

# **TAKING the RIDGE**

## *Anzacs & Germans at the Battle of Messines 1917*



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# INTRODUCTION

‘You were in the Great War,’ I said. ‘Tell me about that.’

‘I’ve been in all the wars,’ Johnson said, ‘but I couldn’t tell you anything about it.’

‘You won’t talk about it?’

‘I couldn’t tell you anything even if I did. It wasn’t anything. You wouldn’t understand it unless you saw it. If you did see it, you wouldn’t understand it.’

– **John Mulgan**, *Man Alone*.<sup>1</sup>

The first faint pink streaks of dawn lightened the sky above the ridge opposite. The men of the New Zealand Division had spent the evening moving into position and were now crammed into their jumping-off trenches. Any resumption of German shelling on their front line would be disastrous. Somewhere to the north, green and yellow signal flares were shooting skywards—someone was receiving artillery fire. But for the first time in weeks the front here was quiet. Relatively. A rifle muzzle flashed across the valley. A double green flare sizzled from the ridge into the moonlit sky, arched, and fell slowly. A machine gun opened up for a minute before abruptly ceasing. A nightingale sang in the wood.

Then, without warning, the ground to the New Zealand troops’ left erupted. A gigantic crimson mushroom of smoke and dust roiled high up into the air where a moment earlier a German strongpoint had stood. Simultaneously, a deafening thunderclap assailed the men as the artillery behind them opened fire. Shells exploded on the German trenches just a few hundred metres in front.

The New Zealanders, bayonets fixed, clambered out of their shaking trenches and strode forward, leapt a stream, and then disappeared into the dust and smoke that now continuously flickered from the lightning flashes of exploding

shells. The air reeked of burnt explosive and gas. Any light from the full moon or reddening morning sky dimmed.

It was 3:10 a.m. on 7 June 1917. In the half-light the New Zealanders, part of the Second Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (II ANZAC), were advancing up the slope of a broad ridge. Also moving forward were the other divisions making up II ANZAC. On the New Zealanders’ right were the 3rd Australian Division and on their left the British 25th Division. On their left and further north were the six divisions of IX and X corps of the British Second Army. The 4th Australian Division, II ANZAC’s reserve, waited in position further back for their phase of the attack. The objective of this action, led by the British Second Army, was to recapture the Messines Ridge. The special role for the New Zealanders within this action was to capture the ruins of Messines (now known as Mesen) from the Germans who had held the town since November 1914.

The Battle of Messines (7–14 June 1917) was a celebrated British victory now largely forgotten. If remembered, it is for the nineteen large mines under the German defences that blew at the start of the attack. Mostly, the weeklong battle serves as a footnote to the three-month Battle of Passchendaele or the Third Battle of Ypres (31 July–10 November 1917), where it figures as a necessary but self-contained action to allow British troops to assemble around Ypres unhindered. Its limited objectives and short duration, a morning to take the ridge and the rest of the week to consolidate, were eclipsed by that larger battle. Yet, Messines is one of the few unequivocally successful British battles of the war, notable for its exemplary planning and execution.

The New Zealand Division’s role and success in the battle was significant for New Zealand at the time. The division embodied almost the entire

contribution made by the country to the First World War. Victory at Messines was a victory for New Zealand. The number of New Zealand soldiers fighting in the battle made it even more significant. Typically, the division mounted two-brigade attacks, with the third held in reserve. At Messines, it committed all three, a total of some 8000 fighting men. Adding to that total, the newly formed 4th Infantry Brigade was brought in during the battle's consolidation phase. Messines would therefore directly touch more lives back in New Zealand than any other battle.

Messines also has its darker side. The New Zealanders suffered nearly 4000 casualties in three days, while II ANZAC overall incurred a disproportionately large share of the total British Empire casualties. Two monuments sum up the two aspects of the battle. On the former German front line in front of the town stands the Messines Ridge (New Zealand) Memorial to the missing. In stark contrast is the New Zealand Battle Memorial commemorating the New Zealanders' victory just 500 metres further along the ridge. Juxtaposed in these two monuments are individual loss and collective victory.

