wide front between the Vardar and Lake Doiran, while Briggs’ XVI Corps advances in the direction of Serres and the Rupel Pass. Both commanders have been instructed to minimise casualties and conserve resources.

CAMEO - 67TH BRIGADE AT LAKE DOIRAN, AUTUMN 1916: All four battalions in Sir Frederick Gordon’s 22nd Division’s 67th Brigade were Welsh, namely 11th Bn Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 7th Bn South Wales Borderers, 8th Bn South Wales Borderers, and 11th Bn Welch Regiment. A typical action involved 11/RWF and took place on 13th-14th September at Evzonoi/Machukovo, for control of the Salonika-Skopje main road (the modern E-75), thus (heavily abridged) ...

"On the night of the 12th/13th our battalion moved into what was known as the Ravin des Cuisiniers. [...] It was a notable occasion: the first attack in which our battalion took part and the first attack of the 22nd Division. [...] At [1930hr] on the 13th Brigadier-General Herbert [...] gave the order to advance, and the assaulting groups began to move forward through gaps in our wire which had been opened after dark. [...] The assaulting groups then moved forward to positions of deployment, and at [0155hr on 14th] were a hundred yards from the German wire. [...] The assault was delivered at [0210hr] and [...] the whole of B Company of our battalion moved into Cardiff Ravine. Everything, so far, was quite successful. Most of the German troops holding the work retired into the deep dugouts on the northern slopes of the spur and were either captured or bombed [...] The consolidation of the captured position then proceeded without interruption from the enemy [...] Bulgarian infantry was now reinforcing the Germans; the enemy were making a desperate effort to regain the lost salient, and fresh troops were seen advancing [...] At [1630hr] Brigadier-General Herbert informed General Gordon that the whole spur was enfiladed [...] and 'was the target for the concentrated fire of the enemy's artillery,' [...] He proposed to withdraw at dusk, and General Gordon agreed. [...] Our battalion casualties were: 1 other rank killed; Captain [Ronald A.] Spooner and 3 other ranks wounded" (Ward, 1929/2005, pp202-206). Ward, C. H. D. (1929/2005). Regimental Records of the Royal Welch Fusiliers (Volume 4). Uckfield: Naval and Military Press.
CAMEO - I/WELCH ON THE STRUMA, AUTUMN 1916: 1st Bn Welch Regiment [1st August to 1917 (1st January)] was involved in the fighting on the Struma River as part of [Sir] Henry L. Croker's [no convenient biography] 28th Division's 84th Brigade.

The overall outcome of the first month of the offensive is an advance of some 20 miles in the Monastir, Kajmakcalan, and Lake Doiran/River Vardar sectors, but stalemate on the Struma. [sub-thread continues at 15th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1915 [Thursday 14th-17th September] The Italian Adriatic Front [VIII - The Seventh Battle of the Isonzo River]: [Continued from 6th August] The Italians mount an offensive along the Isonzo/Soča River [maplink at 1915 (23rd June)], but with little effect [sub-thread continues at 10th October ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 15th-19th September] War in the Balkans [XX - The Romanian Fronts (Counterstrokes are Prepared)]: [Continued from 12th September] Deciding to concentrate their effort on their southern (i.e., Bulgarian) front the Romanians suspend operations in Transylvania and prepare to attack southwards across the Danube at Flamanda [map, etc.], 30 miles south of Bucharest. In Transylvania, meanwhile, von Falkenhayn [19th August to 18th September] recently re-assigned from the Verdun Front - is assembling the Ninth [German] Army in and around the railhead at Sebeș [map, etc.] in preparation for a major counteroffensive of his own toward Sibiu [map, etc.] and the mountain passes from there down into Romania [sub-thread continues at 18th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

********** HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BATTLE **********
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1916 [Friday 15th-22nd September] The Somme Campaign [XXX - Phase Three, Early (Overview and The Battle of Flers-Courcelette)]: [Continued from 9th September] Following the painfully slow advances during the Battle of the Bazentin Ridge [maplink at 1st July] and with winter in the offing the third and final phase of the Somme Offensive sees Fourth Army commit its three corps in a major push north-eastward toward Le Transloy [map, etc.] in an effort to to cut the Bapaume-Sailly road [= the modern D917]. The Reserve Army to its left supports with simultaneous attacks by II Corps against the Thiepval Salient and by the Canadian Corps toward Courcelette [maplink at 10th August]. Fourth Army's III Corps sends its two divisions against Martinpuich [maplink at 15th July], XV Corps fields three divisions in a push forward out of Delville Wood toward Flers [maplink at 15th July], and XIV Corps fields two divisions out of Ginchy [maplink at 9th September] toward Lesboeufs [map, etc.] and Morval [map, etc.]. The operation as a whole is noteworthy in the present context for its first massed deployment of tanks, whose immunity to small arms fire and wire entanglements facilitates an impressive two mile or so advance on the first day of the battle, with Courcelette, Martinpuich, and Flers all being taken. The next eight weeks will see further operations as fresh troops become available. The histories will deal with these actions under separate headings by location and date, as follows ...

The Battles of Thiepval Ridge and Morval [=25th September]
The Battles of the Ancre Heights and Le Transloy Ridge [=1st October]
The Battle of the Ancre [=13th November]

The overall outcome of this third and final phase of the broader Somme Offensive is that Fourth Army's front moves another two to three miles northward (this includes the advances made on 15th September), thus shifting the south-round-to-east bend from
Thiepval [maplink at 1st July] to Grandcourt [map, etc.] and the subsequent east-back-to-south bend from Combles [map, etc.] to Saily-Saillies [map, etc.] [sub-thread continues at 25th September ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]


1916 [Monday 25th-30th September] The Somme Campaign [XXXI - Phase Three, Early (The Battles of Thiepval Ridge and Morval)]: [Continued from 15th September] This six-day-long battle is fought as a continuation of the Phase Three operations of the broader Somme Offensive [overview at 15th September] in order (a) to reduce the German salients at (on the left) Thiepval [maplink at 1st July] and (on the right) Combles [maplink at 15th September], and (hopefully) (b) break through (in the centre) to the Bapaume-Sailly road [ditto]. Again II Corps, the Canadian Corps, III Corps, XV Corps, and XIV Corps coordinate their attacks along the nine-mile-long front between the Ancre River by St.-Pierre-Divion [a tiny hamlet three-quarters of a mile to the north-west of Thiepval] and Combles. Lesboeufs [maplink at 15th September] and Morval [ditto] fall on the first day of the battle, followed by Mouquet Farm [maplink at 23rd July], Gueudecourt [map, etc.], and Combes on the second, and Thiepval on the third. The final four days of the battle are spent fending off counter-attacks and consolidating gains [sub-thread continues at 1st October ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 29th September-3rd October] War in the Balkans [XXIII - The Romanian Fronts (Counterstrokes are Delivered)]: [Continued from 25th September] After a fortnight in the planning, the Third [Romanian] Army under Alexandru Averescu [Wikipedia biography] launches its attack across the Danube at Flamanda [maplink at 15th September]. This brings them in behind Stefan Toshey's [Wikipedia biography] Third [Bulgarian] Army, which is presently pressing north-eastward toward Constanța [maplink at 1st September]. A simultaneous counter-attack by Romanian and Russian forces on the Constanța Front at Cobadin [map, etc.] halts the Bulgars in their tracks, but - ominously - fails to break them, and the offensive is abandoned. In the north, meanwhile, von Falkenhayn's [18th September<=29th October] Ninth [German] Army has been continuing its advance toward Sibiu [maplink at 15th September] and, 50 miles further east, Brasov [map, etc.] ... [sub-thread continues at 9th October ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Sunday 1st October-11th November] The Somme Campaign [XXXII - Phase Three, Middle (The Battles of the Ancre Heights and Le Transloy Ridge)]: [Continued from 25th September]
This five-week-long battle is fought as a continuation of the Phase Three operations of the broader Somme Offensive [overview at 15th September] in order to exploit the gains made in the Battles of Thiepval Ridge and Morval [<=25th September]. The same five corps are involved, and the new objectives are ...

GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE: The villages now fought over for the first time are (from west to east) Grandcourt [maplink at 15th September], Le Sars [map, etc.], Warlencourt [map, etc.], and Le Transloy [maplink at 15th September]. These are strung out across the southern approach to Bapaume [maplink at 29th June], and accordingly now become the objectives for what will turn out to be the final weeks of the offensive.

After a month of small but encouraging advances British progress is suddenly painfully slow again, for the Germans have brought all available reserves into the line. As a result Le Sars will not fall until 7th October and the only other major gains are (a) the capture of Regina Trench [using the Courcelette maplink at 10th August go three-quarters of a mile north on the D107 and Regina Trench goes off westward to Stuff Redoubt - see 1st October - and eastward to Le Sars] (the German firing line since they lost Mouquet Farm [<=25th September]) by elements of 4th (Canadian) Division’s 10th and 11th (Canadian) Brigades on 11th November, and (b) the general straightening out of the German salient to the east of Le Transloy by the 6th [French] Army [sub-thread continues at 15th November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Monday 9th October or hereabouts] Shellshock [XVII - Brock's Ergotherapy]: [Continued from 15th July] The British physician Arthur J. Brock [no convenient biography=>16th October] joins the R.A.M.C. as a medical officer and is given the freedom to use "ergotherapy" in the management of shell-shock patients. Brock has experimented with this method with a civilian caseload before the war (e.g., Brock, 1911), having convinced himself that neurasthenia is essentially a (possibly long-standing) lack of get up and go. Ergotherapy is thus an "activity-based therapy", that is to say, one encouraging, facilitating, and even now and then insisting upon such activities as sport, gardening, music, writing, and drama [sub-thread continues at 16th October ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE] Crossman, A.M. (2003). The Hydra, Captain A. J. Brock and the treatment of shell-shock in Edinburgh. Journal of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, 33:119-123.

ASEIDE - ACTIVITY-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPY: Too many psychotherapeutic regimes involve "activity" to be listed here [start at this Wikipedia factsheet and take care to separate out "abreactive" and "expressive" activities from all the others]. A century later there is a similar debate as to whether "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome" [Wikipedia factsheet] is a disease with a genuine organic basis or sheer bone-idleness. 

1915 [Tuesday 10th-12th October] The Italian Adriatic Front [IX - The Eighth Battle of the Isonzo River]: [Continued from 14th September] The Italians mount an offensive along the Isonzo/Soča River [maplink at 1915 (23rd June)], but with little effect [sub-thread continues at 1st November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 14th October-1917 (6th January)] The East African Campaign [XXIII - The Smuts Offensive (The Battle of Kibata)]: [Continued from 19th September] On 14th October a British column under Henry de Courcy O'Grady [no convenient biography] occupies an empty fort at Kibata [map, etc.], but then has to endure a three-month siege by von Lettow-Vorbeck's [<=6th May] column of experienced backwoodsmen [sub-thread continues at 1917 (TBA) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]


