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# Important Battles of WWI

# The C.E.F.

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- The C.E.F. was the Canadian Expeditionary Force.
- Over the course of the war, over 425,000 C.E.F. members served overseas.
- Most soldiers in the C.E.F. were inexperienced as soldiers and came from normal professions.
- Canadian soldiers were most often led by British officers rather than Canadian officers.



# Ypres

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- The First Division of the C.E.F. was sent over to Ypres, Belgium.
- Ypres was considered important because it had many connections to ports via road and rail.
- It was one of the final towns in Belgium not occupied by Germany.



# Ypres cont.

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- Ypres was significant because it was the first battle of World War One to use poison gas in April 1915.
- Despite being outlawed in 1906 by international treaties, the Germans unleashed poison gas from canisters that flowed towards allied trenches.



# Gas Attacks

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- The chlorine gas was heavier than air and sunk into the trenches.
- Soldiers who hid in their dugouts were quickly killed.
- The only ways to survive were to wear a gas mask or to pee on a handkerchief and hold it over your mouth and nose.



# War Technology: Poison Gas

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- The advantages of using poison gas included that it was easy to deploy, one only needed to let the gas flow into an enemy trench with little risk to the operator.
- A downside of poison gas was that it was hard to control.
- If the wind changed direction unexpectedly, the poison gas could blow into your own trench.
- Poison gas killed about 1,000,000 people over the course of World War One.

# The Somme

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- The Somme Offensive took place during the summer of 1916 in the Somme River Valley in Northern France.
- The Somme was significant because of a large British commitment that yielded little gains and represented the futility of trench warfare.



# The Somme cont.

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- Initial Entente artillery bombardments did little against the German defences.
- The well-constructed German trenches could more easily withstand artillery fire and they simply hid.
- Many artillery shells fired by the British sunk into the mud and failed to destroy the enemy barbed wire.

# The Somme cont.

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- Canadians were ordered “Over the Top.”
- Used a new tactic known as the “Creeping Barrage” where friendly artillery would fire at no man’s land then slowly start firing towards the enemy trench.
- This made enemy soldiers hide in their dugouts and gave them less time to prepare for the incoming attack.
- Despite this new tactic, they were nearly immediately cut down by the still intact machine gun nests and German artillery.

# The Somme: Casualties

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- The First Newfoundland Regiment was cut down from 801 men to 68.
- Only 13 km were gained and over 600,000 casualties occurred for the British attackers and over 400,000 casualties for the German defenders.



# War Technology: Machine Guns

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- As mentioned before, machine guns made traditional formation fighting obsolete.
- A Lewis Gun could shoot 500-600 rounds per minute.
- The only disadvantages that come with machine guns is that they are bulky and require a team to use properly.



# War Technology: Artillery

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- Artillery became much more destructive and common during World War One.
- Artillery lobbed explosive shells long distances.
- Shrapnel is the fragments of metal and debris shot out from a shell explosion.
- These explosions could wipe out large groups with ease.
- The main disadvantage of artillery was its lack of mobility.



# Canadian Identity

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- Canadian troops were often used by the British as cannon fodder for their own troops.
- This often meant being given the most perilous of assignments.
- While this meant that Canadian casualties were high, it also meant that Canadian troops who survived became highly skilled and experienced.
- This would help Canadian troops with later successes.

# The Arras Offensive

- The Arras Offensive was a plan for the Triple Entente to push westward in the spring of 1917.
- The Canadians were given the daunting task of taking the high point of the region known as Vimy Ridge.



# German Defences at Vimy Ridge

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- The Germans had fortified Vimy Ridge for 3 Years.
- It had 3 lines of trenches, a network of barbed wire, concrete machine gun nests, and underground bunkers for troops to hide in during artillery barrages.
- Previously in 1914, more than 100,000 French Soldiers were killed and wounded in trying to recapture Vimy Ridge.

# Battle Preparations

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- Canada had 100,000 soldiers committed to retaking the ridge.
- Roads were built and repaired to move in massive quantities of men and supplies.
- During the night, Canadian raiding parties entered German trenches to cause havoc, capture enemy soldiers, and gather intelligence.
- Airplanes were used to locate enemy artillery placements.
- All this preparation was required to avoid previous disasters such as the Somme.

# General Julian Byng

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- British General Julian Byng was the mastermind behind Vimy Ridge.
- Insisted that squads be able to think for themselves and take initiative as long as they achieved the main goal.
- More battlefield specialists, such as grenadiers, were used instead of just riflemen.



# Opening of Vimy Ridge

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- 980 artillery pieces opened fire, doing severe damage to key points of German trenches thanks to earlier scouting.
- The “Creeping Barrage” was used to ferry Canadian soldiers up the battlefield before German soldiers had time to react in the early hours of the morning.
- 150 supporting machine guns also kept the German heads down.



# Vimy Ridge

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- Canadians quickly engaged in hand-to-hand combat in German trenches.
- The surviving German machine gun nests were destroyed by hand grenades.
- By the late afternoon, most of Vimy Ridge was under Canadian control with many German soldiers taken as prisoners.
- Canadians gained 5 km of territory in one push.

# Conclusion of Vimy Ridge

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- Canada had taken Vimy Ridge at the cost of over 11,000 casualties.
- The Germans had suffered 20,000 Casualties and had lost their territory
- A point of national pride for Canada, even though we worked very closely with British officers
- This was the first time Canada's forces would band together to take an objective by themselves.