Success at Messines contrasts with the New Zealand Division's battle experiences before and after. Formed in early 1916, the Division first fought at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette in September 1916 as part of the larger Battle of the Somme (1 July to 18 November 1916). This action established the Division's reputation as a first-class fighting formation but at great cost.<sup>2</sup> Just over a year after Flers-Courcelette came the horror of the 1st Battle of Passchendaele in October 1917, a disastrous defeat which cost the Division nearly 3000 casualties on the one day.<sup>3</sup> Although the Division would see further successful action in 1918 in the Hundred Days Offensive, Messines was in many respects the high point of the war for most New Zealand troops. It was *the* New Zealand victory.

In this perspective it is an oddity that New Zealand's First World War discourse centres firmly on Gallipoli, despite the fact that only 16 of every 100 New Zealand men sent overseas fought there.<sup>4</sup> What of the 84,000 men who only served in France and Belgium? One way or the other, around 18,000 of them were involved at Messines, either in the front line or in support. That is about the same number as those at Gallipoli and nearly a fifth of all overseas men. Some of the 3370 New Zealanders enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) also fought and died at Messines.

New Zealand's involvement in this battle is largely unregistered in the communal memory, despite its name being engraved on many war memorials. More than a century on from the battle, it is appropriate for New Zealanders and Australians to rediscover this largely forgotten victory and understand the part their troops played in it.

## Some key questions

In this book, the 1917 Battle of Messines is treated as a microcosm of New Zealand's participation on the Western Front in the First World War. Other actions will be necessarily be mentioned in the narrative but only in subordination to this main focus. The justification is that this battle gives us an unsurpassed vantage point for the discussion of many aspects of New Zealand's participation in the First World War.

For one, it provides an opportunity to confront public perceptions and evaluate recent scholarly thinking about the Western Front. Conveniently, the battle sits right at the chronological midpoint of the New Zealand Division's three years of existence. It also occurred at a time when both adversaries were implementing new doctrines (tactical methodologies). To that extent, the battle is specially placed to provide an insight into the New Zealand Western Front experience. In a seeming contradiction, a reason for the battle's relative neglect, the fact it was a limited set-piece engagement with limited ambitions, makes it an ideal case study for exploring leadership, technology and military praxis as these things affected the lives of the Division's citizen soldiers.

As to leadership, today's military historians challenge the popular discourse that still largely frames the First World War as a case of 'lions led by donkeys'. In this perception, incompetent 'butcher' generals are seen condemning brave men to fight disastrous battles in the unremitting mud for horrendous costs.<sup>5</sup> Recent reviews of the performance of Field Marshal Haig and his commanders challenge the proposition that their strategies were uniformly flawed and callous.<sup>6</sup> Armies are instead reframed as institutions able to learn from experience.<sup>7</sup> Proponents of this 'learning curve' theory have shown how the British and German doctrine and tactics evolved as they learnt from and sought to respond to and anticipate the other's actions.<sup>8</sup> They argue that the British Expeditionary Force and its leaders were far from incompetent, enabling the British Army to reach a level of effectiveness sufficient to win the war.<sup>9</sup>



The Battle of Messines offers an opportunity to assess the overall leadership and of course also that of II ANZAC's generals. As an instance, two of its divisional commanders, New Zealand Major General Andrew Russell, along with his Australian counterpart Major General John Monash, have repeatedly been blamed for their respective divisions' failures at Passchendaele<sup>10</sup> but this goes against more recent reviews of these men<sup>11</sup> Monash has always been regarded as a commander par excellence in Australia, while more recent studies have sought to rehabilitate Russell.<sup>12</sup> Messines offers us a means of gauging the performance of these two men, along with their controversial colleague Lieutenant General Alexander Godley.

