

The Battles of the Great War Project

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Western Front, 1917

Battle of Messines

- This battle was fought in **June of 1917**
- The participants of this battle consisted of the **British Empire**, which included **Australia, Canada, New Zealand**, and the **United Kingdom**, and the **German Empire**

Battle of Messines

- It took place in **Flanders, Belgium**
- This battle lasted from **June 7, 1917** to **June 14, 1917**

Battle of Messines

- For the British Empire, **24,562 people** were killed. As for the German Empire, **25,000 people died, 10,000 went missing**, including the **7,200 taken prisoner**
- The **British Empire** won the Battle of Messines

Battle of Messines

- From a mixture of **craters** and **explosives**, tons and tons of land was lost due to over 200 foot diameter circles in the ground
- One unusual thing that happened during this war was that **19 mines** were set off just before the infantry attack.

Third Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Passchendaele

- The Battle of Passchendaele was fought in **mid-1917**
- The **British Empire**, which included **France** and **Belgium**, fought against the **German Empire**

Third Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Passchendaele

- This battle took place in **Passchendaele, Ypres Salient, Belgium**
- The duration was from **July 31, 1917** to **November 10, 1917**

Third Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Passchendaele

- The casualties for the **British Empire** was **275,000 people**, meanwhile, for the **German Empire**, the casualties was **220,000**, including **24,065 prisoners**
- The **British Empire** claimed their victory for the Battle of Passchendaele

Third Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Passchendaele

- In the year of 1918, all of the land that was **gained** in this battle by the **British** was soon **evacuated** after **German assault**
- The Battle of Passchendaele is known for being one of the **muddiest battles** of the war, and this had the soldiers and war horses drowning in the liquid mud

Battle of La Malmaison

- The Battle of La Malmaison was fought in **October of 1917**
- The participants of this battle was **France** and the **German Empire**

Battle of La Malmaison

- This battle was fought in **France**
- The duration of this battle was from **October 23, 1917** to **October 27, 1917**

Battle of La Malmaison

- The casualties and losses for France was somewhere in between **12,000-14,000 people**, meanwhile for the German Empire, it was **18,000-50,000 people**
- The Battle of La Malmaison resulted in a **French victory**

Battle of La Malmaison

- There is **no information** regarding the amount of land gained or lost in the Battle of La Malmaison
- For every **32 Germans** in this battle, they were confronted by **125 French people**

Battle of Cambrai

- This battle was fought towards the **end of 1917**
- On one side, there was the **British Empire**, which included the **United Kingdom** and **Newfoundland**, along with **France** and the **United States**. On the other side of the battle was the **German Empire**

Battle of Cambrai

- The Battle of Cambrai took place in **Cambrai, France**
- This lasted from the **20th of November** to the **7th of December in 1917**

Battle of Cambrai

- The British Empire, France, and the United States lost **44,00**, and **476 tanks**, with **378** being **combat tanks**
- There is **no information** regarding who won or lost the Battle of Cambrai

Battle of Cambrai

- This battle was considered a **wash** because the British gained land, but it was soon taken away by the Germans towards the end of the battle
- The Battle of Cambrai was the **first battle** that **tanks** were **used en masse**

Western Front, 1918

German Spring Offensive

- The German Spring Offensive started on March 21, 1918.
- The belligerents that were involved in these attacks were France, the British Empire, United States, Portugal, and Italy.

German Spring Offensive

- The German Spring Offensive took place in the Northern France; West Flanders, Belgium. It was launched from the Hindenburg Line.
- This lasted from March 21st to July 18th, 1918.

German Spring Offensive

- There were 688,341 casualties just for the German sides and as for the other sides:
 - Italy- 5,000 casualties
 - Portugal- 7,000 casualties
 - France- 433,00 casualties
 - British Empire- 418,374 casualties
- Victory was not achieved and the German armies were severely depleted.

German Spring Offensive

- The territorial gains were in the form of salients which greatly increased the length of the line that would have to be defended when Allied reinforcements gave the Allies the initiative.
- This series of attacks along the Western Front during World War I was marked the deepest advances by either side since 1914.

First Battle of the Somme/Battle of St. Quentin/The Second Battle of the Somme

- This battle started on August 21, 1918.
- It was the British Empire and the United States against the German Empire.

First Battle of the Somme/Battle of St. Quentin/The Second Battle of the Somme

- It took place along either side of the Somme River in France.
- The battle lasted from August 21st to September 2nd, 1918. The Battle of Somme lasted for a total of 140 days.

First Battle of the Somme/Battle of St. Quentin/The Second Battle of the Somme

- Heavy German casualties took place, no number was recorded. Canada did capture more than 6,000 German unwounded soldiers. The United States had 11,500 casualties along with 5,600 British Empire casualties from Canada.
- It was an allied victory.

First Battle of the Somme/Battle of St. Quentin/The Second Battle of the Somme

- Land gained/lost
- Tanks were used for the first time at the Battle of the Somme. 50 tanks of the British army were sourced and were to reach Somme by September, but only 24 of the tanks actually participated due to mechanical fails.

Battle of the Lys/The Fourth Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Estaires

- The Battle of Lys started on April 7th, 1918.
- The United Kingdom, Portugal, Belgium, and France went against the German Empire in this battle.

Battle of the Lys/The Fourth Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Estaires

- Flanders, Northeast France is where the battle had taken place.
- It lasted from the 7th to the 29th of April, 1918.

Battle of the Lys/The Fourth Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Estaires

- The German empire had 86,000 to 109,300 casualties along with 8 aircrafts and there were 118,300 to 119,040 casualties, 118 guns, 60 aircrafts lost together with the United Kingdom, Portugal, Belgium, and France.
- Allied powers victory.

Battle of the Lys/The Fourth Battle of Ypres/The Battle of Estaires

- Land gained/lost
- The Battle of Lys was part of the 1918 German Spring Offensive ordered by Luderndorff in a final attempt by the Germans to break the Allied lines around Ypres.

Eastern Front, 1915

Siege of Przemyśl

- The Siege of Przemyśl was fought in September of 1914. The first phase lasted for a short time and later continued in October of 1914, November 9, 1914, and then finally the Austrians surrendered on March 22, 1915.
- Austria-Hungary, Russian Poland, and Przemyśl (a fortified city on the Austro-Hungarian border with Russia.)

Siege of Przemyśl

- It took place in Przemyśl, Austria-Hungary (present day Poland)
- It lasted from September 16, 1914- March 22, 1915

Siege of Przemyśl

- Austria-Hungary had a casualty number consisting of 203,000. 86,000 were dead and 117,000 were captured including the wounded.
- Russia had a casualty number consisting of 115,000. 40,000 of those casualties were sustained in the first few days of the siege.
- The Russians won the war. The fate of Przemyśl was decided by the failure of the Austrian-Hungary winter offensive of 1915. Neither worked and once it was clear that they failed, Austria-Hungary surrendered leaving 2,500 officers, 117,000 men and 1,000 guns being captured by the Russians.
- Because of this loss, it gave Austria-Hungary the will to seize Przemyśl back again and on June 3rd, they did.

Siege of Przemyśl

- Przemyśl lost their land while the Russians took the land. After a couple of months, the land was recaptured by the Austrians. This was because a combined German-Austrian offensive ended the great victory of Gorlice-Tarnow, which forced the Russians to leave all of Poland.
- Airmail flights from Przemyśl during both sieges when airmail postcards, mostly military mail, were flown from the besieged city on twenty-seven flights. Following a forced landing, mail from one flight was confiscated by the Russians and sent to Saint Petersburg for postal censorship and onward transmission. Balloon mail, on some manned but mainly unmanned paper balloons, was also carried out of the city. Pigeon mail was also used to send messages out of the city.

Battle of Bolimov

- The Battle of Bolimov took place on January 31, 1915.
- The battle consisted of the Russians and the Germans.

Battle of Bolimov

- The battle took place and was centered around the west of Warsaw, Poland.
- It is not known how long the battle lasted for.

Battle of Bolimov

- The German Empire suffered 20,000 casualties.
- The Russian Empire suffered 40,000 casualties.
- There is no known result to this battle, therefore it is inconclusive.

Battle of Bolimov

- There was no recollection of land being gained or lost.
- The Battle of Bolimov was the first to use poison gas.
- The poison gas failed to vaporize in freezing temperatures, resulting in this not being very useful to the Germans.
- Due to the fact that the poison didn't work, a German attack was called off, resulting in the Russians launching a number of heavy frontal counterattacks.

Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes

- The Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes was fought in February of 1915.
- The German Empire and the Russian empire both fought each other in the Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes.

Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes

- This battle took place in East Prussia, Germany
- The battle lasted 15 days.

Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes

- The Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes consisted of 16,200 casualties on the German Empire's side with 14 guns being destroyed.
- The Russian Empire had 200,000 casualties with 185-300 guns lost.
- The German Empire won this victory by surrender of the XX corps.

Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes

- The Germans drove the Russians out of their remaining enclaves in East Prussia, gaining that land.
- The purpose of this war was to knock Russia out of the war.
- It was also called the Winter Battle of Masuria because when it started, a severe blizzard occurred.

Naval Engagements

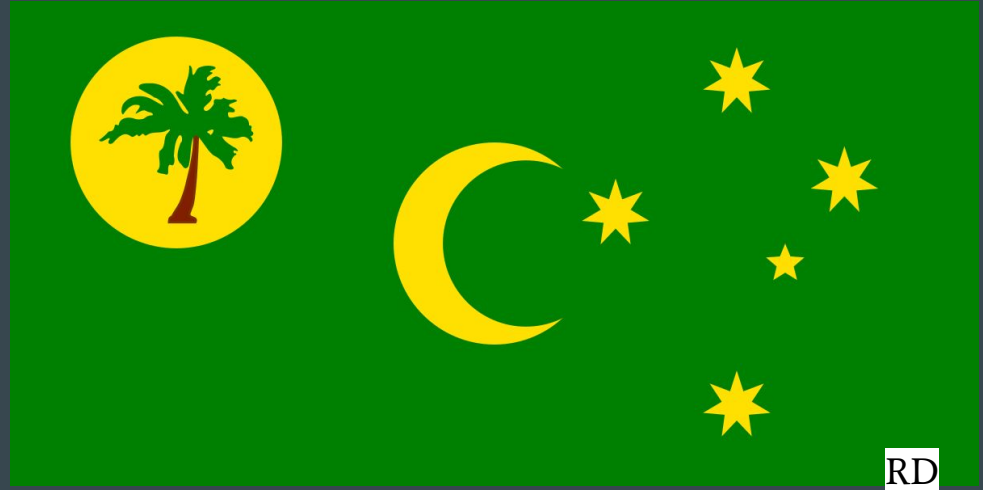
Battle of Cocos (1914)

- The Battle of Cocos was fought between the **German Empire** and **Australia** on **November 9, 1914**.



Battle of Cocos (1914)

- The battle took place on **Coco (Keeling) Island**, an island on Australia's external territory. It was a **90-minute battle/gun-duel**.



Battle of Cocos (1914)

HMAS Sydney (Australia):

- 4 killed
- 16 wounded

SMS Emden (German Emp.):

- 131 killed
- 69 wounded

- **Sydney** hits Emden more than 100 times resulting in Australia's success. Emden so badly destroyed, they had to run ashore to avoid sinking.
- Extreme moral victory for Australia, devastating for Germany

Battle of Cocos (1914)

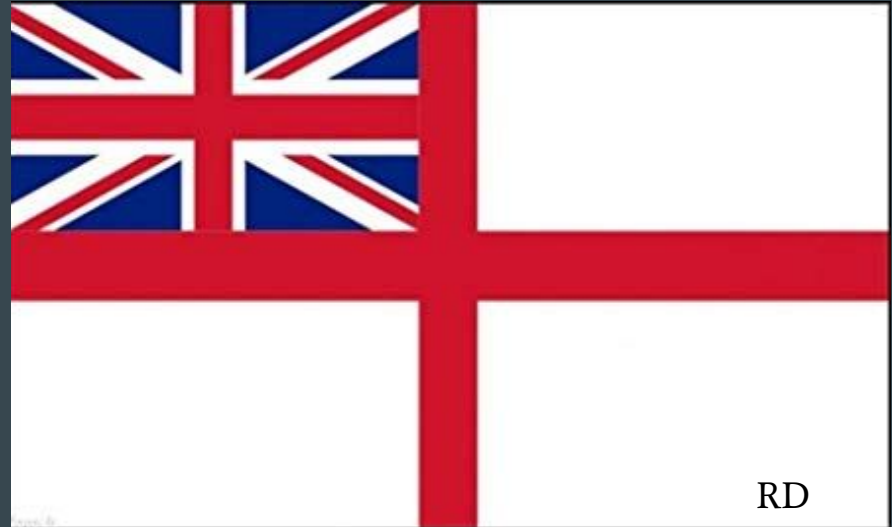
- No land was gained or lost
- This was Australia's **first** sea battle of WWI
- “...in the name of humanity you now **surrender** your ship **to me**. In order to show how much I **appreciate** your **gallantry**, I will recapitulate the position. You are ashore, three funnels and one mast down and most guns disabled. You cannot leave this island and my ship is intact,” - Von Miller(commander of Sydney)

RD

 - Germany finally took their flag down after being hit again

Battle of Coronel (1914)

- The battle took place on **November 1, 1914** between the German (**Germany**) and Royal (**Great Britain**) navies.



