


Haig on Trial

The Trial of Douglas Haig



 **Mission:** to decide if General Haig really was 'The Butcher of the Somme'.

The year is 1925 and memories of the Allied victory after World War 1 are starting to fade. Increasingly, people have begun to look more closely at the war how it was won, fought and at what human cost. As the man ultimately responsible for the deaths of so many British soldiers, all eyes are now on former general, Douglas Haig. Those who defend Haig, do so passionately and have many points of argument. Those who attack him do so on several fronts too. Sir Douglas Haig will stand trial for his decisions and actions during the First World War.

Douglas Haig is accused of being 'The Butcher of the Somme' ... how will the jury rule?



The Judge

The Jury



Prosecuting	The Trial	Defending
Lawyer 1	1: Opening Statements	Lawyer 1
Historian A. Livesy	2: The Character of Haig	Haig's Son
General Gough	3: Haig's Tactics	Historian P. Hart
New Zealand Officer	4: Leadership Style	British Soldier
British Officer	5: The Casualties	German Officer
Dead Soldier's Mum	6: Shouldering the Burden	Douglas Haig
David Lloyd George	7: 'The Man Who Won The War'	John D. Clare
Whole Team	8: Debate: The Battle of the Somme Was Futile	Whole Team
Lawyer 2	9: Closing Statements	Lawyer 2

The Roles Explained

The Judge (Teacher?)

Your role is to organise the courtroom, control the debate, introduce people and make sure that each team listens to the other. Also check the lawyers don't use any dirty tricks!



The Jury

Your role is to listen carefully. You will make the decision as to which team gave the most persuasive argument. Be in the lookout for any lies that may be told during the trial!



The Lawyers: choose 2 per team?

Your role is to question your own witnesses and those from the opposing team. You can prepare your own witnesses before the trial and raise **OBJECTIONS** if the opposing lawyer is asking unfair questions or going off topic. Don't forget your suit!



The Witnesses

Learn about your character and be prepared to answer questions truthfully (and dramatically) from both your own and the opposing team's lawyers. Bring evidence for the jury, extra points for props or costumes!



Prosecution Witnesses



2. Anthony Livesy

You have studied the First World War to great depth and wrote a book called 'The Great Battles of World War 1'.



Work with your lawyers on these types of questions

- 1: Haig was too optimistic wasn't he?
- 2: What were the consequences of this optimism?
- 3: Could Haig be described as stubborn rather than optimistic?
- 4: Another question about a weakness in his character?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!

4. New Zealand Officer

Find the name of a real New Zealand officer who fought at the Somme. Give your account of what you and your men thought about the generals who fought the war from cosy houses away from the trenches.



Work with your lawyers on these types of questions:

- 1: What was it like living in the trenches?
- 2: Did General Haig come to the trenches very often?
- 3: What did the other soldiers say about him as a leader?
- 4: Do you feel that Haig understood what it was like living in the trenches?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!

6. Soldier's Mum

Your son fought and died at the Battle of the Somme.



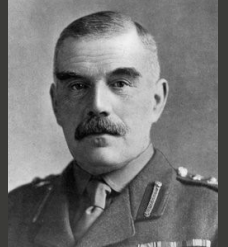
Work with your lawyers on these types of questions:

- 1: What was your son's name?
- 2: How old was your son when he died?
- 3: Did Haig ever contact you or other families about the deaths of loved ones?
- 4: Do you blame Haig for the death of your son?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!

3. General Gough

You were a British General and worked closely with Haig. You reported directly to Haig and offered him advice and support before and during the Somme Offensive.



Work with your lawyers on these type of questions:

- 1: Did you think that artillery would break the barbed wire?
- 2: Haig is a cavalryman isn't he - why was this a problem during WW1?
- 3: Did you think attacking at the Somme was a good idea at the time?
- 4: Did you offer any advice to General Haig - did he listen to you?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!

5. British Officer

Find the name of a real British officer who served under Haig at the Somme. Give your account of your experiences leading men over the top.



