

# History Lecture #22 The War Opens Up

Wednesday, November 30, 2016 2:35 PM

## Recap

- The war seemed endless, people didn't see an end in sight
- The Russian revolution led Russia to pulling their soldiers out of the war
- This gave the Germans numerical superiority
  - The Germans knew the United States was coming and they couldn't face the size of the United States
- The Germans knew it was now or never



Audio 1

## Kaiserchlacht

- This was the final German attempt to reach victory on the Western front
  - It was successful as the British Army virtually dissolved
- All attempts were relatively successful
- The Allies lost all the land they had captured over the course of the war
  - Passchendaele
  - Villages around Ypres
- The Germans get very close to Paris and brought heavy artillery to shell the city
- This was a serious point in the war
- This was all the Germans had left to offer, they had used up all their resources
- The Allies don't know about this German issue, they only see their soon defeat
- Douglas Haig
  - He sent out important instructions to his troops
    - Everyone must fight to the death, die fighting
    - Considerable amount of desperation
    - Dishonesty, enemies had made significant progress but Haig lied about this
- April 1918 the Germans looked to be victorious

## Government Controls

- The response of the Borden government is to extend government control over peoples lives
- All the interventions made were expanded in the last year of the war
- So the government brings in many interventions
  - It's not huge but significant
    - Daylight savings time to conserve energy
    - Food rationing for people to eat less
    - Censorship
    - Certain women can vote
    - Income tax
    - National registration counts
      - This was a huge step representing the government intervening into personal lives
    - Conscription was extended
      - This exempted farmers
      - This was canceled in the Spring of 1918 because of the German offensive
        - Shows how desperate Borden was
- What's interesting is the lack of opposition to these conditions, these restrictions on their liberties as the cost of winning the war
- Germany's territorial objectives were in Europe and the chance of it becoming overseas was non-existent
  - But people didn't think like that
  - Losing the war was losing civilizations
  - They called a possible German victory the German Dark Ages
  - People are willing to accept anything if it means defeating Germany because this was a war for national **survival**

## The CEF in England

- By Spring 1918 conscripts began to arrive to Britain in significant numbers
- They virtually took over parts of Britain
- Mass movement of young Canadian men to Britain in a short amount of time
- Integrated well into British society
- British society embraced them
- British social life was cut off in the war so the Canadians brought a new social life
  - Troops traveled with a band so they introduced new music
  - Canadians introduced baseball to Britain
- Marriages between Canadian soldiers and British women became very prominent especially in the final year of the war
  - War Brides
- There was a special marriage license registry
  - Quick Vegas marriages
  - Lots of paperwork
- Thousands of new wives had to travel alone and were forced to live with in-laws until the soldier returns home
  - This was a real culture shock
  - 54-55 000 women and children arrived in Canada
- Many women elect to stay in Canada
  - The lives of these women worked out reasonably well in the broader scheme

## The Hundred Days

- Summer 1918 the German offensives had halted because they ran out of strength to keep going
  - No resources no men no nothing
- The Allies saw this as time to bounce back
- The Canadian divisions took no part in German offensives
  - But the Borden government insisted the Canadian corps stay together
- The Canadians were arguably the strongest and the best corps on the front
- The hundred days was an operation where all the lesson learned about fighting over the course of the war were put together
- August 8 1918 the artillery starts
  - Offensives lightly armed
  - Each unit has an individual objective once the objective was completed that's it for that division
  - This was extremely successful
    - 8 miles in a single day were taken back -blackest day of the war for the Germans
    - This was the beginning of a long successful victories on the western front
- Cambrai was the first city to be liberated by the Canadian corps
- Casualties on the British-French side were heavy
- Canadian corps the most successful at this time of the war then they ever were
  - More than Vimy Ridge
  - The Canadians actually had a decisive role
- Canadian propaganda gave the image that Canada was the ultimate victor
  - Irony that Canada 4 years ago had no army at all

## Mons, November 1918

- 10 November 1918 Canadian units had reached villages on the outskirts of Mons and were moving
- This was where the war began for the British empire
  - First German - British battle
- Canada got a message that there was an armistice was received and there were to be no engagements at 11 am
- George L. Price
  - Last Canadian casualty of the war
- John Par
  - First casualty of the war
- War ends exactly where it began