Battle of Coronel (1914)

- Took place off the coast off **Coronel, Chile** and lasted for about **2 hrs and 15 min.**



Battle of Coronel (1914)

Germany:

- 3 wounded

Great Britain:

- 1654 killed
- 2 armed cruisers lost

- **German Victory**
- First defeat suffered by a British fleet at sea in a century
 - Unleashed wave of outrage across Britain

Battle of Coronel (1914)

- No land lost or gained
- German fleet:
 - SMS *Scharnhorst* / SMS *Gneisenau* *Well*
 - Two light cruisers
- Royal Navy:
 - HMS *Good Hope* / HMS *Monmouth*
 - modern light cruiser HMS *Glasgow*.

Pursuit of Goeben and Breslau (1914)

- The Pursuit of Goeben and Breslau was fought in the mid 1914's.
- The United Kingdom and France fought against the German Empire.

Pursuit of Goeben and Breslau (1914)

- The battle took place in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.
- It lasted for a little less than a month starting on July 28th, 1914 to August 10, 1914.

Pursuit of Goeben and Breslau (1914)

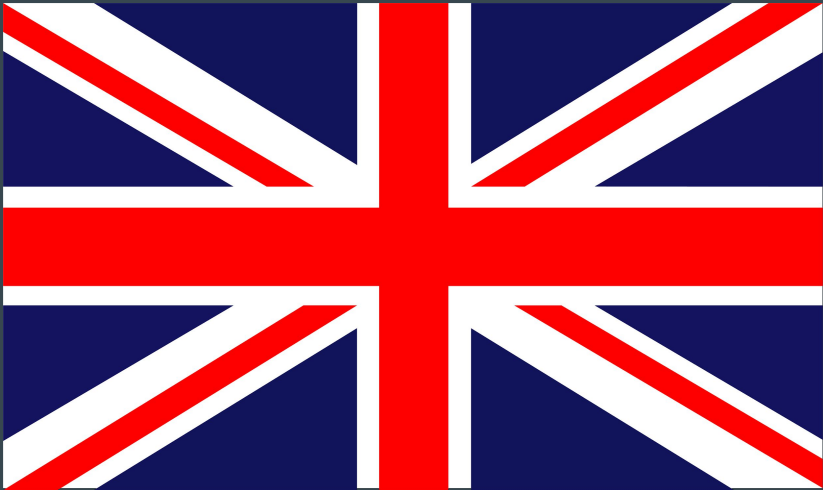
- The French and British suffered no casualties while the German Empire lost 4 sailors.
- Germany won the battle, but The French and British successfully got Germany to retreat out of Constantinople.

Pursuit of Goeben and Breslau (1914)

- France and Britain got Germany to retreat out of Constantinople, giving them their land back.
- Admiral Souchon's heavy battle cruiser, the *Goeben*, was one of the fastest and most powerful warships of its day. Manned by over a thousand crewmen, the ship measured 640 feet in length, and carried 34 guns of various sizes. The *Goeben's* largest guns could accurately fire explosive shells at targets up to 15 miles away.
- Souchon's other ship, the *Breslau*, was in good repair, but was a smaller and less powerful vessel, with a crew of 370. While the *Goeben* was being repaired in Pola, in July of 1914, the *Breslau* lay anchored off the southern coast of Italy.

Battle of Dover Strait (1917)

- Fought between **Great Britain** and **Germany** on **April 20th, 1917** (second battle)



Battle of Dover Strait (1917)

- Occurred in **The Strait of Dover** (strait apart of English Channel separating Great Britain and continental Europe)
- Lasted **2 days**



Battle of Dover Strait (1917)

Germany:

- 71 killed
- 2 torpedo boats sunk

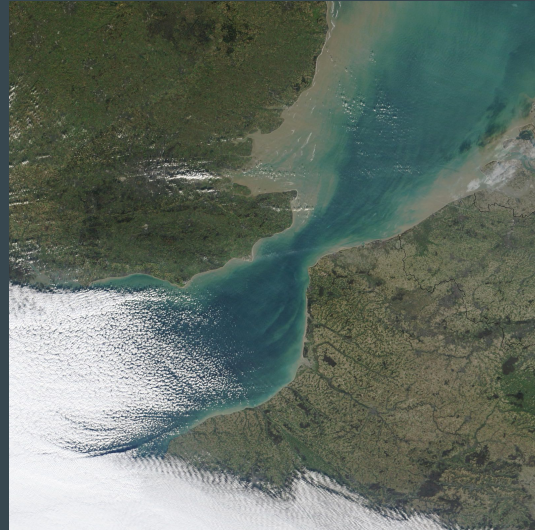
Great Britain:

- 22 killed
- 2 destroyers damaged

- **British** victory
- Royal Navy on patrol when Germany attacked, but still managed to succeed

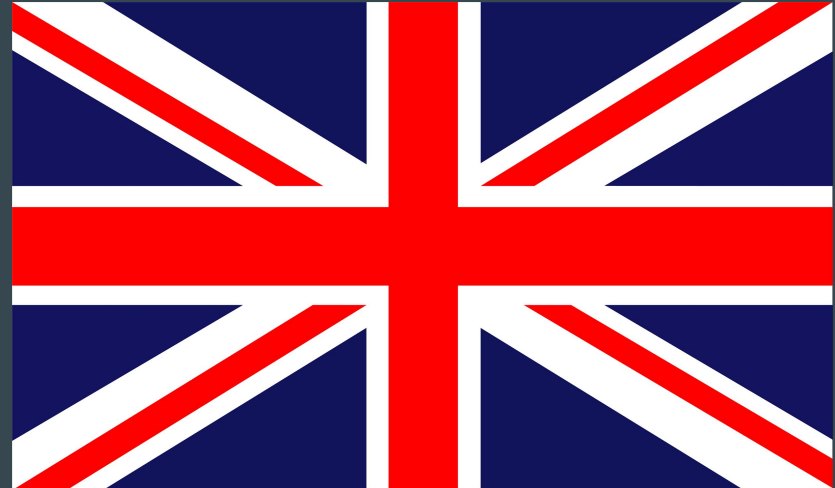
Battle of Dover Strait (1917)

- The Strait of Dover was an important for those seeking to invade United Kingdom (Britain now in control of area)
 - Britain also wanted area to reach the continent
- The name Dover originally meant “the waters” or “the stream”



Second Battle of Heligoland Bight (1917)

- Battle between the **German Empire** and the **British Empire**
- Fought on November 17th, 1917



Second Battle of Heligoland Bight (1917)

- Took place in **Heligoland Bight, North Sea** and lasted about 3 hrs.



Second Battle of Heligoland Bight (1917)

Germany:

- Unknown
- Damaged light cruiser

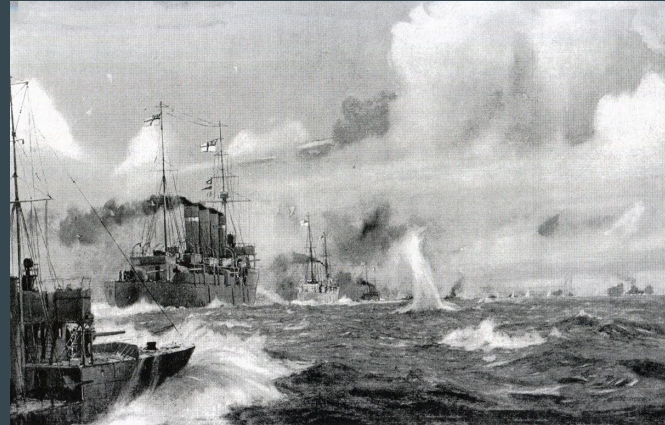
Great Britain:

- 22 killed
- Damaged light cruiser
- Minesweeper sunk

- Both sides made their errors. Germany was caught off guard but Britain did not perform as well as they wanted.
 - Britation was preparing and studying German moves prior

Second Battle of Heligoland Bight (1917)

- **No** land lost or gained
- Both sides were restricted by the naval minefields
- Britain was desperate to retaliate prior to this battle because of Germany's raid on Scandinavian convoy.



Zeebrugge Raid (1918)

- The Zeebrugge Raid took place on April 23, 1918.
- This raid was between the United Kingdom and Germany.

Zeebrugge Raid (1918)

- Port of Zeebrugge Belgium is where this raid took place. The raid began with a diversion against the mile-long Zeebrugge mole.
- There is no information on how long it lasted.

Zeebrugge Raid (1918)

- 8 dead and 16 wounded were the casualties for Germany. As for the United Kingdom, 227 dead and 356 wounded were the casualties.
- According to research it says that the result was indecisive.

