

1918

The Final (ish) Year



1918 - THE FINAL(ISH) YEAR

- During 1916 and 1917 the situation had seemed gloomy for the Allies.
- At the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 there were 5,533 Australian casualties in one day.
- By the end of 1916 fighting on the Western Front had taken 42,270 Australian casualties (servicemen killed or wounded).
- The following year also took its toll at Bullecourt, Messines and in the 4-month long campaign around Ypres in Belgium known as the Battle of Passchendaele.
- In 1917 there were another 76,836 casualties.
- During 1918 the balance began to turn in favour of the Allies and Germany's position was weakened, leading to the eventual armistice.



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- At the start of 1918 the British troops (including Australian and New Zealand servicemen) were exhausted.
- The French armies were threatening mutiny.
- The Russians had withdrawn from the war as the Communist Revolution was now underway and every effort was needed to focus on events at home (more on this in a minute).
- The Germans were of course equally exhausted.



1918 - KEY EVENTS



3 March 1918	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk The Treaty is signed between Russia and the Central Powers, officially ending Russia's involvement in World War I.
21 March 1918	The launch of the final German offensive The Germans were keen to have a decisive victory over the Allies before the Americans entered the war. At first the Germans were successful. They moved further west, 64 kilometres past the 1916 Somme battlefields. However, by April 1918 the Germans were beginning to lose momentum.
24 - 25 April 1918:	Battle of Villers-Bretonneux On 24 April the Germans captured Villers-Bretonneux. This was only a few weeks after the Australians had fought hard to defend the town. On the night of 24 April the Australian and British forces launched an unconventional night attack. The British went in first and bore most of the German attack. While this was happening, the Australians approached the town in two groups. One group came from the north and one group from the south. They surrounded the town and helped to force the Germans out of the town and its adjacent woods. The German advance was halted and the town of Villers-Bretonneux was saved.
4 July 1918	The Australians recapture Hamel This was the last major offensive in which Australians were involved during 1918. The battle only lasted for 93 minutes with Sir John Monash in command of the Australian troops.

1918 - KEY EVENTS

8 August:	Beginning of the Allied offensive at Amiens Start of the <i>Battle of Amiens</i> , the opening phase of the Allied <i>Hundred Days Offensive</i> , that will ultimately lead to the end of World War I. Allied armoured divisions smash through the once impregnable German trenches. Erich Ludendorff calls it "the black day of the German Army."
28 August - 1 September:	Battle of Mont St Quentin Mont St Quentin is a fortified hill overlooking the town of Peronne. People believed Peronne was impregnable. That is, it was believed that no-one could enter the town and capture it. During a battle that lasted for three days the Australians captured the hill and the town.
September	Capture of the Hindenburg Line The Hindenburg Line was an area between Cambrai and St Quentin in France behind which the Germans withdrew between February and March 1917. It was a very strong defence line. It was only in late September 1918 that the Allies finally broke through that line. This was a very important move. The Allies then continued throughout October and November to move further eastwards, forcing the Germans into retreat.



1918 - KEY EVENTS



October 1918	Australian divisions withdrew from the front after fighting at Montbrehain. They needed a rest and to refit their equipment.
November 1918	The Allies broke through the German lines between the Sambre and the Schelde. Twenty thousand Germans were taken prisoner. On 11 November 1918 the Germans surrendered.
12 January 1919	Paris Peace Conference begins

WHY NOVEMBER 11?

The armistice or end of hostilities in the First World War was actually agreed to at 5.00am on 11 November.

However, it took another six hours before all fighting units received word that the armistice had been agreed that fighting should cease.

Germany surrendered unconditionally.

It was felt that the time when all hostilities finally stopped was the more appropriate time to remember the service and sacrifice of men and women involved in World War I.

This day was named Armistice Day from 1918. And so we remember at 'The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month'.



THE GUNS FELL SILENT

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1799326/Video-Recording-reveals-moment-guns-fell-silent-end-WW1.html>

QUICK TASK

1. Write down five facts you remember from this presentation.
2. Turn to the person on your right and steal one fact from them.
3. Together, come up with three problems you think Europe (& the world) faced at the end of WWI.



QUICK TASK

1. Share one problem with the class

When the teacher asks a question
and you're trying to avoid eye contact

