

***BRITAIN IN THE
FIRST WORLD WAR***

World War I (WWI or WW1), also known as the First World War, the Great War, or the War to End All Wars, was a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918. More than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilised in one of the largest wars in history. Over nine million combatants and seven million civilians died as a result of the war (including the victims of a number of genocides), a casualty rate exacerbated by the belligerents' technological and industrial sophistication, and the tactical stalemate caused by gruelling trench warfare. It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history, and paved the way for major political changes, including revolutions in many of the nations involved. Unresolved rivalries still extant at the end of the conflict contributed to the start of the Second World War only twenty-one years later.

The war drew in all the world's economic great powers, assembled in two opposing alliances: the Allies (based on the Triple Entente of the Russian Empire, the French Third Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) versus the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Although Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary, it did not join the Central Powers, as Austria-Hungary had taken the offensive against the terms of the alliance. These alliances were reorganised and expanded as more nations entered the war: Italy, Japan and the United States joined the Allies, while the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers

The trigger for the war was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. This set off a diplomatic crisis when Austria-Hungary delivered an ultimatum to the Kingdom of Serbia, and entangled international alliances formed over the previous decades were invoked. Within weeks the major powers were at war, and the conflict soon spread around the world.

By the end of the war or soon after, the German Empire, Russian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist. National borders were redrawn, with several independent nations restored or created, and Germany's colonies were parceled out among the victors.



Clockwise from top:
trenches on the
Western Front; a British
Mark IV Tank crossing a
trench; Royal Navy
battleship HMS
Irresistible sinking after
striking a mine at the
Battle of the
Dardanelles; a Vickers
machine gun crew with
gas masks, and German
Albatros D.III biplanes



Rival military coalitions in 1914; Triple Entente in green; Triple Alliance in brown. Only the Triple Alliance was a formal "alliance"; the others listed were informal patterns of support.

German industrial and economic power had grown greatly after unification and the foundation of the Empire in 1871 following the Franco-Prussian War.

From the mid-1890s on, the government of Wilhelm II used this base to devote significant economic resources for building up the Kaiserliche Marine (Imperial German Navy), established by Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, in rivalry with the British Royal Navy for world naval supremacy.[25] As a result, each nation strove to out-build the other in capital ships. With the launch of HMS Dreadnought in 1906, the British Empire expanded on its significant advantage over its German rival.[25] The arms race between Britain and Germany eventually extended to the rest of Europe, with all the major powers devoting their industrial base to producing the equipment and weapons necessary for a pan-European

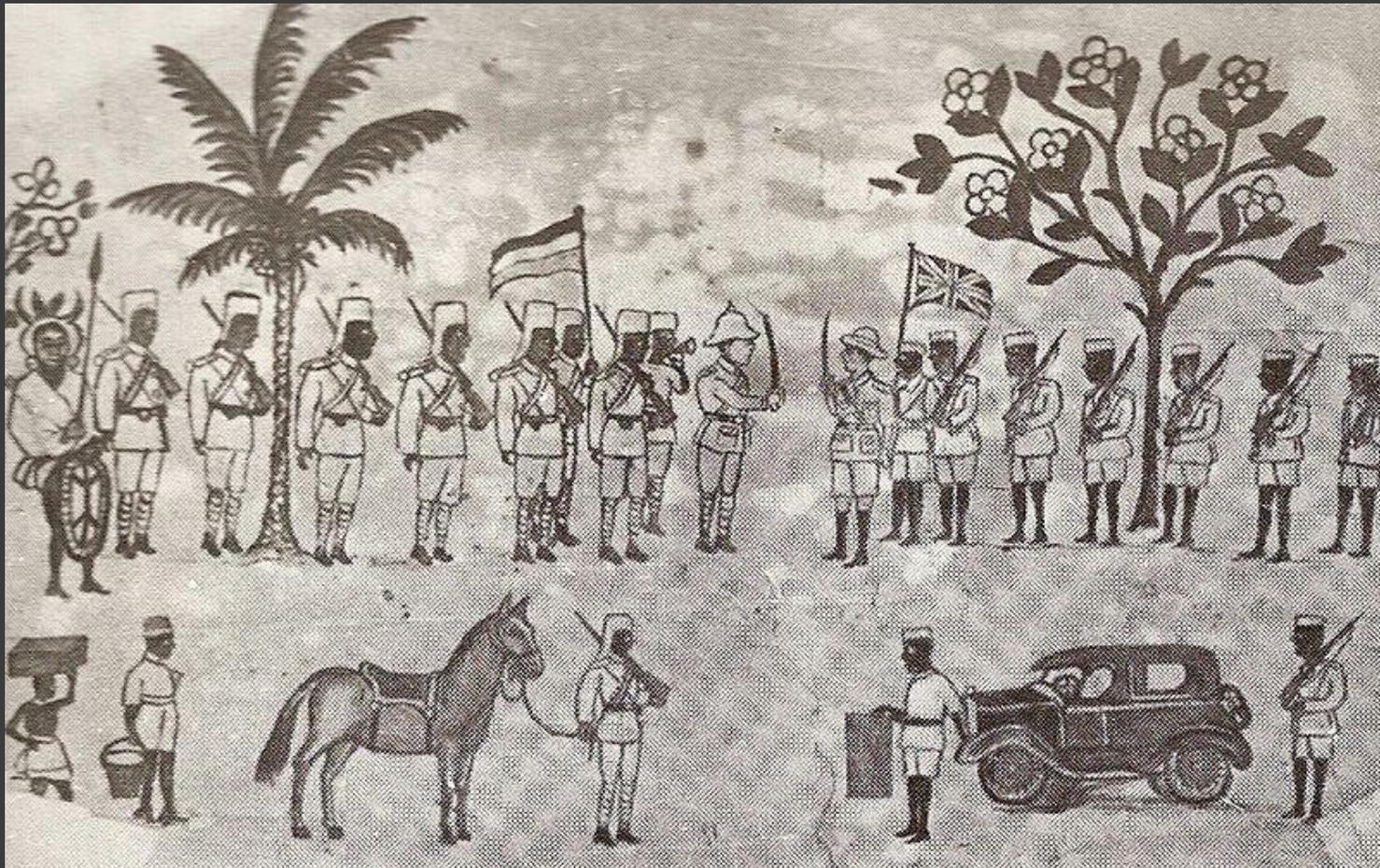
Map of the participants in World War I: Allied Powers in green, Central Powers in orange, and neutral countries in grey