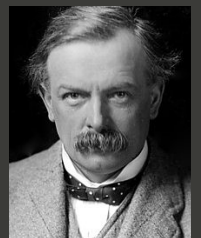
Work with your lawyers on these type of questions:

- 1: Did you think going over the top was a good plan?
- 2: What happened to the men as they went over?
- 3: How many men died on the first day of the Somme?
- 4: How many men died under Haig's command - do you blame him for this?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!

7. Lloyd George

You were the British Prime Minister during the First World War. Although you backed Haig publicly during the war privately you had many concerns about him.



Work with your lawyers on these types of questions:

- 1: Why did you show support to Haig during the war?
- 2: What concerns did you have about Haig's command?
- 3: Do you think the Battle of the Somme helped win the war?
- 4: Do you think Haig was an important factor in winning the war?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!

Defence Witnesses



2. George Haig

George Haig is your father. You are upset by the criticisms of your father and have the chance to show a side to him that most have never seen or heard.

Work with your lawyers on these types of questions

- 1: Was he a good father when you were growing up ?
- 2: How would you describe the character of your father - is he uncaring?
- 3 : What kind of things does your father enjoy doing in his leisure time?
- 4: Are you upset by the things people have said about him?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!



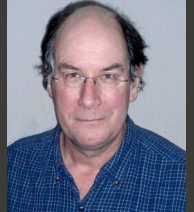
3. Peter Hart

You have studied the First World War to great depth and wrote a book called 'The Somme'. Find out about his views on Haig's tactics.

Work with your lawyers on these type of questions:

- 1: Why did Haig send men over the top with heavy equipment?
- 2: Were Haig's tactics too inflexible, did he try new ideas?
- 3: What was a war of attrition - was Haig successful in this tactic?
- 4: Any other remarks about Haig's tactics used during the Somme?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!



4. British Soldier

Find the name of a real British soldier who fought at the Somme. Give your account of what you and your fellow soldiers thought about General Haig.

Work with you lawyers on these types of questions:

- 1: What was it like living in the trenches ?
- 2: Do you think Haig and other leaders should have been in the front line?
- 3: Did you ever meet Haig ? If so what did you think of him ?
- 4: What would have happened if Haig had not sent men over the top?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!



5. German Officer

Find the name of a real German officer who fought against the Allied forces at the Somme. Give your account of your experiences and losses during these months.

Work with your lawyers on these type of questions:

- 1: You almost had the French lines broken at Verdun didn't you?
- 2: How many soldiers did you lose at the Somme ?
- 3: Why were your casualties so high ?
- 4: Were these losses sustainable and damaging to your war effort?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!



6. Douglas Haig

You were the Allied Field Marshall during World War

1. This is your chance to defend yourself and explain what it felt like to HAVE to send men to their deaths.

Work with you lawyers on these types of questions:

- 1: A lot of men died under your command didn't they?
- 2 : Do you ever think about this, how do you sleep at night, nightmares?
- 3 : It takes a strong man to shoulder such a burden doesn't it ?
- 4 : Is there anything else you would like to say to those calling you a 'butcher'?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling



7. John D Clare

You are a historian, author and founder of the website JohnDclare.net. Find out about him and his views on Haig's contribution to winning the war.

Work with you lawyers on these types of questions:

- 1: It is easy to attack Haig using hindsight isn't it?
- 2: How effective were Haig's tactics at the Somme ?
- 3: Do you think the Somme Offensive helped win the war ?
- 4: Is there anything Haig could have done differently ?

You may bring evidence to give to show to the jury, e.g. a photo, letter or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may cross examine you and challenge your answers. The jury will also be looking to see if you are telling lies and will deduct points if you do - Don't forget to dress for the occasion!



