

The Battle of the Somme, 1916



ZERO HOUR

100 YEARS ON: VIEWS FROM THE PARAPET OF THE SOMME

Coke Trench
730 yds

Artillery Lane
2500 yds

*Enemy
Front
Line*
250 yds

Beaumont Alley
1100 yds

Ruin of Church
5110 to 93 630 yds

Quarry Position
5110 to 5 110 yds

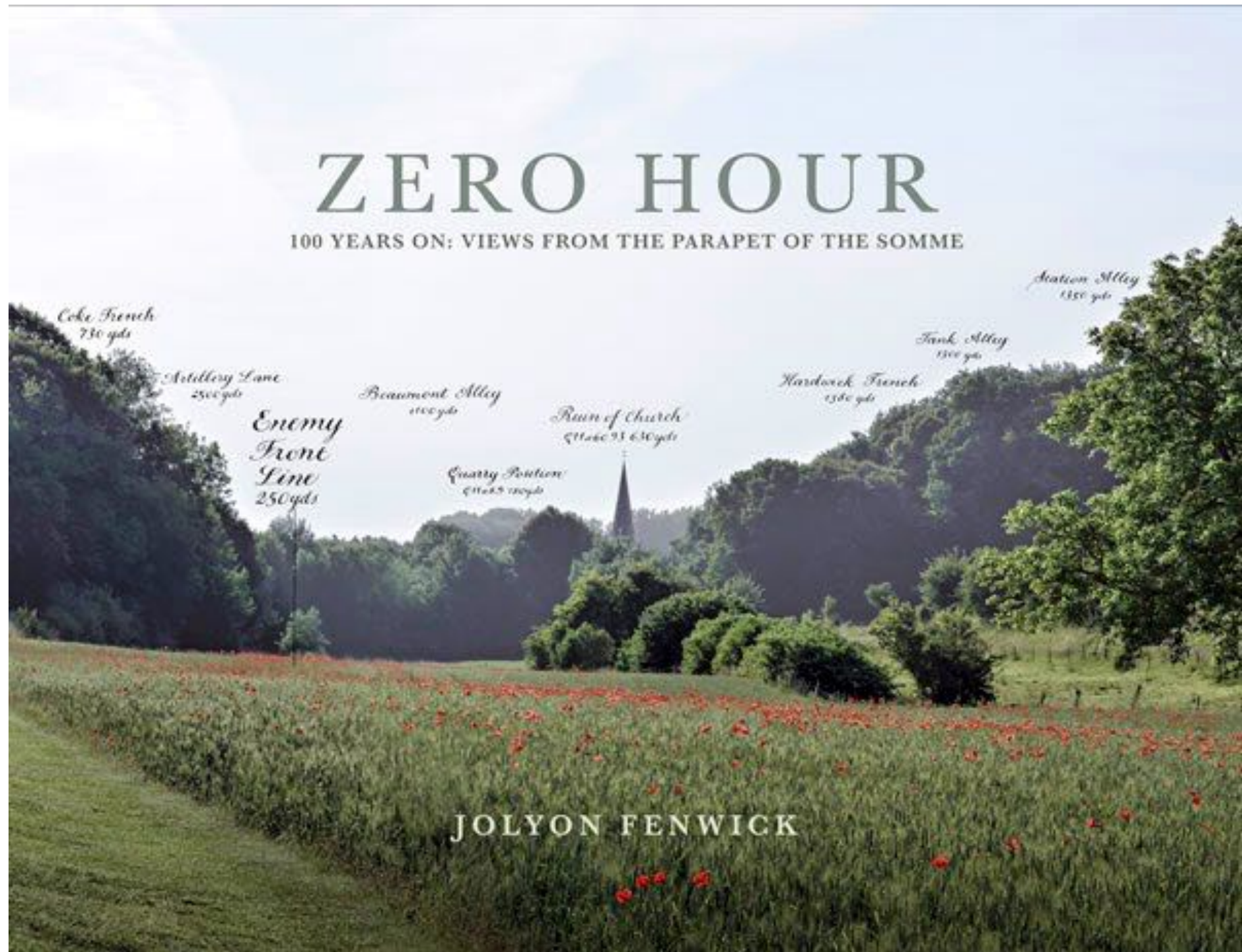
Hardwick Trench
1380 yds

Frank Alley
1300 yds

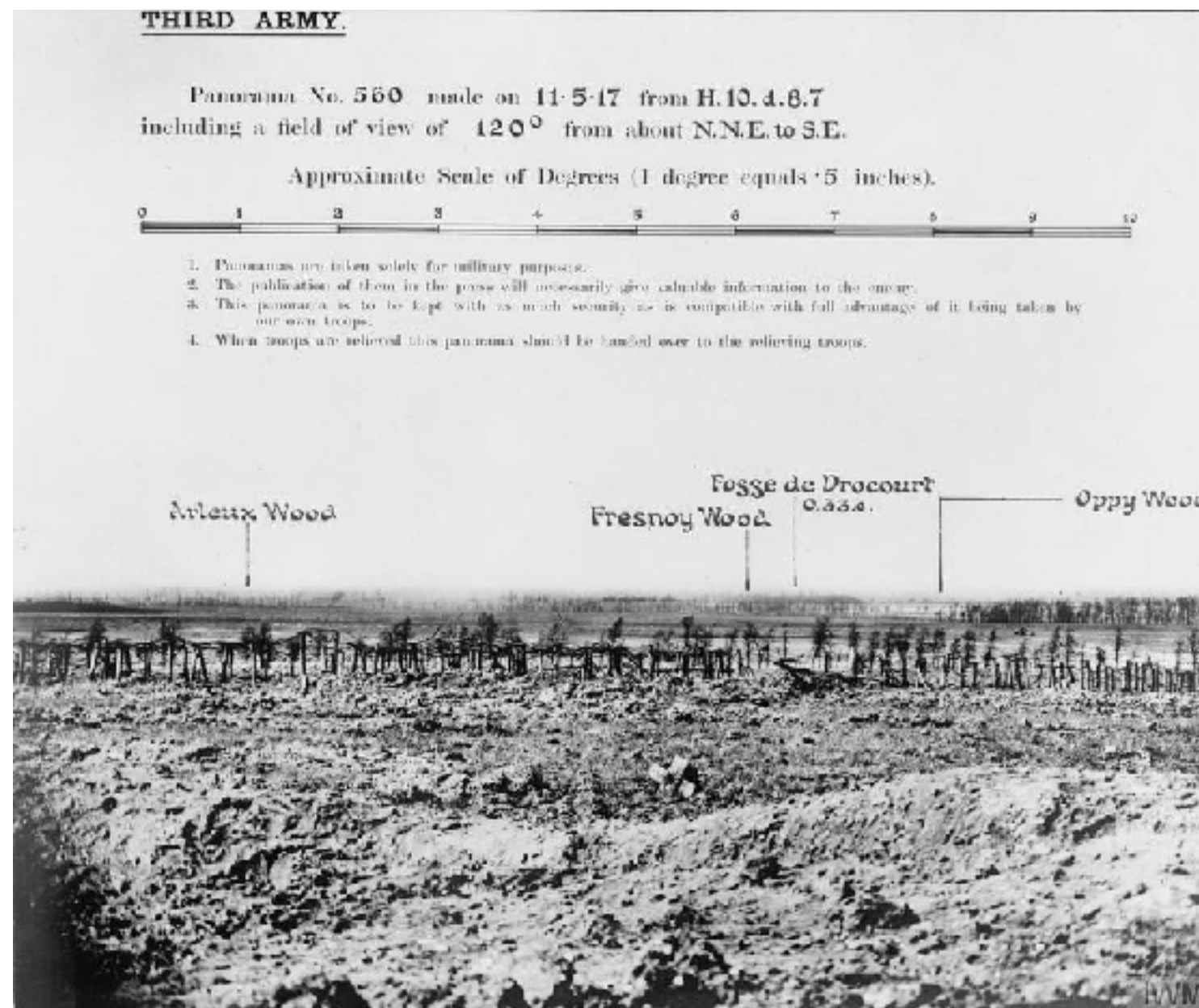
Station Alley
1350 yds

JOLYON FENWICK

I. WHY THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME IS SO IMPORTANT FOR BRITAIN AND MANY COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES ?



In *Zero Hour*, 14 superlatively photographed panoramas show the Somme's major sites as they look today. Taken by Jolyon Fenwick from the exact viewpoints of the front-line British troops as they began their advance towards the German trenches at 7.30 a.m., these hauntingly peaceful present-day views are annotated (in the handwritten military style of the time) to show the lethal German defensive positions at the moment of the attack.