As to technology and military praxis, Messines marks a stage when Western Front trench warfare had reached maturity. In response to the 1916 Battle of the Somme<sup>13</sup> both sides evolved new tactical and operational doctrines that would become standard for the rest of this war and beyond. These doctrines saw their first application at the Battle of Arras in April 1917, a month before Messines. Messines represented further progress in their development. As such, it provides us with an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the rival doctrines.<sup>14</sup>

Messines is also notable because, as part of II ANZAC, New Zealanders and Australians were fighting side by side here for the first time since Gallipoli. This Antipodean dimension is of particular interest to New Zealanders and Australians curious to know what their soldier ancestors did in this war. In addition, it picks up an emerging theme in military historiography: the role of Dominion, that is Australian, Canadian and New Zealand, troops within the larger British Empire military project. The popular press and public sentiment on both sides of the Tasman Sea then and now tend to mythologise the Anzac citizen soldiers. By contrast, recent Australian and Canadian scholars argue that their soldiers did not conform to nationally desired and extolled stereotypes and were not innately superior or natural warriors.<sup>15</sup>

Popular narrative has also tended to gloss over New Zealand soldiers' conduct as anything other than honourable. Here too, historians and others have begun reappraising these too comfortable perceptions.<sup>16</sup> Diaries and other documents relating to Messines will be evaluated in the present study as potentially providing qualitative insights into New Zealanders' and Australians' attitudes and behaviours.

## Telling what happened

Telling what happened in a battle is relatively easy; making sense of a battle seems near impossible. Writing to his father at Halfway Bush, Dunedin, two and a half weeks after the attack on Messines, James Cunningham did not even try:

Just a few lines to let you know I'm still going strong. No doubt you will have seen by the papers that the NZ's were in a 'Fair Dinkum Go' with old Fritz. It's utterly beyond me to put in writing what it was like but it was magnificent in its devilry — **Private James Cunningham**, 8th (Southland) Company, 2nd Otago<sup>17</sup>

The challenge is to make meaning of a battle conducted and experienced at three different scales concurrently: abstract grand strategy; operational strategy and tactics; and the visceral experiences of individual soldiers. It requires reconciling actions at different organisational, spatial and temporal scales so that individual soldiers' experiences can be situated within an enterprise involving the actions of tens of thousands of men who extend spatially within a battlefield fifteen kilometres long and three kilometres deep and organisationally within a hierarchy of numerous ranks.

Exploring battles using different organisational levels as lenses, each focusing on a different scale of observation, can help comprehension. The individual level provides the 'blood and mud' vantage point. Necessarily, though, it is spatially confined to a small part of the battlefield and typically lacks wider operational context. 'Shell hole and trench have a limited horizon. The range of vision extends no further than a bomb-throw; but what is seen is seen very distinctly.'<sup>18</sup> By contrast, the battalion, a self-contained community of around a thousand men, provides a useful scale for framing soldiers' lived experiences at a more collective level.<sup>19</sup> At the next level, the division, as a self-contained formation with the population of a town, provides a useful scale to explore administration and tactical planning for the brigades that constituted its fighting units. It had full responsibility for several kilometres of front line, with the capacity to draw on its artillery and infantry to defend or attack. A division drew on a recruiting district population of a little under a million people. New Zealand, with barely one million souls recorded in the 1913 census, could just support the one.

At the same time, too narrow a focus on the New Zealand Division's contribution risks

exaggerating its importance and downplaying the significance of other divisions. It was just one of nine British divisions fighting for the Messines Ridge in the morning of 7 June, and one of four making up II ANZAC. Rather, its actions need to be seen within the wider military context of that battle. A broader perspective, at the level of the corps, allows the actions of II ANZAC and the New Zealand Division within it to provide a window into broader Western Front warfare. The corps, an administrative unit usually of two to three divisions, was by 1917 the key unit for planning and coordinating attack.<sup>20</sup> It was also responsible for maintaining a high level of coordination between infantry, cavalry, artillery and aerial observation; important in an all-arms battle.