Team Lawyers



To do

Work with my witnesses and prepare answers

To do

Prepare evidence to show the jury

To do

Prepare to cross examine opposing witnesses

To do

Write and practise opening and closing statements

Opening statement notes:

My witness notes:

1

2

3

4

5

6

Opposing Witness Notes:

1

2

3

4

5

6

Closing statement notes:

Don't Forget

To raise objections during the trial

Don't Forget

The phrase "no further questions"

Don't Forget

To pitch to the jury not to the judge.

Check

Evidence?
Witness Props?
Briefcase?

Team Jury

Team Jury To Do List ...

- 1 : Select a presiding juror who will deliver the final verdict.
- 2 : Decide how you will reach a verdict - vote, rounds won, high score, other?
- 3 : What happens in the event of a hung jury?
- 4 : Write out the meanings of the words posted to the right.
- 5 : Create a plan to turn the classroom into a courtroom- include places for the judge, jury, lawyers , a witness stand and witness chairs.
- 6 : Find the answers to trial questions below.



During the trial you must listen very carefully. You should put your opinions about Haig to one side and judge only on what you see and hear during the trial. You should also be looking out for witnesses who may be telling lies or giving information that is not correct. Give a lower score for shaky testimony or lies. Find out the answers to the questions outlined below so you can judge if witnesses answer accurately and are credible. You may award two 'dramatic' bonus points per round for teams that play their parts well and / or bring props to or wear costumes during the trial. Similarly, reward participation bonus in the debate round for teams that have more people debating.

You must be comfortable that witnesses are not committing perjury. Find out the answers questions below before the trial starts.

	1-Opening Statements	2 : The Character of Haig	3 : Haig's Tactics	4 : Haig's Leadership	5 : The Casualties	6 : Shouldering The Burden	7 : Haig Won the War	8 : Debate Round	9 : Closing statements	10 : Total
Check Prosecuting questions	✗	Find three positive things about his character	It is said Haig was a 'cavalryman' - what did this mean?	Did Haig EVER go into the trenches?	How many Allied soldiers died at the Somme?	Did Haig ever contact the families of the dead?	Why did Lloyd George support Haig in public during the war?	✗	✗	✗
Check Defending Questions	✗	Find there negative things about his character	Did Haig try new tactics other than sending men over the top?	What is a 'Chateaux General? Did any other general visit the trenches often?	How many German soldiers died at the Somme?	Did he ever show remorse or say he was sorry for so many deaths?	What does hindsight mean?	✗	✗	✗
Prosecution Score	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 + participation : 10	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	116
Defence Score	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	: 10 + participation : 10	: 10 Dramatic bonus : 2	116

Prosecuting
Round
Won

Defending
Rounds
Won



General Haig is accused of being the
'Butcher of the Somme'
How does the jury rule?

Guilty

Not Guilty

Place Cards



Cut + Fold

Encourage lawyers to raise objections.
Encourage witnesses to use 'post its' / scraps of paper to communicate with their lawyers quietly during the trial.
Remind lawyers to end with 'no further questions'.
Remind witnesses and lawyers to pitch to the jury not the judge.
Let the trial flow whenever possible.

Judge



'Your Honour'



Remember to put your opinions about Haig to one side before the trial begins.
Give scores based only on what you see and hear during the trial.
Use post its / scrap paper to quietly communicate with other jury members during the trial.
Don't discuss the trial with witnesses or lawyers in our out of the courtroom.
Ensure the other jury members are focussed and listening carefully.
Take the jury out of the class / courtroom when deliberating the final verdict.
Leave a dramatic pause when reading out the final verdict.

Head Juror



Remember to put your opinions about Haig to one side before the trial begins.
Give scores based only on what you see and hear during the trial.
Use post its / scrap paper to quietly communicate with other jury members during the trial.
Don't discuss the trial with witnesses or lawyers in our out of the courtroom.
Ensure the other jury members are focussed and listening carefully.

Jury Member



Remember to put your opinions about Haig to one side before the trial begins.
Give scores based only on what you see and hear during the trial.
Use post its / scrap paper to quietly communicate with other jury members during the trial.
Don't discuss the trial with witnesses or lawyers in our out of the courtroom.
Ensure the other jury members are focussed and listening carefully.