The same landscape, 100 years on

they were used for the first time during the Battle of the Somme.

From the end to 1914 to the 1918's spring, the warring parties were looking for it (and it was the same during the Somme).

The first big Battle during WWI (September 1914)

UK, France and Russia in 1916

Artillery and Machine Guns

The Battle of the Somme began when it exploded

The Beginning and the end of the WWI worked like that (with many casualties)

The Battle of the Marne (which took place during Manoeuvre Warfare).

Poison gas

The Triple Entente

Two bigs Allied offensives in 1915

A giant mine

A big Battle between Frenchs and Germans. It lasted from 21t February to 19th December, 1916 (so it was quite in the same time than the Somme).

A break in the Frontline

Manoeuvre Warfare

During the first Battle hours, many British soldiers were killed by...

the no man's land is...

Verdun

It was used for the very first time in 1st April 1915 during battle of Ypres. Of course, Germans Used them during the Somme.

Tanks

The very closed area Between the first ennemies trenches

Battles of Artois and Champagne

The first big Battle during
WWI (September 1914)

The Battle of the Marne (which
took place during Manoeuvre
Warfare).



Siege/ Attrition Warfare

Trench Warfare



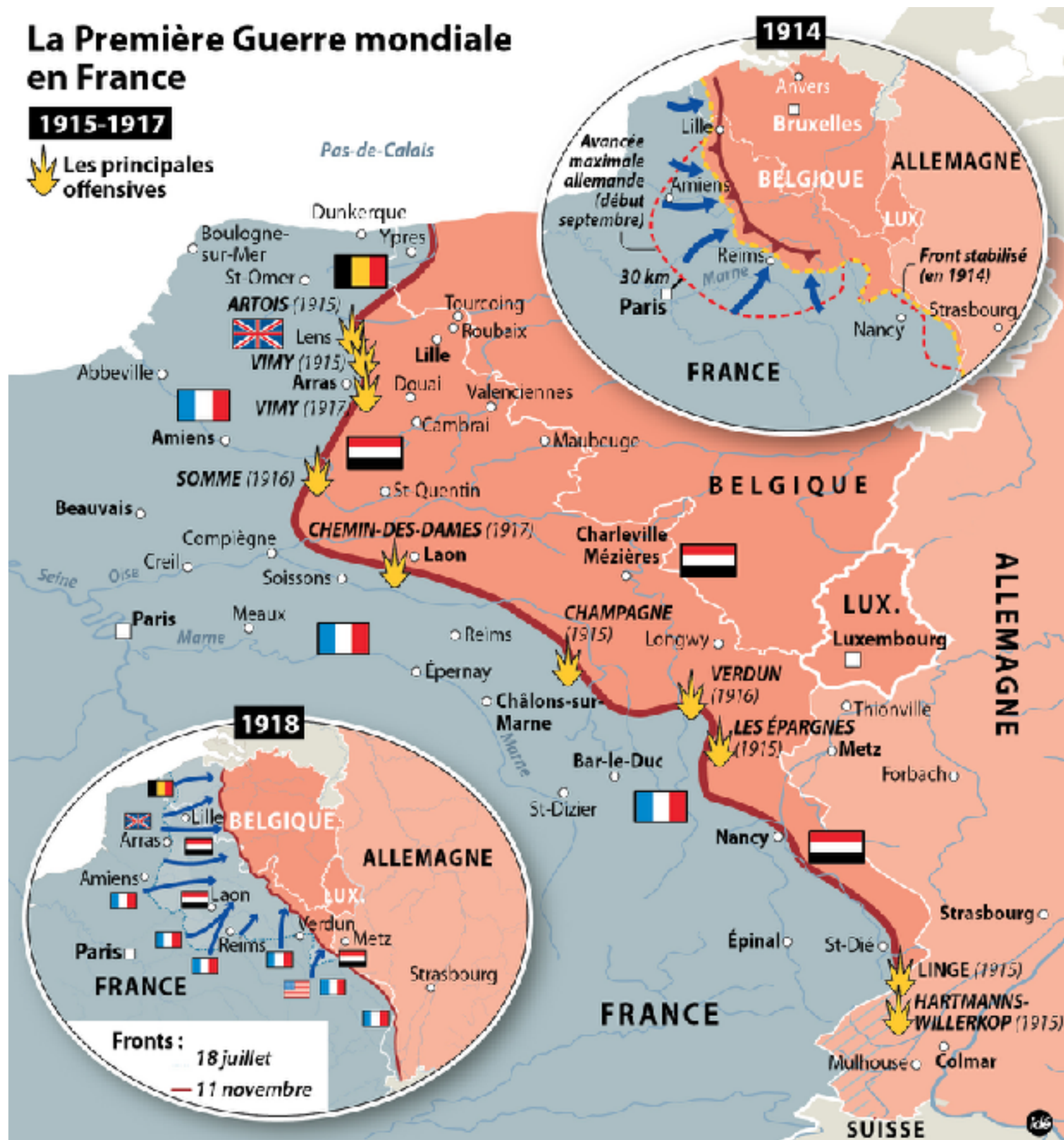
British soldiers in communication trench near Beaumont le Hamel, Somme 1916.