1916 [Thursday 19th-23rd October] The Battle of Verdun [XV - The French Counter-Offensive (Preliminary Bombardment)]: [Continued from 23rd June] Having had four months of comparative inactivity since the failure of the under-resourced German summer offensive [<=23rd June], a major French counter-offensive begins with a five day artillery bombardment. French spirits are high because they are now well-prepared. The Germans, by contrast, are understrength, often unfed, and plagued by malingering and desertion. Nivelle's [23rd June<=24th October] artillery uses the bombardment as an opportunity to try out two of its brand new 400mm [=16"] railway guns, scoring a direct hit on (and down through the roof into) Fort Douaumont with the very first shot [sub-thread continues at 24th October ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Friday 20th October] War in the Balkans [XXV - The Salonika Campaign (The Boulogne Conference)]: [Continued from 9th October] Representatives of the French and British political and military establishments meet in Boulogne to discuss the practicability (not to mention the wisdom) of transferring British troops from the Western Front to support Allied operations on the Macedonian Front. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir William Robertson [12th September<=12th December] opposes this suggestion very strongly for he is a "Westerner", that is to say, one who believes that the war will only be decided on the Western Front, and that resources should be allocated accordingly [sub-thread continues at 29th October ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Monday 23rd October] Islam in WW1 [XXIV - The Arab Uprising (Lawrence Arrives in the Hejaz)]: [Continued from 10th June] Recently arrived as an adviser Lawrence [24th January<=1917 (3rd January)] meets to discuss objectives and tactics with Faisal bin Hussein [5th June<=1921 (23rd August)], third son on the King of the Hejaz Hussein bin Ali [10th June<=1917 (3rd January)] [sub-thread continues at 1st December ...]. [THREAD = THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]
1916 [Tuesday 24th October-2nd November] The Battle of Verdun [XVI - The French Counter-Offensive]: [Continued from 19th October] Nivelle [19th October<=12th December] experiments with an artillery innovation known as the "creeping barrage", in which there is no give-away pause between the softening up and the attack itself. Instead the artillery rack up the range fractionally after every round so that the detonation line creeps forward at the same speed as (but, if done properly, just in front of) the advancing infantry. So successful is this innovation (and so understrength are the Germans) that Fleury, the Ouvrage de Thiaumont, and Fort Douaumont are all retaken before evening and then held against such counter-attacks as the Germans have the strength to mount. To complete the French victory the Germans abandon Fort Vaux on 2nd November and the battle is effectively over [end of sub-thread]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Sunday 29th October-8th November] War in the Balkans [XXVI - The Romanian Fronts (The Battle of the Jiu Valley)]: [Continued from 20th October] Von Falkenhayn [29th September<=23rd November] separates off an 80,000-strong army group under Viktor Kühne [Wikipedia biography] for operations on his right against the Surdec Pass and then southward along the Jiu Valley [map, etc.] in the direction of Craiova [map, etc.], which duly falls on 8th November. This is the beginning of the end of Romania's part in the war, and they will spend the next two months abandoning their country village by village and falling back to Russian-occupied Moldavia [sub-thread continues at 4th November...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1915 [Wednesday 1st-4th November] The Italian Adriatic Front [X - The Ninth Battle of the Isonzo River]: [Continued from 14th September] The Italians mount an offensive along the Isonzo/Soča River [maplink at 1915 (23rd June)], but with little effect [sub-thread continues at 1917 (12th May) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Sunday 29th October-8th November] War in the Balkans [XXVII - The Romanian Fronts (Britain Sends an Agent)]: [Continued from 29th October] Concerned at Ninth Army's progress toward the Romanian oilfields at Ploesti [map, etc.] and the granaries at Braila [map, etc.] the British War Office despatches its demolition expert Norton-Griffiths [1915 (19th July)<=23rd November] on a secret mission to deny those resources to the enemy. This involves him in eight days of Baltic-hopping to Petrograd [= modern St. Petersburg] followed by a six-day-long train journey down through Russia to Bucharest [sub-thread continues at 10th November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]


1916 [Saturday 4th November] Economics, Social Confrontation, and War [IV - America Against Preparedness (The Everett "Bloody Sunday" Massacre)]: [Continued from 29th October] Concerned at Ninth Army's progress toward the Romanian oilfields at Ploesti [map, etc.] and the granaries at Braila [map, etc.] the British War Office despatches its demolition expert Norton-Griffiths [1915 (19th July)<=23rd November] on a secret mission to deny those resources to the enemy. This involves him in eight days of Baltic-hopping to Petrograd [= modern St. Petersburg] followed by a six-day-long train journey down through Russia to Bucharest [sub-thread continues at 10th November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Sunday 5th November] Economics, Social Confrontation, and War [IV - America Against Preparedness (The Everett "Bloody Sunday" Massacre)]: [Continued from 22nd July] Following a number of local confrontations between striking millworkers and strike-breakers at Everett [map, etc.], WA, their supporters in Seattle [=22nd July], 30 miles down the coast, charter a boat to ferry in some 300 reinforcements. The strike-breakers meet them on the quay and open fire, killing several activists [sub-thread continues at 1917 (5th March)...]. [THREAD = WW1 AMERICAN NEUTRALITY] [THREAD = WW1 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION]