Additionally, the German soldiers opposite, fighting in similar military formations to the British, were not passive opponents, but actively responded to the New Zealand and wider British offensive. Their decisions and actions need to be incorporated into any assessment of the Anzac forces. Both sides were also responding to and exploiting the battlefield topography and geology that had shaped earlier military actions and would shape future ones.

To understand the New Zealand Division's actions and situate individuals' experiences within the battle therefore requires placing it within the wider military and geographical context within which its men fought. That is what will be attempted in this book. The New Zealanders' story is part of a dynamic story that is multi-scalar in space and time and cannot be told in isolation. The approach adopted here is to lay out an historical geography of the battle. In a chorological viewpoint, the causal relations between geographic phenomena within a cross-section of the battle will be identified. This cross-section encompasses a width of about four kilometres of the whole 15-kilometre front, reaching from behind the II ANZAC lines, through the battlefield, and onwards to the German reserve positions. Such a focus limits the spatial and temporal dimensions to provide a manageable but still meaningful scale of analysis.

An expanded appreciation of the chronology is also needed. The battle was one of several major actions on the ridge, beginning in October 1914 when the front line was first delineated and then again in 1918. Although the 1917 attack had a clearly defined start of 7 June, initial planning started in late 1915, while the offensive itself reaches back to initial bombardments in

mid-May 1917. The battle officially ended a week later, but the New Zealand troops were still fighting to consolidate a day afterwards at La Basse-Ville and were to mount a further attack there at the end of July as part of the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, which opened the Third Battle of Ypres. These latter actions, albeit minor in the larger Western Front scale, resonated in New Zealand at the time and are also the logical play-out of the division's Messines actions.<sup>21</sup> The chronology extends, though necessarily in summary form, to the New Zealanders' experiences fighting at Passchendaele and Polderhoek at the end of the year, so as to counterpoint the victory of Messines and identify the factors that made Messines so successful.

## Source material

In the present book the various war histories, unit diaries, reports, and personal correspondence between commanders are used to establish actions and to check facts. These include the unit war diaries and other relevant documents held by Archives New Zealand, along with similar material made available online by the Australian War Museum and the British National Archives. New Zealand soldiers' diaries and memoirs, held by the Kippenberger Military Archive at the National Army Museum, Waiouru, and the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, have been used to provide personal perspectives. They are supplemented with published diaries, as well as anthologies of writing and oral histories. British and German commanders' autobiographies and histories have also been consulted.<sup>22</sup>

The German official history and regimental histories, along with original documents held at the German Federal and state archives, are used to establish the German versions of the battle. The Bavarian Archives in Munich are extant, providing a detailed understanding of the Bavarian side of the conflict with their war diaries and documents. Some Saxon Army administrative material also survives, housed in the Dresden Archives. Most Prussian Army archives that include the Saxon operational files were apparently destroyed in the Second World War. Only a small fraction of the missing archival material survives. The bulk of it takes the form of quotations within correspondence between Walter von Strube, the German war historian responsible for the chapter addressing the battle, and officers present at the battle. This correspondence is held at the German Federal Archive at Freiburg.

The quality of this material varies. Each document has its author's subjectivities embedded in the choice of what material to present and how. Charles Bean identified the challenge of using soldiers' diaries when he drew extensively on two soldiers' accounts for the Messines chapter of the Australian Official History. Points that related to the diarists' own experiences were 'surprisingly accurate and honest'. On the other hand, the diarists were unable to distinguish the true and false in what they heard from others.<sup>23</sup> The challenge is therefore to determine whether the account was first-hand or not. At the same time, most soldiers did not write diaries and the diaries of those that did range from little more than weather reports to full-blown purple prose. As such, they supply a qualitative, though not necessarily typical, experience of the men at Messines to complement unit war diaries.