Two bigs Allied offensives in 1915 Battles of Artois and Champagne

La Première Guerre mondiale en France

1915-1917

Les principales offensives



Verdun

A big Battle between Frenchs and Germans. It lasted from 21t February to 19th December, 1916 (so it was quite in the same time than the Somme).



French infantry recapturing Douaumont

Henri Georges Jacques CHARTIER (1859-1924)

the no man's land is...

The very closed area Between
the first enemies trenches

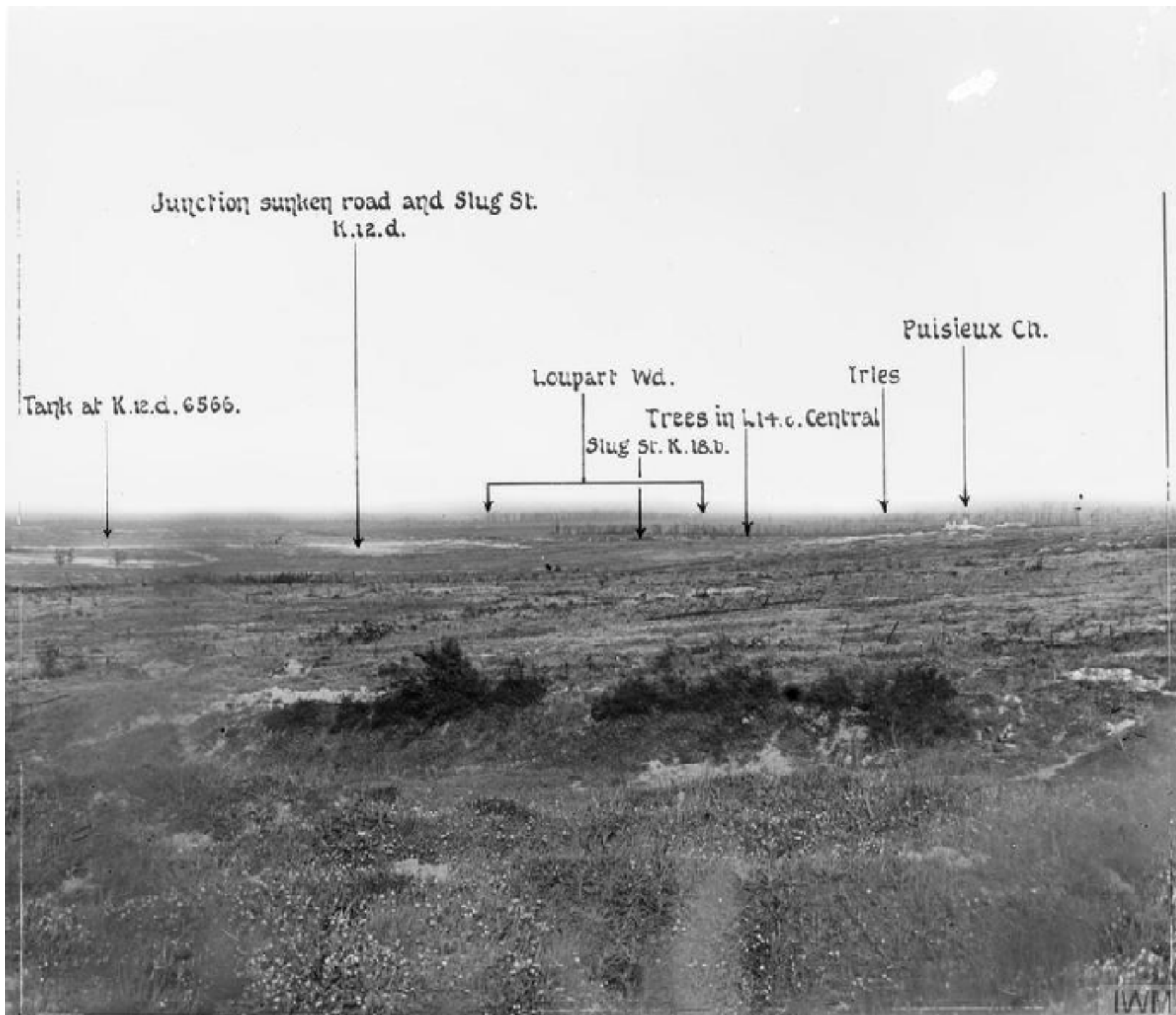
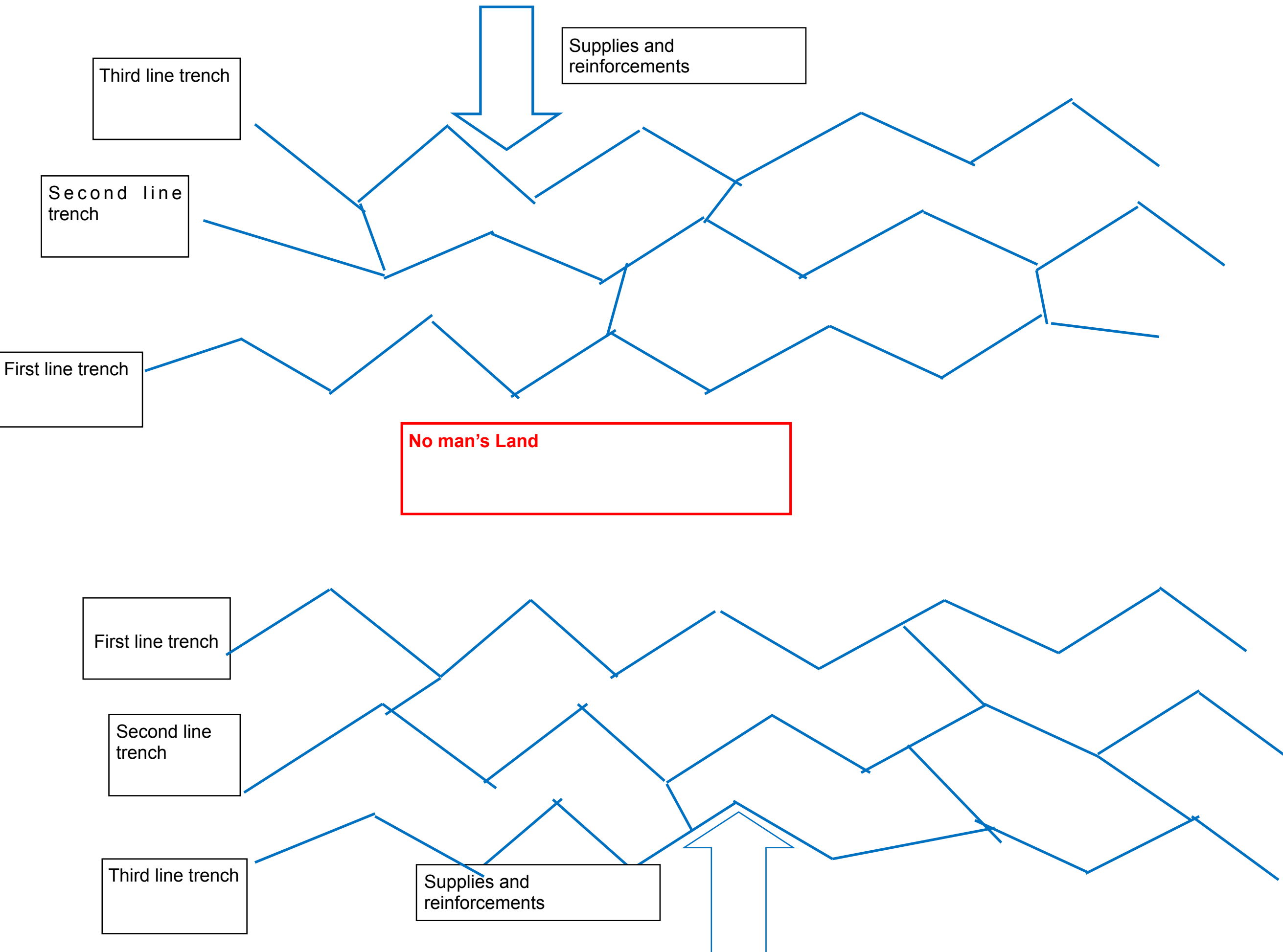


Schéma 1 : Trench warfare, a very efficient defensive system



A break in the Frontline

From the end of 1914 to the 1918's spring, the warring parties were looking for it (and it was the same during the Somme).