1916 [Friday 10th-19th November] War in the Balkans [XXVII - The Salonika Campaign (The Monastir Offensive Renewed)]: [Continued from 29th October] The third month of the Monastir Offensive sees a renewal of operations, resulting in the town falling to Entente forces on 19th November. A shortage of reserves then prevents further progress, and the offensive is called off early in December [sub-thread continues at 18th November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Monday 13th-18th November] The Somme Campaign [XXXIII - Phase Three, Late (The Battle of the Ancre)]: [Continued from 1st October] This six-day-long battle is fought as the final extension of the Phase Three operations of the broader Somme Offensive [overview at 15th September] in order to straighten out the line of the German salient between Serre [maplink at 1st July] and Mouquet Farm [maplink at 23rd July]. The battle is largely a Fifth Army affair, and involves a pincer movement between (north of the Ancre) V Corps (six divisions, of which four are committed in the initial assault) and (south of the Ancre) II Corps (four divisions, of which two are committed in the initial assault). XIII Corps ensures a stable left flank north of Serre [maplink at 1st July] and Fourth Army's III Corps and I ANZAC between them ensure a stable right flank around Le Sars [maplink at 1st October].

**GEOGRAPHICAL ASIDE:** From left to right (but swinging gradually around from south to east all the way) the main waypoints are: Star Wood [a German support position a mile north of Serre], Serre itself, the Redan Ridge [maplink at 1st July], Beaumont Trench/Munich Trench [the German firing-line/second-line between the Redan Ridge and Beaumont-Hamel], Beaumont-Hamel itself [maplink at 5th February], Station Trench [the German firing line from Beaumont-Hamel to the river], the Ancre itself, St.-Pierre-Divion [maplink at 25th September] on the immediate southern bank, Strasbourg Trench [the German firing-line from St.-Pierre-Divion to the Schwaben Redoubt], the Schwaben Redoubt [maplink at 1st July], Stuff Trench [the German firing-line for the next three-quarters of a mile], Stump Road [a German communication trench leading from Stuff Trench back to Grandcourt [maplink at 15th September]], Regina Trench [maplink at 1st October; freshly captured and now the Canadian firing-line], Desire Trench [the German firing-line facing Regina Trench], Grandcourt Trench [the German second line at this point, and the last line of defence before the Ancre], and Le Sars. Most of the fighting since 15th September had been for the high ground south of the Ancre, and so Nomansland north of the river is still littered with the bones of those who died in the first days of the campaign.

**Day #1:** On 13th November the battle begins with set-piece assaults, mainly in the northern pincer. On the far left flank XIII Corps’ 31st Division attacks north of Serre in the direction of Star Wood, taking the German firing-line and then spending the remainder of the day dealing with counter-attacks. The four V Corps divisions attack as follows: 3rd Division on the left, against Serre, 2nd Division in the left-centre, against the Redan Ridge, 51st (Highland) Division in the right-centre, against Beaumont-Hamel, and 63rd (Royal Naval) Division on the right, in an attempt to push through between Beaumont-Hamel and the river in the direction of Beaumont-sur-l’Ancre [map, etc.]. Two II Corps divisions attack south of the Ancre as follows: 39th Division on the left, along the river toward St.-Pierre-Divion, and 19th Division on the right, against Stuff Trench. The attack at Serre fizzes out in severe mud, whilst that at the Redan Ridge takes and holds Beaumont Trench. The attack at Beaumont-Hamel succeeds in occupying the village by mid-afternoon and in consolidating Station Trench just beyond it. The attack toward Beaumont takes most of the remainder of Station Trench but is called to a halt short of Beaucourt to prevent over-extending the division. The attack toward St.-Pierre-Divion goes in at 0615hr and by 0740hr has taken the village. And the attack toward Stuff Trench is likewise quickly successful.