Jury Member



Defence Lawyer



Remember to raise objections if opposing lawyers go off topic or 'harass' your witness.
Look for faults / lies with testimony of opposing witnesses.

Question errors during your cross-examination.

Keep questions reasonably short and simple.

Your main role during the debate round is to encourage others to speak out.
Don't forget to end your questioning with the phrase 'no further questions'.
Show any evidence provided by witnesses to the jury.

Defence Lawyer



Remember to raise objections if opposing lawyers go off topic or 'harass' your witness.
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Prosecution Lawyer



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Don't forget to end your questioning with the phrase 'no further questions'.
Show any evidence provided by witnesses to the jury.

Try to get into character during the trial.
Rub your chin and leave pauses after each question?

Mr Livesy



Historian



Try to get into character during the trial.
Sit straight and answer formally.
Salute Haig before you give your testimony?

Gen Gough



British Officer



Try to get into character during the trial .
Sit straight and answer formally.
Salute Haig before you give your testimony?

Officer



Allies / New Zealand



Try to get into character during the trial .
Sit straight and answer formally.
Salute Haig before you give your testimony?

Officer



Allies / England



use it!

Take a tissue / handkerchief to the witness stand and

Try to get into character during the trial.

Mother



Allies / Britain



Can you speak using a Welsh accent?

Try to get into character during the trial.

L. George



WW1 British Prime Minister



Try to get into character during the trial.
Hug your father at some point during the trial?

Haig Jr



Son of General Haig



Try to get into character during the trial.
Rub your chin and leave thoughtful pauses before answering questions?

Mr Hart



Historian / Author



Try to get into character during the trial.
Salute Haig as before you give your testimony?

Soldier



Allies / Britain



Try to get into character during the trial.
Can you speak using a German accent?

Officer



Central Powers / Germany



you are a hero!

This is the only time you get make people understand
how hard it was to carry the weight of the war on your
shoulders - make the most of your time on the stand -

Haig



Allies / Britain



when you own lawyer speaks.

Try to get into character during the trial .
Answer carefully and thoughtfully. Pause after each
question asked for dramatic effect. Nod and agree

John D Clare



Historian / Website



General Haig : Hero, Butcher or Bungler ?



Investigate : was British General Douglas Haig a hero, butcher or bungler?

General Haig : Hero, Butcher or Bungler?

The man pictured to the right is Sir Douglas Haig. He was the British Field Marshal who commanded the fighting on the Western Front during the First World War. He is a controversial figure whose actions have created intense debate amongst historians. Some argue that Haig was a 'butcher', the heartless general who cared little for the millions of men who died under his command. Others defend him as a hero, the man, who, under enormous pressure, and with little other choice, stayed strong and helped win the war. Or was he simply a bungler, a well meaning but old fashioned general who lacked the intelligence and ideas to win a clear victory in this new type of warfare ?



The Battle of the Somme was the biggest battle of World War One. Over 58,000 men lost their lives in the first day, most of them in the first hour. The plan was simple: to bomb the Germans for five days and nights then walk to the enemy trench and kill and remaining soldiers or capture those who surrendered. The British were led by General Haig. After 5 days of bombing the German trenches were barely scratched. The British planned to attack the Germans at the strongest point. The Germans just had to shoot their machine guns, reload and shoot and shoot. The same type of attack continued from the 1st of July until November 1916 and over a million men died because of General Haig, the Butcher of the Somme.

A

www.wix.com/stewie96/trenches/page1

'My men are very happy. Several have said that they have never before been so well led and they know what they will have to do tomorrow. The enemy barbed wire has been so well cut as the bombs we have dropped been so many and powerful. All the commanders are full of confidence.'

General Haig.

June: 1916, The day before the Battle of the Somme.

B



C

'The country must learn that our men will die. No amount of skill on the part of the higher commanders, no training, however good, on the part of the officers and men, no better weapons, however great, will allow us to win without the sacrifice of men's lives. The people at home must be ready to see heavy casualties' (lots dead British soldiers) .