Zeebrugge Raid (1918)

- There is no information on how much land was either gained or lost from either side.
- An attempt to raid Zeebrugge was made on April 2nd, 1918 but was cancelled at the last moment due to the wind direction changing which made it impossible to lay a smokescreen to cover the ships.

The Christmas Truce



Context

On December 7, 1914, Pope Benedict XV suggested a temporary hiatus of the war for the Christmas holiday. The warring countries refused to create any official cease-fire.

Then on Christmas the soldiers in the trenches declared an unofficial truce of their own.

Background

The event wasn't just the result of good spirit and holiday cheer.

A lot of unique factors drove the armies to declare peace in no-man's land.

Leading up to the truce, small armistices were happening everyday.

Some people adopted tendencies of looking the other way and "live and let live." They also ate meals at the same time, causing ceasefire.

What was happening?

At the time both sides of the war were focused on surviving the winter. The weather was the true enemy.

High water levels caused flooding in the trenches, and soldiers struggled to keep warm.

Supplies had to be hung from the ceilings to avoid being ruined.

It rained for weeks. Mud turned into quicksand, dragging down the men.

The Attacks

A British field marshal, Sir John French, noticed the attitudes the men had towards each other. He thought morale needed a boost.

He ordered attacks in late December. These resulted in many British losses.

He, also, declared that no official armistice could be tolerated during the holiday.

German Side

In the German trenches, morale was extremely high.

Since men were experiencing their first holiday away from home, commanders brought Christmas to the trenches.

They received many gifts, more than they knew what to do with.

The British Side

They, too, received gifts in the trenches. They each got a brass box from Princess Mary.

This was added to the gifts sent from family members.

Each side were given gifts in excess and didn't have enough room or need for all of them.

Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, the rain spontaneously came to a stop. All the trenches were drained.

The mud was frozen because of the cold and created a floor.

It started snowing, and that afternoon the gunfire started to slow down as the soldiers appreciated the weather.

The Germans put up lit tannenbaum on their side of the trenches.

Caroling

The German side started to sing Silent Night.

Once the British side heard this, they tried to drown out the Germans with their own carol. They sang Good King Wenceslaus.

The competition turned into a harmony of caroling.

That Night

A few people stepped out of the trenches to talk. The commanders didn't know it, though.

Informal treaties of peace were formed, agreeing to cease fire the next day.

Many troops came to the agreement that they wouldn't shoot at each other the next day.

Proposing this was extremely dangerous as peace wasn't happening everywhere

The Not-So-Peaceful Responses

A British troop responded to German caroling with a machine gun.

Some unarmed soldiers proposing a truce were gunned down.

But in a majority of sectors, the peace held true.

The Truce

It mainly occurred between the British and Germans.

On Christmas day, the sky was clear. British troops saw Germans walking around outside the trenches.

In daylight, that's usually suicide. The British saw that as a sign that the Germans were serious about keeping the peace.

Comrades

The soldiers were able to get out of the trenches and stretch.

The two sides buried their dead in common graves, and they grieved together.

Then they started swapping some of the gifts they were sent from home.

A German barber even gave haircuts.

Bonding

They men had real conversations about the difficulties of war with each other.

They shared so much in common and were going through the same struggles.

The men were curious about each other.

Both sides were fighting for freedom, which neither realized.

Games

“Kickabouts” broke out. Men from both sides chased the ball together.

They would play games together and against each other.

Some people used this time to gather information about the trenches of the enemy. Some refused to smoke cigars fearing they were poisoned.

But mostly, people were bonding and taking a break together.

Corporal Attitude

Some German men wanted to meet the British, but their corporal said, “Such a thing should not happen in wartime.” He said, “Have you no German sense of honor left?”

This was Adolf Hitler.

Generals

Commanders contacted senior offices and threatened disciplinary action for people who continued the truce. They wanted to continue with the war.

In most areas, the peace came to a close in a good fashion by firing pistols in the air to signal the war was back on.

The friendships that were made were being destroyed across the front lines.

Never Again

Nothing like the Christmas truce would happen ever again.

On Christmas Eve the next year, the British ordered a 24-hour military barrage.

The war was young in 1914. By 1915, the troops had experienced chlorine gas and creeping bombardments. People were bombing London. A battle before that holiday left 750,000 casualties.

Remembering

The people of the Christmas truce were unlikely to have seen another holiday.

They are remembered today for trusting their enemy not to shoot, and the momentous occasion that would not repeat itself again.

The End :)