**Day #2:** On 14th November both pincers are in action. North of the river 2nd and 51st Divisions push forward out of Beaumont Trench toward Munich Trench, while 63rd
Division, now that its flanks are supported, takes Beaucourt. South of the river two II Corps divisions attack as follows: 19th Division on the left, toward Grandcourt, and 39th Division on the right, against the Schwaben Redoubt and the maze of trenches around Stump Road. The Schwaben Redoubt is partly taken. Further east I ANZAC commits 2nd (Australian) Division against the line a mile beyond Le Sars in an attempt to divert German reserves toward protecting their vulnerable left flank. **Days #3-#6:** The remaining four days of the battle see mainly divisional rotations and local consolidating actions. On 15th November 39th Division finally clears the Schwaben Redoubt, and on 18th November - in the final substantive action of the entire Campaign - 18th Division and 4th (Canadian) Division storm Desire Trench. The overall outcome of the battle is thus an advance of half-a-mile or more along a six-mile-long front [sub-thread continues at 18th November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Wednesday 15th November] The Conservative and Unionist Member of Parliament William A. S. Hewins [Wikipedia biography] opens a House of Commons debate on how best "to increase and conserve [Britain's] national food supply" (Hansard, 87:827-939), although no decision has yet been made\(^1\) as to who will get the job of "Food Controller". [THREAD = WW1 AUSTERITY]

\(^1\)ASIDE: The appointment will be announced on 10th December as Hudson E. Kearley, 1st Viscount Devonport [Wikipedia biography].

1916 [Saturday 18th November] **Top Ten¹ WW1 Poetry [III - "The Hero"]:** [Continued from 29th June] Having grown concerned that there is a worrying gulf between military reality and civil reality Sassoon [16th October<=>1917 (TBA)] now highlights same in "The Hero", as now reproduced in full (the colour-coding is ours and relates to the end-notes after the text ...]

"'Jack fell as he'd have wished,' the mother said,  
And folded up the letter that she'd read.  
'The Colonel writes so nicely.' Something broke  
In the tired voice that quavered to a choke.  
She half looked up. 'We mothers are so proud  
Of our dead soldiers.' Then her face was bowed.

Quietly the Brother Officer went out.  
He'd told the poor old dear some gallant lies  
That she would nourish all her days, no doubt  
For while he coughed and mumbled, her weak eyes  
Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed with joy,  
Because he'd been so brave, her glorious boy.

He thought how 'Jack', cold-footed, useless swine,  
Had panicked down the trench that night the mine  
Went up at Wicked Corner; how he'd tried  
To get sent home, and how, at last, he died,  
Blown to small bits. And no one seemed to care  
Except that lonely woman with white hair."

The poem catches on, and it is still being analysed in today's WW1 literature classes [see example] [sub-thread continues at TBA ...]. [THREAD = WW1 INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES] [THREAD = WW1 POETRY]

¹CITATION AS TOP TEN WW1 POETRY: The green highlighting describes the civilian reality - the untutored but inevitably well-rehearsed holding back of tears - of the dreaded War Office telegram. The blue highlighting describes the military reality that civilians - perhaps/perhaps not in their best interest - need to be lied to. The red highlighting states the
truth, of a son who had been an inveterate waster all along, and had "got what he deserved" (this being the irony which - once shared with the reader - makes the work so effective).

**STUDENT EXERCISE:** Compose a fourth verse where the officer - suddenly concerned for the truth - corrects the lie regardless of the mother's feelings.