HMS Dreadnought. A naval arms race existed between the United Kingdom and Germany.



Lettow surrendering his forces to the British at Abercorn



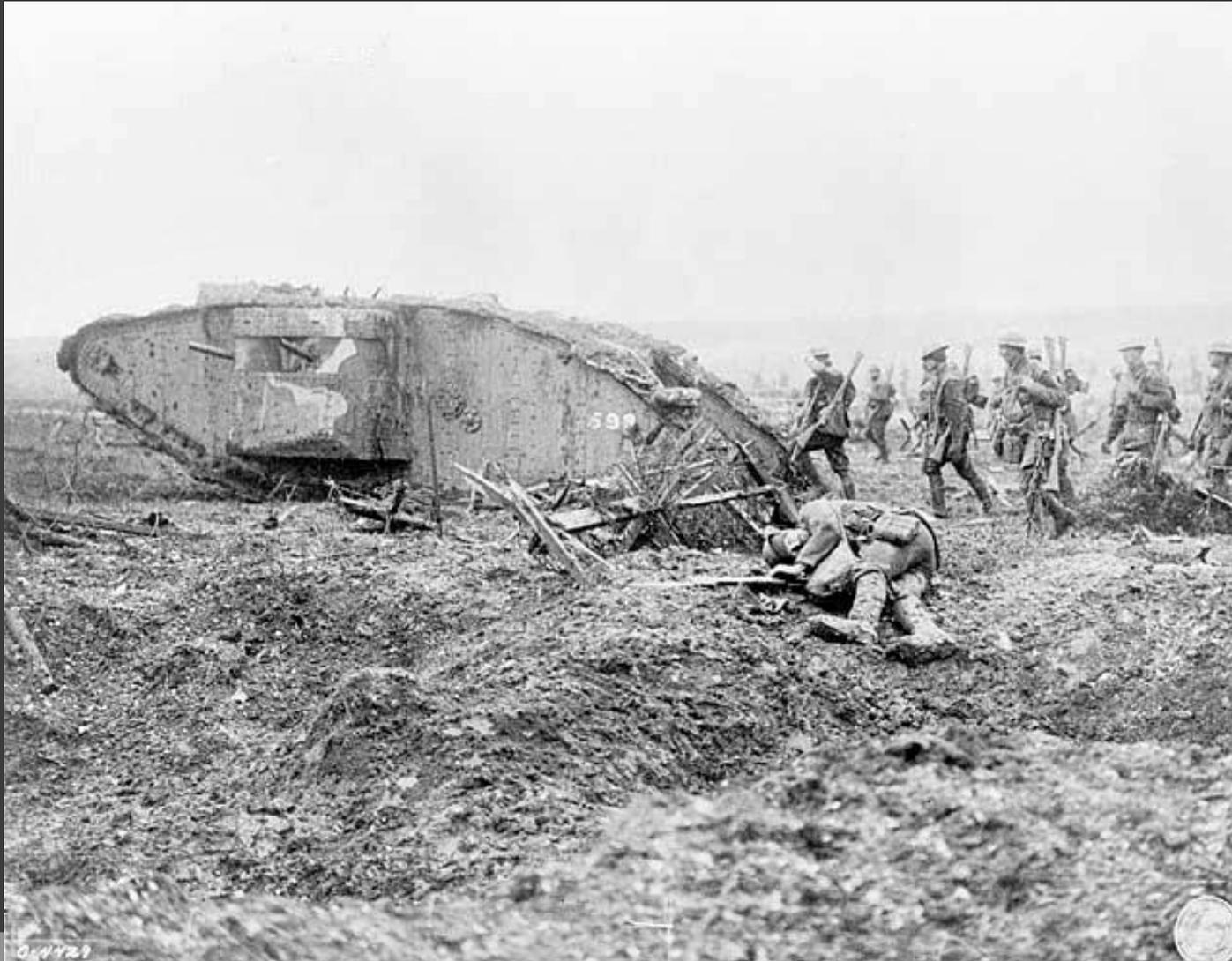
Sir Winston Churchill with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1916