General Haig.

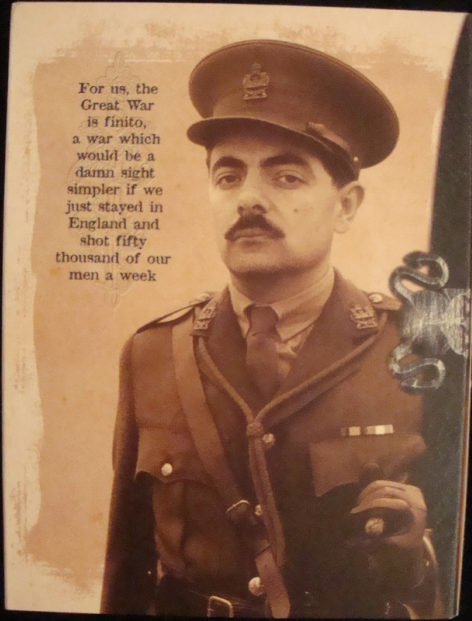
June: 1916, written before the Battle of the Somme.



Haig was a quiet and shy man. but he was intelligent and ambitious and had great self-confidence. Perhaps his greatest weakness was his optimism, which seemed to come from his belief that he had been chosen by God to serve his country. It was probably this failure to see when he was defeated (had lost) that led to his continuing attacks on the Somme and Passchendaele.

Written by the modern historian, Anthony Livesey, 'Great Battles of World War I' - 1989.

D



Watch the YOUTUBE clip, taken from the BBC comedy 'Blackadder Goes Forth.' Think about:

- 1: How Haig treats his toy soldiers.
- 2: The conversation between Haig and Blackadder.

Haig: *"You know me, I'm not a man to change my mind."*
Blackadder: *"Yes we've noticed that"*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fVNtHQ1tTQ



Deaths from the Battle of the Somme, taken from the British War Office Records.

British	415, 000
French	195, 000
German	600, 000



'I do not think the generals who send us over the top know what it is like down here in the trenches. The mud, cold and rain are terrible. The Germans are not so exhausted / tired as they think. Our men cannot fight against dry men in their trenches with machine guns.'



A New Zealand Officer who fought under General Haig. Written after the war.

"Haig looked every inch like a general. He was a very intelligent man. What would have happened if he hadn't send us over the top?'. The war would have gone on and on. This was a war of attrition and it was about who could stand it the longest."

A British soldier who fought for General Haig,



'Why did Haig send men over the top carrying packs weighing sixty pounds (over 20kg)...the answer is that once a British soldier got into a German trench he had to keep it and he needed lots of ammunition (bullets) to keep the Germans away until help could arrive.'

"The Somme" by Peter Hart.



Time to pull down Haig's statue?

Statues were made in Britain to celebrate Haig and his role in helping win the war. But, military historian Alan Clark records that "if the dead could march, side by side

in a single past the statue, it would take them four days and nights to get past the saluting base. We believe that Haig, and his blinkered view of strategy and tactics are to blame for those deaths. We do believe that Haig tried his best for the country, but we doubt his judgment and his humanity. There is one further charge against the Field Marshal: He did not share the sufferings and hardships of his troops. British soldiers lived a horrible life in the rat-infested trenches while Field Marshal Haig and his staff lived a life of luxury in a Chateau (nice house) miles behind the trenches and away from the fighting.

The Express Newspaper, November 1998.





General Haig, defended by son.

The son of the British commander at the Somme has defended his father on the eve of the battle's 90th anniversary. Haig who was seen as hero at the end of the war but was later labelled a 'butcher' by some historians. His son George Alexander Eugene Douglas Haig, has spoken out to *"set the record straight"*. He will not take any part in events to mark the battle of the Somme on Saturday.