**RESEARCH ISSUE:** Note the second half of Verse #2. We do not know how long it had taken "the Brother Officer" to make his personal visit to the bereaved mother, but it could not have been before his next leave, by which time she would already have received the (always complimentary) Colonel's letter and, before that, the (always curt) War Office death-ogram. She would therefore have been at least a month, possibly two, into the Kübler-Ross (1969) *Stages of Bereavement* [Wikipedia factsheet]. She is certainly showing some signs of "Acceptance" [ditto], where one makes sense of one's grief in order to reduce its pain. Here thoughts take the form: "OK I've lost my son but it was in a good cause and he seems to have died a man amongst men, which is how he would have wanted it". As we have already noted [<=4th July (Research Issue)] there is no satisfactory theory of the psychological Defense Mechanisms which enable the human mind to arrive at such compromise cognitions; and again the process of Rationalisation is a good place to start one's reading. More to the point, there is also no theory of how much harder it would be to start a war if the parents of those who had died in the previous one had been less successful at controlling their grief in this fashion. [THREAD = THE CAUSES OF WAR]

1916 [Saturday 18th November] The Somme Campaign [XXXIV - Declared Over]: [Continued from 13th November] A cold snap from 15th to 17th November is followed by rain, turning the battlefield into "a wilderness of mud"¹. The battlefields duly fall quiet for the winter. Casualties since 1st July amount to over a million men (420,000 British and Imperial troops, 200,000 French, and 500,000 German) [sub-thread continues at 28th December ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

¹ASIDE: This phrase from the *Official History*.

1916 [Saturday 18th November] Following a letter to the newspapers by Sir Edward Nicholl [<=3rd June] the Welsh editorial cartoonist Staniforth [1915 (25th December)]<=21st November] publishes a cartoon entitled "John Bull at War" [see it now] in which he quotes Nicholl's reminder that Britain "cannot seriously fight and play at the same time". [THREAD = WW1 AUSTERITY]

1916 [Saturday 18th November-1st December] War in the Balkans [XXVIII - The Salonika Campaign (The "Greek Vespers")]: [Continued from 10th November] As part of their ongoing negotiations [<=9th October] on 19th November Constantine I of Greece [30th August<=1917 (11th June)] meets with Dartige du Fournet [<=9th October]. However their attempts to reach an accommodation are soured by a French demand for reparations in kind for Entente losses during the Fort Rupel Affair [<=26th May]. The Greeks politely decline and on 1st December a Franco-British force of marines is put ashore in Athens only to be forced to withdraw when it comes under heavy attack [sub-thread continues at 23rd November ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Tuesday 21st November] Following the capture of Monastir [<=10th November] the Welsh editorial cartoonist Staniforth [18th November]<=30th December] celebrates the event in a cartoon entitled "Rescued" [see it now]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Tuesday 21st November] Presently in service as a hospital ship HMHS Britannic [Wikipedia shipography=>sinks this day] strikes a mine off the Greek coast while en route to pick up wounded from the Salonika Campaign. She sinks in about an hour with the loss of 30 lives. At 53,200 tons she will be the largest ship to be sunk in the war. [THREAD = WW1 SUBMARINE OPERATIONS]

1916 [Thursday 23rd November] War in the Balkans [XXIX - The Romanian Fronts (Von Mackensen Crosses the Danube)]: [Continued from 18th November] In an attempt to divide the already over-stretched Romanian forces von Mackensen [1st September<=1st December] crosses the Danube at Svishtov/Zimmicea [map, etc.] and strikes north-eastward for Bucharest, a mere 80 miles away. Around the same time von Falkenhayn [<=29th October] is closing in from the north on Ploesti [maplink at 4th November] and Braila [ditto]. Norton-Griffiths [=1915 (19th July)] meanwhile, after his fortnight en route, has arrived in Bucharest and on 23rd November the Romanian government approves the destruction of the oilfields and grain stocks. He duly assembles a small team of operatives from suitably experienced British oilfield engineers and they spend the next month working alongside the Romanian rear-guard plugging oil drillings, trashing wellheads and machine shops, dynamiting refineries, and setting fire to storage tanks; also burning or contaminating the 54,000-ton grain stocks around Braila [sub-thread continues at 1st December ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Friday 1st December or hereabouts] Shellshock [XIX - The NYDN Centres]: [Continued from 9th October] Having taken advice from Myers [<=1915 (13th February)] the Director-General of the British Army's medical services Sir Arthur T. Sloggett [Wikipedia biography] approves the establishment of four "NYDN [= "Not Yet Diagnosed (Nervous)""] Centres in France for the rapid treatment of shellshock casualties (that they might be equally rapidly returned to duty) [sub-thread continues at 1917 (2nd January) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MILITARY MEDICINE AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE]