Unit diaries, although a prime type of source material, also need to be treated with some caution. The 25th Division's historian, Arthur Crookenden, noted they were often inconsistent with other records:

Brigade war diaries are the worst, and Divisional the best. But these latter sometimes give too good an account of a battle, and are not easy to reconcile with the diaries of lower formations. As regards Battalion war diaries, the severer the action, the worse the account in the diary and sometimes 'there was no one left competent to tell the tale'.<sup>24</sup>

The New Zealand divisional and regimental histories are clearly important synthesising accounts. Here too, however, some systematic liabilities need to be registered. Some of these histories were written soon after the war and their authors were limited by the material available to them. Errors also tended to creep in, especially when the author was drawing on other published works. More seriously, some correspondence between official war historians and senior officers shows officers trying to distance themselves from critical adverse decisions.<sup>25</sup>

Descriptions of events quite often vary between diarists and official histories, but also between British and German versions. Often it is impossible to tell which version is accurate. The approach taken by the New Zealand Division's historian, Hugh Stewart — to accept the less favourable version — is adopted in this book. For some actions, however, the different versions are presented side by side, in the belief that each was intended as an accurate record by its narrator.

## Structure

This account of the Battle of Messines begins with an overview of the battle as a whole, as seen from afar through the lens of newspaper readers in New Zealand and Germany. In chapters 2, 3 and 4 the composition of the opposing forces, British and German, and their hierarchy, men and officers, are described in detail. In chapters 5 and 6 the geography of the battlefield and the imprint of prior military engagements on this inhabited space are discussed. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 conclude this introductory section by analysing the doctrine, planning and engineering employed by the Germans to defend and British to attack the Messines Ridge.

The narrative of the battle proper comes next, and it is broken into several discrete phases. Chapters 10 to 13 recount, respectively, the preliminary bombardment of the ridge, the morning attack by the New Zealand Division to take the ridge and the town of Messines, and the flanking actions by the 3rd Australian Division and the 25th Division. Chapters 14 to 16 then take up the story of the afternoon attack on the second objective, the Oosttaverne Line, by 4th Australian Division. Chapters 16 and 17 discuss the consolidation of the line and subsequent actions by the New Zealand Division through June and its final action in the sector at La Basse-Ville. Finally, in a short coda, Chapter 18 outlines the New Zealand Division's actions at Passchendaele and Polderhoek, the latter an almost forgotten yet significant action.

The third and final section, comprising chapters 19 to 21, reflects on the costs and gains of the battle. The drivers of the outcomes and the battle's wider value as a lens for understanding the First World War on the Western Front are examined. The book concludes with a postscript showing how the 1917 Battle of Messines has subsequently been recognised and memorialised.

## Notes

Translations from the German are by the author except where otherwise identified. German military terms, such as *Bataillon* (battalion), are given in translated form, but in italics and with German capitalisation to signal the fact that they often differ significantly in meaning from the cognate English terms.

Generic terms apply regardless of specific origins of men or units: British signifies 'of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland



and the Dominions', Entente 'British and French', and German 'of the German Empire'. The Germans mostly used *Englisch* or *Engländer* as generic terms for British. 'Colonial' and 'Dominion' were often used interchangeably by the men to describe themselves, although officially they were Dominion troops.

In citing the names of British and New Zealand units, the term Battalion is taken as read. For example, the 1st Battalion, Wellington Regiment, is referred to as **1st Wellington**, as in the unit histories. English battalions follow British convention, e.g. **6/Lincoln** for 6th Battalion, Lincoln Regiment. The term 'Company' is often omitted, thus 6th (Hauraki).

The standard German Field Service Regulations abbreviations are used for German units: thus **40 ID** is the 40th *Infantry Division* and **bIR 18** the Bavarian 18th *Infantry Regiment*. *Battalions* are given Roman numerals: **III./18** is the third *Battalion* of bIR 18, while its 3rd *Company* is denoted as **3./18**. 'Field artillery regiment' is abbreviated as **FAR**.

The German *Eszett* (ß) is used rather than 'ss': Loßberg, rather than Lossberg.

