

THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI 20th November 1917

On the 28th June 1914 a shot rang out that echoed around the world. Three and a half years have passed, millions have died, cut down by machine gun fire, blown apart by shell fire or drowned in a sea of mud. The war on the western front had developed into a stalemate situation that was costing too many lives on both sides. The German forces had pulled back and during March and April to create a new and totally impregnable line of defence. By May 1917 they started moving troops to other theatres of war, safe in the knowledge that no allied troops could cross the Hindenburg Line. Traditional tactic would not work against this new defence, but behind sea of barbed wire lay a prize the allies converted, the rail link, that supplied the German front line. The land near to the town of Cambrai was thought a suitable as it hadn't seen any real action. The assault on the Hindenburg Line would be a bold one. At 6 20 am Tuesday 20th November. Massed tanks smash through the wire followed by infantry and cavalry. The artillery were using new technique as 1000 guns open up at the same time 300 allied aircrafts took off to drown out the sound of the tank engines.

The German forces were taken completely by surprise and the Hindenburg line had been breached the tanks and allied troops had punch a gap 12 kilometres wide and 7 kilometres deep.

The German forces counter attacked but the allies saw this battle as a victory and the tide of war was turning in the allies favour.