1916 [Friday 1st-6th December] War in the Balkans [XXX - The Romanian Fronts (The Battle of Bucharest)]: [Continued from 23rd November] Following von Mackensen S [=23rd November] crossing of the Danube [=23rd November] Bucharest falls on 6th December, and all who can struggle eastward toward the (comparative) safety of the Russian lines in Moldavia [sub-thread continues at 12th December ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Wednesday 6th December] Irish Home Rule [LI - The Easter Rising (The Unionists Play Kingmakers)]: [Continued from 3rd August] Backed by the Conservative and Unionist Party's Bonar Law [<=1915 (17th May)] and Sir Edward Carson [<=24th July], the Liberal Party's Lloyd George [<=24th July] ousts Asquith [<=31st July] as Prime Minister. The price of their support is a Cabinet reshuffle to the right [sub-thread continues at 23rd December ...]. [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

1916 [Tuesday 12th-21st December] War in the Balkans [XXXI - The Salonika Campaign (Thinking Ahead)]: [Continued from 1st December] Joffre [=26th May] resigns as Commander-in-Chief of the French Army, and is replaced by Nivelle [24th October<=1917 (TBA)]. His last substantive order (signed the day before) is that Sarrail [9th October<=1917 (5th January)] should prepare for a major Central Powers counter-offensive now that a quarter of a million enemy troops have been freed up by the collapse of Romania for use on the Salonika Front. Meanwhile Bullfin's [<=1915 (27th May)] 60th (2/2nd London) Division arrives in theatre, bringing Milne's [12th September<=1917 (5th January)] British Salonika Army up to six divisions. On 21st December Britain finally formally recognises the triumvirate Provisional Government in Salonika [sub-thread continues at 1917 (5th January) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]
1916 [Tuesday 12th December] The Peace Offer: Following the receipt through diplomatic channels of a German suggestion for peace negotiations to begin the Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir William Robertson [20th October => 1917 (5th January)] advises that - militarily - it should be rejected. [THREAD = WW1 GRAND STRATEGIES]


1916 [Saturday 23rd December] Egypt and the Canal Zone [IV - The Sinai Campaign (The Battle of Magdhaba)]: [Continued from 3rd August] This battle is fought during the Sinai Campaign of mid-to-late 1916 between a British-Anzac column under [Sir] 1917 Henry G. ["Harry"] Chauvel [Wikipedia biography] and the Turkish-German defenders at Magdhaba [use the Al Arish maplink at 3rd August and go 15 miles south-eastward along Wadi Arish]. The outcome is a British-Anzac victory and the outflanking of the Ottoman defences on the coastline south of Gaza [sub-thread continues at 1917 (TBA) ...]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Thursday 28th December] The Somme Campaign [XXXV - The End of the Road]: [Continued from 18th November] One John C. Lauder [no convenient biography] is killed in action on the Somme. The circumstances of his death are not precisely known and are destined to become the subject of theories and counter-theories [see negative theory; see positive theory]. The news of his only son's death reaches his father, the music-hall entertainer [Sir] 1919 Henry ["Harry"] Lauder [Wikipedia biography], on New Year's Day, just as he is about to go on stage, the agony rendering him unable to perform. Later, however, he will give voice to his grief in the lyrics of his 1924 song "Keep Right on to the End of the Road" [hear it now] [end of sub-thread]. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS]

1916 [Saturday 30th December] In his last offering for the year the Welsh editorial cartoonist Staniforth [21st November => 1917 (TBA)] publishes a cartoon entitled "Artful Dodgers" [see it now] which - in political cartoonists' code - accuses the Germans of political cynicism in their recent proposals for peace talks and tacitly approves the decision [<= 12th December] to reject same. Europe, despite its accumulating losses, still evidently has a stomach for war. [THREAD = WW1 MAJOR BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS] [THREAD = THE SHAPING OF THE MODERN WORLD]

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