Impact of the battles of Verdun, Somme, and Passchendaele

By: Kiley Spencer, Alexander Ruiz, Cheyenne Clements
Background of Verdun

- Battle went on from February 21st to December 18th, 1916
- It was the largest battle of World War One, on the Western Front
- The battle was between the German and French armies
- It took place on the hill north of Verdun-sur-meuse in eastern France
Background of Somme

- It was also known as the Somme offensive
- The battle was between the British Empire and the German Empire
- The battle lasted from July 1st to November 18th, 1916
- The battle was fought in Pas-de-Calais, France
Background of Passchendaele

- It was also known as the Third Battle of Ypres
- Fought by the Allies against the German Empire
- The battle was from July 31st to November 10th, 1917
- It took place at Passchendaele, Zonnebeke, Belgium
Strategies, aims, and weaponry
Verdun

Strategies

- Three-quarters of the French division and one third of the German divisions traveled through “hell of Verdun”
- The strategic goals from the battle were subtle
- Their approach was very sophisticated compared to other strategies
- Germany wanted to take more casualties than land from the France
- All about destroying the French
Verdun

Aims

- The plan by German Chief General Staff wanted to “bleed France white”
- Wanted to launch a major attack on the French
- The Chief believed that the French would lose to many men
- German General Staff makes proposal of, “not to take territory but to take lives, to cause the French army to “bleed to death” defending the fortress complex around Verdun on the Meuse heights
Verdun

Weaponry

- Machine guns had a lot of popularity during the battle
- Artillery was also used offering kills in depth and scale
- Germans had heavy artillery enabling them to reduce French forces
- Germany had flamethrowers and green cross gas (toxic chemical)
- French used rifles during the battle
The main strategy used by the British was to bombard German trenches with multiple smaller attacks for a week before the larger assault on July 1, 1916.
Somme

Aims

- The overall aim of the British attack was to relieve the French army fighting at Verdun.
- They also wanted to weaken the German army
- Although Allies could not break through German lines
Somme

Weaponry
- Bayonets
- Chiefly (used as a psychological weapon)
- Flame throwers
- Grenades
- Mills Bombs and Jam pots (both different forms of a grenade)
- Machine guns
- Pistols (officer’s weapon)
- Poison gas
- Rifles
- Tanks
- Trench Motars
Passchendaele

Strategies
- To attack on multiple fronts
- To use poisonous gases
- Make small gains during the battle
Passchendaele

Aims

- Their objective was to break through the German defences.
- They wanted to seize the highlands of Passchendaele.
- They wanted to capture German occupied Belgian channel ports.
Passchendaele

Weaponry

- Similar weapons to those used at the battle of Verdun
- Rifles
  - Standard issue for each country
  - British issue was more favorable in battle
- Machine guns
- Grenades
  - Weren’t used as much
  - Used during infantry to throw in trenches
  - Had a very long tick time
Passchendaele

Weaponry

- Mustard Gas
  - Very deadly
  - Easily avoided by gas masks
- Flamethrowers
  - Used in close quarters
- Tanks
  - Vulnerable to become stationary in terrain
- Artillery units
Civilian involvement and cities burned
Verdun

- In the heart of the city there was a citadel
- The citadel had forts around them resistant to artillery
- Thick steel reinforced concrete tops, sand cushions, the citadel was modernized for war
- Enclosed towns were used as bases for counter attacks
- The civilians were in between the crossfire
- Towns used for attacks therefore civilians being caught up in the battle
Somme

- British soldiers went to attack against the German trench line which was suppose to be damaged but wasn't
- Civilians from cities across Britain and Ireland volunteered to help but never returned home
- British were not able to significantly damage the German dugouts
Passchendaele

- After the war the land and villages of Passchendaele was completely destroyed
- Germans used Mustard gas in the battle affecting not only the soldiers but also the civilians in the villages
- The battle greatly affected New Zealand families
Science and technology during the battles
Verdun

- Even with all the new technology, the battle of Verdun still used trench warfare
- Haldane’s oxygen apparatus was used to get men large amounts of oxygen to counterbalance effects of poisonous gasses
- Big Bertha
Somme

- Tanks were first introduced on September 15, 1916
- Barbwire
- Haldane’s oxygen apparatus was also used at the Somme
Passchendaele

- Germans introduced chlorine gas
- Caused suffocation for victims
- Blood bags were brought into use in order to get blood to the front lines for those injured.
Bibliography


Bibliography


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Bibliography