Quotations from soldiers' diaries and notebooks silently spell out abbreviations and incorporate minor spelling and punctuation corrections. Stated ranks of individuals are those held at the time of the battle.

This part of Belgium has a complicated political geography. Mesen is on the country's provincial and linguistic border; the Douve stream just south of Mesen forms the border here as does part of Huns' Walk (Komenstraat, Comines road) to the east and the Wulverghem road to the west. The town itself is in Flemish speaking Flanders but Ploegsteert and Hill 63 are in French speaking Wallonia. The Flemish form of placenames is used for present-day references in Flanders, French in Wallonia and for the period of the war. For positions and trenches, British names are favoured; a concordance giving both the British and the German names and their map coordinates is appended.

Times given here are those stated in the British records. All German times have been converted to British time or with British time cited in parentheses following German times to facilitate comparison. These adjustments are necessary because the Germans used Central European time, one hour in advance of British time.<sup>26</sup> One hour should be added to British times to make them comparable to contemporary local times (UST + 1). Unit and personal diary entries show

a range of times for events, perhaps explained in part by the *Instruction No. 9—Organisation of Machine Gun Barrage*: 'Group Commanders will ensure that there is at least one reliable watch per sub-section.'

A set of maps has been prepared specifically for this book by Robert Gibb with further maps prepared on this set by the author. He has used the digital elevation model and LiDAR overlay produced by Informatie Vlaanderen to generate the base map as well as the '3-dimensional' maps.<sup>27</sup> LiDAR, which can be thought of as laser-radar, has a very accurate height determination (to a resolution of less than 5 cm), even under foliage. It clearly registers many of the mine craters. Naturally, it also shows up contemporary buildings, earthworks and roads but on balance I decided to accept this limitation, not least because it supplies battlefield visitors with modern-day reference points.

Other maps prepared according to more traditional methods are added to aid an appreciation of the contemporary battlefield context. Difficulties arise when British trench maps are overlaid on the base map. Belgian topographical map plates evacuated to England in 1914 were used by Ordnance Survey as a base for a series of small-scale maps that imposed an Imperial grid (yards) over the original metric units (metres) to create their trench maps.<sup>28</sup> This origin explains the names of features such as Hill 63, named for their elevation in metres as shown on the base maps. The maps exhibit uneven precision, coordinates give a maximum accuracy of a square with sides of 5 yards, though a 50 yard square is more prevalent.<sup>29</sup> The various sketch maps have another level of inaccuracy again. While I have sought to reference the maps to observed features on the LiDAR imagery, it is not possible to attain complete accuracy.

The aerial photographs and three-dimensional mapping present a particular challenge. The sense of depth is not achieved unless a picture is orientated in a particular way, usually with the apparent sun coming from the top left of the frame though the topography can influence perception. Viewed otherwise shell craters and depressions are perceived as dimples instead of holes in the ground. Following mapping convention the maps have the sun from the north-west, a real-life impossibility, and the aerial photos are rotated for effect. Readers need to be aware that some aerial photos therefore have their due north at the bottom of the frame not the top.



Military mapping convention holds that one's own side's trenches are coloured blue, the enemy's red. Both British and German cartography conformed to that convention. I have adopted blue for British, red for German. Convention holds, too, that actions are normally described from right to left along the frontage under consideration.

Presenting units of measurement is challenging. The British mostly used imperial measurements of miles, yards, and feet for distance, but used the metric system based on metres for

topography as a consequence of using the Belgian maps. The Germans uniformly used the metric system. Converting all measurements to one or the other system loses the nuance. When reporting distances, each side typically rounds the number: for example, 100 yards or 100 metres; British artillery plans were in 100 foot lifts. Yards and metres are almost the same, but 100 yards is only 91.4 metres. In following my sources I have necessarily had to mix the two types in my account. I have provided conversions to metric units to help readers appreciate the distances and weights.