In the trenches: Royal Irish Rifles in a communications trench on the first day on the Somme, 1 July 1916.



Canadian troops advancing behind a British Mark II tank at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.



Officers and senior enlisted men of the
Bermuda Militia Artillery's Bermuda
Contingent, Royal Garrison Artillery, in
Europe.



The British Grand Fleet making steam for Scapa Flow, 1914



U-155 exhibited near Tower Bridge in London after the First World War.



A British artillery battery emplaced on Mount Scopus in the Battle of Jerusalem.



Signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (9 February 1918) are: 1. Count Ottokar von Czernin, 2. Richard von Kühlmann, and 3. Vasil Radoslavov



British 55th (West Lancashire) Infantry Division troops blinded by tear gas during the Battle of Estaires, 10 April 1918.



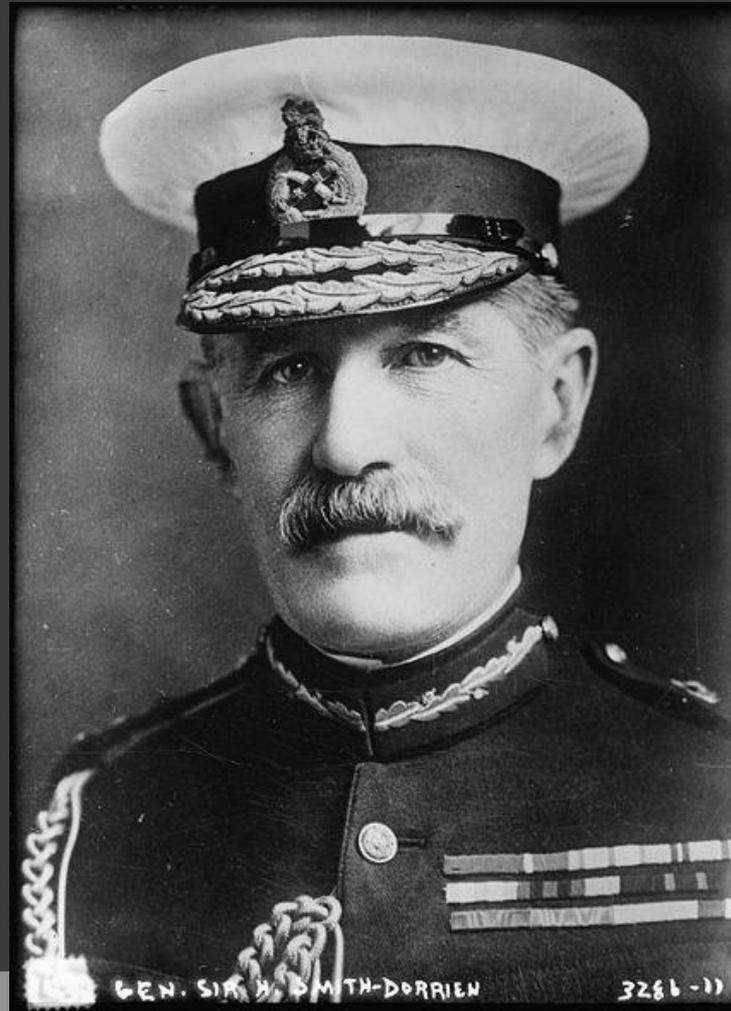
RAF Sopwith Camel. In April 1917, the average life expectancy of a British pilot on the Western Front was 93 flying hours.



British Vickers machine gun



Shortly before the war, British General Horace Smith-Dorrien predicted a catastrophic war which should be avoided at almost any cost.



The Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in the Somme.



"The Girl Behind the Gun" – women workers, 1915

The Girl Behind the Gun

The War Enlistee,
December 30th, 1915.



The Girl Tommy Atkins left behind-him has enlisted in the great Munition Corps with "barracks" all over the country.

There are now few processes in shell and cartridge manufacture with which women cannot be trusted. Above, percussion caps are being fitted, and below is a section of the testing room, where girls are gauging the shell cases as they pass along on a travelling belt.