During the first Battle hours,
many British soldiers were
killed by...

Artillery and Machine Guns



Tanks

they were used for the first time during the Battle of the Somme.



Poison gas

It was used for the very first time in 1st April 1915 during battle of Ypres. Of course, Germans Used them during the Somme.



2. The main informations about the Battle of the Somme. You have to do a personal search to find these informations (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/ztnqxsq>)



The first day of the Battle	
The last day of the Battle	
The frontline area of this Battle (in miles and in Kilometers)	
The British army chief and offensive creator	
The aims of the battle ?	
How many casualties in British army during the very first day ?	

How many casualties in British army during all the Battle ?	
How many casualties in German army during all the Battle ?	
How many casualties in French army ?	
Did the frontline move between the beginning and the end of the battle (how many Kilometers) ?	
Was a break still possible after the two first weeks ? So Why the battle carried on ?	
Why the battle stopped ?	

The first day of the
Battle

1st July 1916



British objectives, 1 July 1916

The last day of the Battle	19th November 1916
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Progress of the Battle of the Somme between 1 July and 18 November.



The frontline area of this Battle (in miles and in Kilometers)

A 15-mile front (about 25 kilometers)



The British army chief
and offensive creator

The British General, Douglas Haig



Field Marshal Lord Haig

He was nicknamed "Butcher Haig" for the two million British casualties endured under his command

The aims of the battle ?

As usual in this kind of offensive, the main aim is to Break the frontline to go far behind the enemy lines and attack them from rear (so you could win the war).
The second aims of the battle were to relieve the French Army fighting at Verdun and weaken the German army.



British objectives, 1 July 1916

How many casualties in British army during the very first day ?

In total, 19,240 British soldiers lost their lives. It was the bloodiest day in the history of the British army. About 30,000 were injured.



During the first waves, It was forbidden to run because Haig was afraid about disruption and distance between soldiers. This decision was a disaster. So they could run only after 12 pm.

How many casualties in British
army during all the Battle ?

420,000 casualties (half died, half injured).