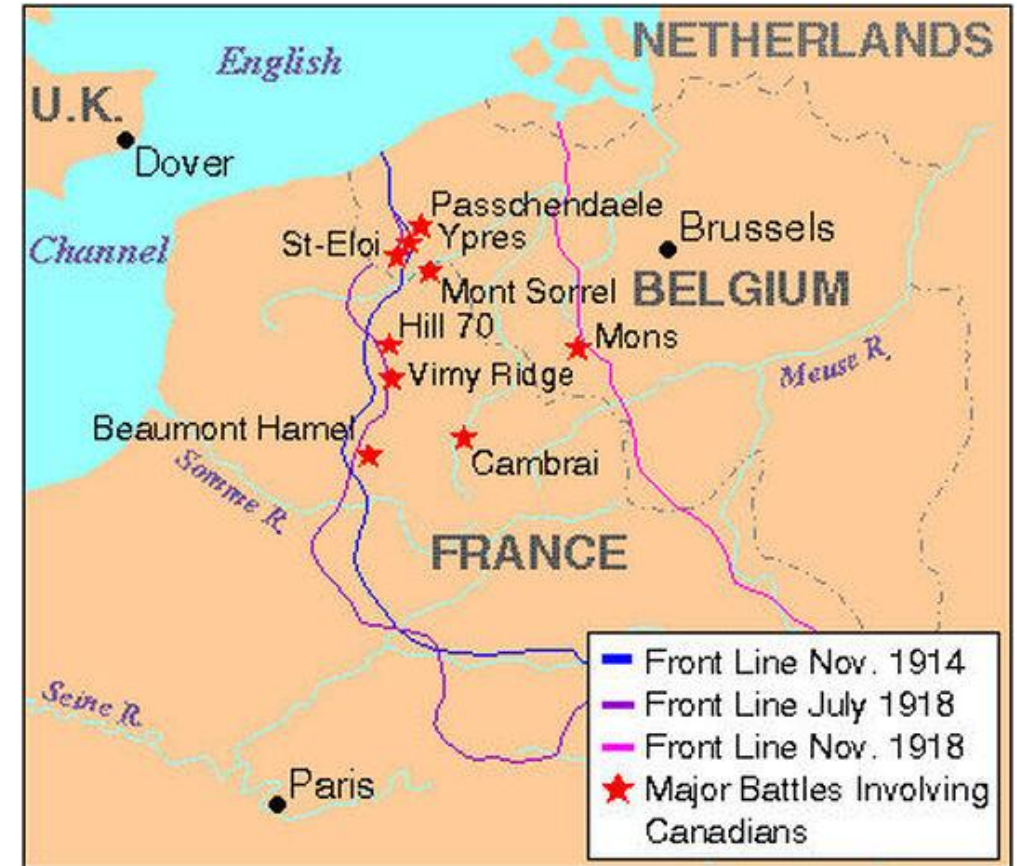
# Canada Advanced as a Nation

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- Vimy Ridge cemented Canadian Victory through proper planning and shaped Canadian identity through military sacrifice.
- Robert Borden would eventually prefer to have more autonomy from Britain and self-representation, which he felt was earned after Canada's sacrifices.
- General Julian Byng would eventually go on to serve as Canada's Governor General after the war.

# Passchendaele

- Passchendaele was an operation to relieve Belgian ports from German control.
- The operation began in the summer of 1917.
- It involved British, French and Canadian Troops.



# Muddy Mess

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- The drainage systems had been destroyed since 1914 and the rainfall had gathered in all the shell craters.
- This created a muddy swamp that could easily drown a man that took a wrong step.



# Results of Passchendaele

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- After numerous assaults, the area was captured.
- Britain, including Canada, suffered over 275,000 casualties.
- Germany suffered over 220,000 casualties.
- The ground taken was quickly lost in 1918 due to the threat of a massive German invasion.
- The liberation of Belgian ports never materialized due to the onset of winter.
- Passchendaele would represent a return to tactics that resulted in incredible losses of life rather than the ingenious tactics of Vimy Ridge a few months earlier.

# War Technology: Tanks

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- Tanks were conceived as a way to ferry soldiers across no man's land.
- They could roll over barbed wire, cross trenches, and have soldiers take cover behind them.
- They were devastating against enemy morale and contained several weapons.
- Tanks were prone to breaking down and could not operate in the mud.

# War Technology: Airplanes

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- Airplanes early in the war were only used for reconnaissance.
- They would scout key enemy positions and track enemy movement.
- Eventually airplanes were equipped with machine guns to counter enemy scouting planes.
- Airplanes at this time were quite flimsy, as any excess weight made it difficult to take off properly.

# The Red Baron

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- Manfred, baron von Richthofen.
- Germany's top Aviator and leading Ace in WWI.
- He was personally credited with shooting down 80 enemy aircraft.
- Debated whether he was killed by Canadian Pilot Captain Arthur Roy Brown or by Australian ground fire.



# War Technology: Horses

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- Horses were used in a variety of roles in WWI.
- They were initially used for mounted combat, but this was impossible due to enemy machine guns.
- Used for carrying supplies and smaller artillery.
- Could be led across the same rough terrain that soldiers walked, unlike automobiles or trains.
- Largely phased out of war after WWI.