Speaking at the family country house in Melrose, however, the 88-year-old defended his father's name. "Nobody likes to see his father labelled as a butcher and I think it's very important for the good of this country to set the record straight," he said. "I found the criticism really rather difficult and sad as his leadership was paramount / most important in winning the war. The country could not get anyone better than him and the Somme broke the backs of the Germans. It was a very, very close-run thing and because of trench warfare and the weapons available, frontal attacks were the only way so deaths were inevitable.

Lord Haig also spoke with affection of family life with his father. "He was not a brutish man, he was a very kind, wonderful man and by God, I miss him," he said. The Field Marshal's state funeral in 1928 was attended by more than 100,000 people.

Despite the national hero worship, Haig was blamed for the war of attrition against Germany that saw hundreds of thousands die. Some 20,000 British and Allied troops died on the first day of the 1916 Battle of the Somme, which has become synonymous with military futility.

Lord Haig said he thought that now people were possibly starting to realise his father's importance. "I believe it has now turned full circle and people appreciate his contribution," he said. "But it saddens me my three sisters have not survived to see it. "They died suffering from the beastly attitudes of the public towards our father. "He was a great family man. We had some marvellous times together, fishing, and having picnics. "The only time when he could be quite strict was when he was teaching me to ride a bike"

Interview recorded by BBC News, Scotland, 30th June 2006.

M



Major-General: (addressing the men before practising an attack behind the lines). "I want you to understand that there is a difference between a rehearsal and the real thing. There are three essential differences: first, the absence of the enemy. Now (turning to the Regimental Sergeant-Major) what is the second difference?". Sergeant-Major: "The absence of the General, Sir."

A cartoon from a British Magazine published in 1917.

'The mud was terrible. When we tried to attack it was so slow and only the shortest gain was possible. I told general Haig that success was not possible or would cost the lives of too many men. I asked him to stop the attack but he did not.'

British General Gough, 1931.

L

'I would like to congratulate you on the achievement and successes you have made in this great battle. You have pushed back the enemy back with great bravery and skill even with such terrible weather.'

A telegram sent by British Prime minister Lloyd George to the British soldiers during the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

N

'The German soldiers are almost finished, tired of the war, have no confidence and ready to surrender / stop fighting any day now. It is true that the amount of ground we have gained is not great. That's nothing. The German casualties / numbers of dead have been much more than ours.'

Written in December 1916, by Haig to the British Prime Minister after the Battle of the Somme

Haig was the first general to use the tank in numbers. Although they often got stuck in the mud or broke down his willingness to use tanks shows he was open to trying new ideas.

Mr P Chantler, History Teacher.



P

Q



R

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qPnLO1L8Pk>

In 1918 the British and French forces under Haig's command achieved a series of victories against the German army which resulted in the winning of the war.

www.johndclare.net

S

'Was I stupid to fight at the Somme? Surely there can be only one opinion. If we had not attacked at the Somme the Germans would have beaten the French at Verdun and the French and British alliance would have been broken.'

From the biography of General Haig, 1935.

T



U

He didn't even go down to see the front line trenches to see his men and dirty his boots. A good General knows what his men are going into. Haig did not. School textbook 2001.



Published in a British newspaper: 1916.

V



Soldiers struggling in thick mud at the battle of Ypres.

W

'Haig believed in the old ways of battle when horses would charge against the enemy and smash them. This worked before the new machine gun arrived. In the First World War Haig tried and failed again and again the same idea with men against machine guns. It was a mass slaughter and a such waste of human life..... 'Haig was a donkey. His only idea was to kill more Germans than have Germans kill his own men. This was a terrible kind of idea and was not an idea at all. He knew he had no chance of breaking through the German trenches but he still sent men to their deaths.'

Book, British Butchers Modern Historian, 1985.

X

Y

'The Somme was the muddy grave (death) of the German army'. A German Officer who fought in the battle.



'The battle of the Somme was the most gigantic, horrible, futile and bloody fight ever fought in the history of war'.

British Prime Minister Lloyd George.
Written after the war in 1921

Z

Find a source of your own and add it here.



icHistory