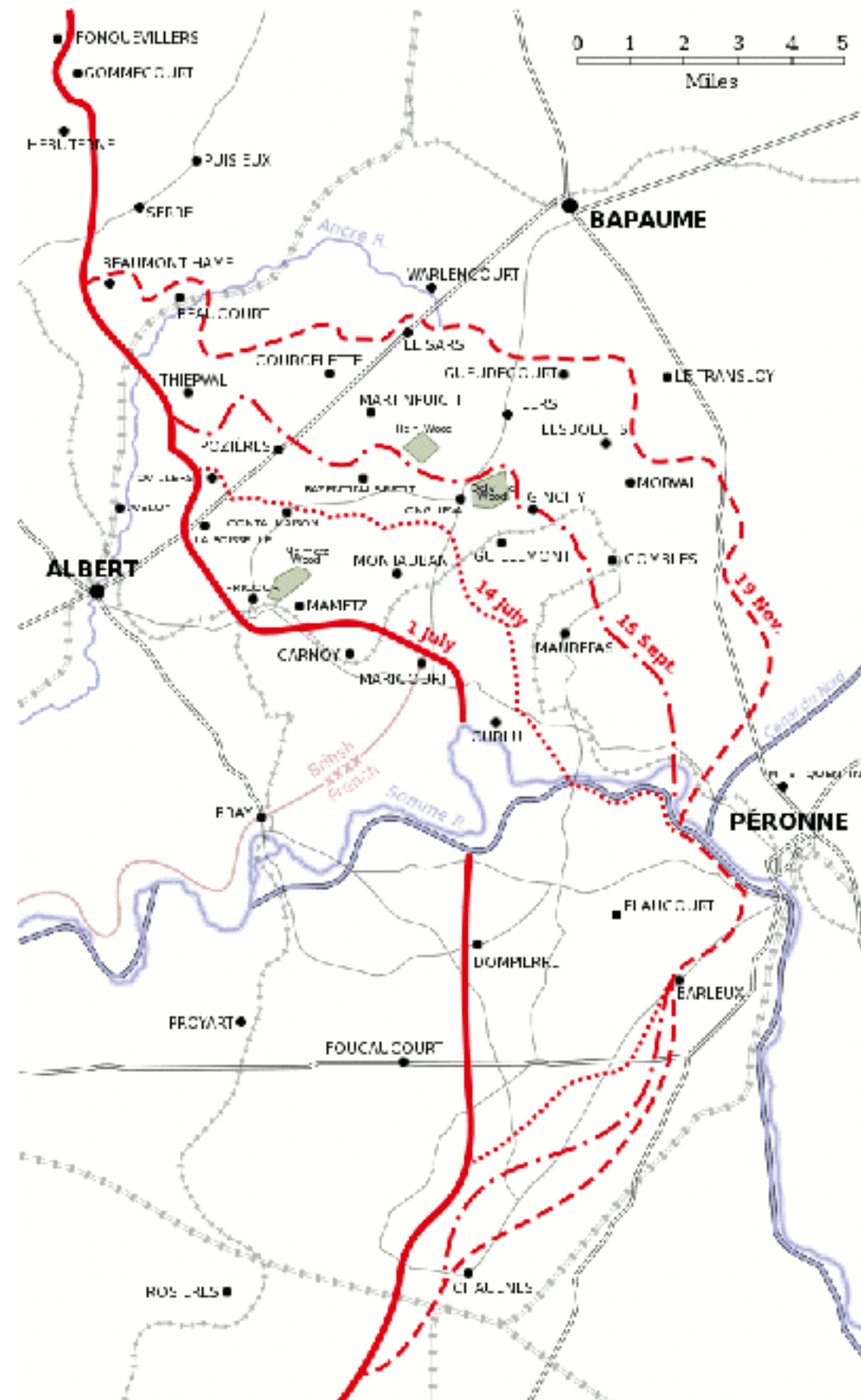
How many casualties in German army during all the Battle ?	434 000
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How many casualties in French army ?	200 000
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Did the frontline move between the beginning and the end of the battle (how many Kilometers) ?

In 141 days the British had advanced just seven miles and failed to break the German defence

Progress of the Battle of the Somme between 1 July and 18 November.



Was a break still possible after the two first weeks ? So Why the battle carried on ?

Headquarters kept hoping that a breakthrough was possible (but It wasn't).

They continued to relieve the French Army fighting at Verdun and weaken the German army (It was the « bleed dry » strategy already used by the Germans against the French in Verdun).

As usual, they need a Victory to justify all the dead.



British troops moving up to the attack during the Battle of Morval, 25 September 1916.

Why the battle stopped ?

With the Winter, there was no more hope to do a breakthrough and even the « bleed dry » didn't work anymore. Statisticians said they had to stop the Battle to use soldiers and Guns in an another front area (to kill more people in another place).



Mametz, Western Front, a winter scene, painting by Frank Crozier

3. Role play : I am...

Use **the Imperial War Museum site** (and others sources) to be a character of this battle. Choose one character in the biographic references.

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/battle-of-the-somme>

What you have to tell :

1) Before the Battle.

Who you are (age, where you are coming from..), how you came in this area in 1916. What you were suppose to do during the battle.

2) During the Battle

Where were you during the battle (in which area) ? How have you lived the battle, what you did (and how) ? What finally happened to You ?

3) After the Battle.

If You survived : What did you become ? How the Battle has affected the last of your life ?

If you didn't survive : Where is your grave, did you have one ? Why your memory has remained in collective memory ?

Group	Character
1	Second Lieutenant Edward Colle MC
2	Second Lieutenant Harold Cope
3	Second Lieutenant Kenneth Macardle
4	Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig
5	Nurse Dorothy Field
6	Major Lanoe Hawker VC
7	Second lieutenant JRR Tolkien
8	German Officer Stefan Westmann
9	Geoffrey Malins
10	Second Lieutenant Percy Boswell
11	Caporal Oswald Blows
12	Lieutenant Robert Smylie
13	Lieutenant Wilfried Waton
14	Captain Wilfried « Billie » Nevill
15	Poet Robert Graves