



THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A virtual museum by
Rebecca Gee 80

Welcome to a museum of the First World War

WW1 started on the 4th of August 1914 after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and even though most people thought it would be over by christmas it actually lasted until Germany surrendered on November 11th 1918.

This museum will uncover the myths about the war of all the untold stories brushed to the side throughout the years and bring them into the light. There are many misconceptions about WW1 which was known then as the Great war. When you hear WW1 you most likely think of 'white europeans' fighting in trenches, a war between England and Germany.

But was this really the case?



Myths about the war

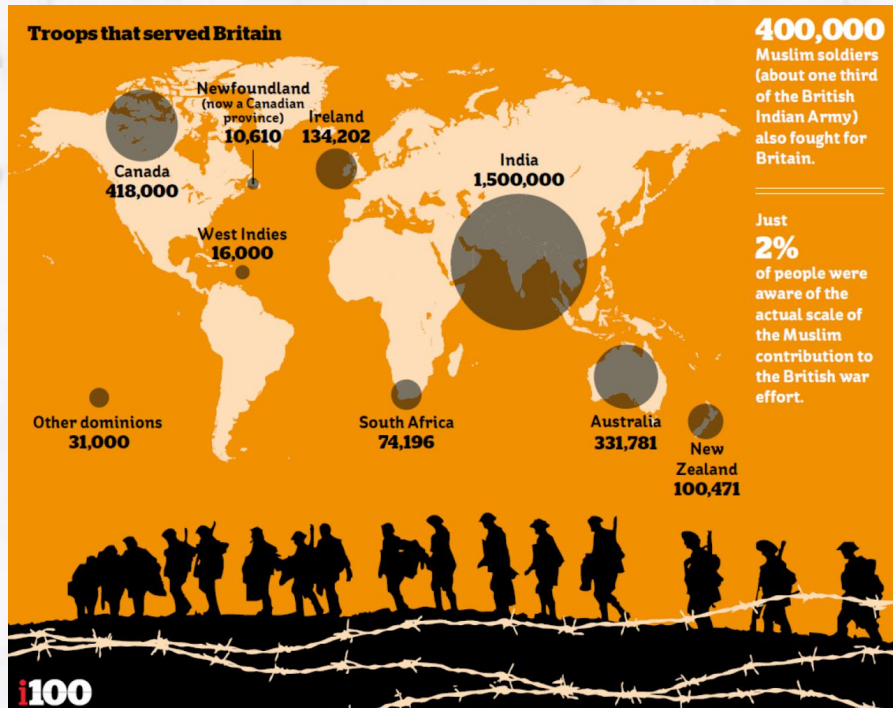


This picture supports the misconceptions about WW1. Everyone assumes only fighting happened in Europe and nowhere else. While we can't deny the fact that the main fighting was in Europe, it was actually a global war and not just a European war.

People also assume the soldiers spent years in the trenches and lived there. This wasn't the case. Soldiers would actually only spend on average 10 days a month in the trenches and only 3 per month in the frontline trenches. This did vary though..

The most famous myth is the **christmas football game** said to have happened in No man's land. While there is little evidence that the football match actually happened there was an unofficial truce across large sections of the Western front where the guns stopped even in some places for weeks. The German and British soldiers shared photos of their family sang carols and helped each other bury their dead.

The Global War



In World War 1 the major european powers fought on two main fronts; the eastern front against Russia and the western front against France, Britain and the United States. These weren't the only fronts in the war-. Fighting also took place at these fronts-

Italian, Balkan, Ottoman, Galipoli, West and East Africa, Mesopotamia and many others.

Europe involved its colonial territories in the war from the start.

The map shows all the different countries troops were recruited from to fight for Britain

The Africans



There was actually **4 million** non-white people from all parts of the world that were recruited in to the British, French, German and American armies.

Out of that **4 million**, **2 million** were actually African and **400,000** were African American. It was actually a very diverse war. When war broke out England and France prepared to seize the for german colonies in Africa; German East Africa, German South west Africa, Togoland and Cameroon.

Alhaji Grunshi (pictured here) was the first British soldier to fire on the 7th of August only 3 days after war was declared but not in Europe. The first shot was actually fired in the German Colony of Togoland in West Africa.

In Africa, unlike Europe, there was not a narrow killing zone. it roamed over vast area so civilians were caught in the middle. Millions of men were used as porters for both sides to carry supplies and ammunition. They were malnourished and overworked which led to **20%** of them dying. That is higher than the rate of the British who died in the war. which is **13%**.

The Indians



This is Manta Singh, a soldier in the Indian Corps. He went into battle at Neuve Chappelle, France, in 1915, when more than 4,000 Indian soldiers were killed in just 3 days of fighting. He became friends with the British army officer, Captain George Henderson. When George was shot in both thighs, Manta Singh saved his life and took him to safety. Manta Singh was also shot in the thigh at a later point but unfortunately did not survive. He was cremated at the Chattri monument at South Downs and their friendship between their families has been carried down through generations.

Indians also played a big part in the war with 1.5 million soldiers sent overseas to fight. The Indians fought for Britain because the Indian politicians thought this loyalty could be used later for independence from Britain. The Indian Corps were some of the first soldiers to experience trench warfare.

Battle of Somme



The Battle of Somme broke out on 1st of July 1916 in Northern France. It was meant to be the big push to break through the German lines and they had been planning it for months. It wasn't a secret though and the Germans knew about it. As they went to attack the Germans were waiting for them. By the end of just the first day 57,000 commonwealth soldiers had been killed, injured or were missing. It lasted for another five months until finally fighting seized in November of that year.

Even though the Battle of Somme was not a great victory, it had taught the British commanders, for example General Haig that their tactics were not working so they had to change them and make new ones. In September, the british introduced a new weapon, a tank. The tank solved the problem of crossing the open ground under enemy fire. Also they realised that allied cooperation was possible as the Battle of Somme was the first time the French and British had jointly planned attack. It proved to be a turning point of the war as what they learnt from the Battle of Somme was very helpful in future battles.

End of my museum

Overall ww1 touched everyone all over the world with deaths of loved ones as it was a Global war not just European. Both my Great Grandad and Great Grandad Grandad were involved.

My great Grandad Norman Stephenson (on the left) was in the 17/21 Lancers and was sent to County Kildare to train horses from Argentina for the British army.

My great great Grandad Ernest Howes (on the right) was a Lance Corporal in the Northamptonshire regiment. He was killed in action at the age of 25 during the Battle of the Somme on the 9th of September 1916. His father, who was in the merchant navy, also died in WW1 when the ship that he was serving on, HMS Clan McNaughton, sunk in the Atlantic.