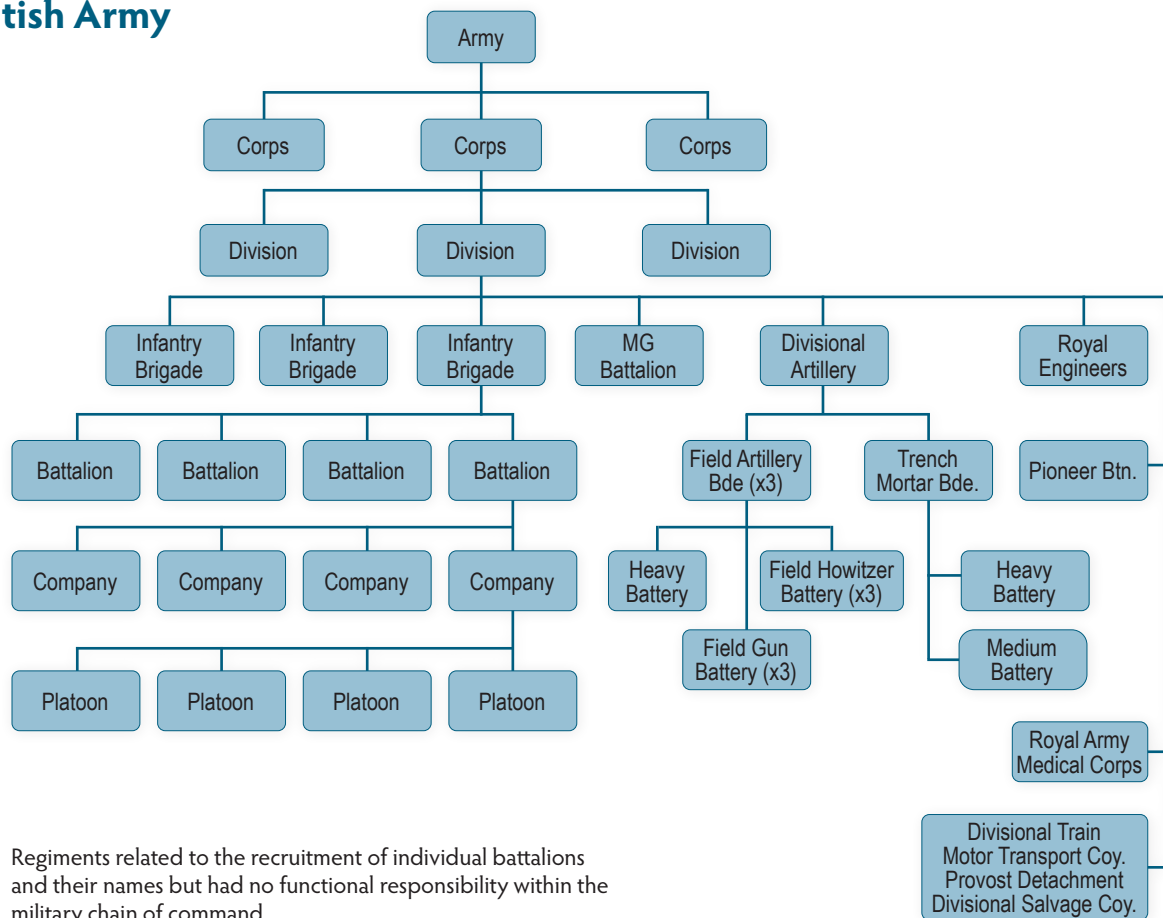
## British and German army ranks

Class	British Army	Command	German Army	Translation
<b>Officers</b>				
<b>General officers</b>	Field Marshal	Group of Armies	<i>Generalfeldmarshall</i>	general of the armies
	General	Army	<i>Generaloberst</i>	
	Lieutenant General	Corps	<i>General der Infanterie</i>	general of infantry
			<i>General der Kavallerie</i>	general of cavalry
			<i>General der Artillerie</i>	general of artillery
	Major General	Division	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	
	Brigadier General	Brigade, Regiment	<i>Generalmajor</i>	
<b>Field Officers</b>	Colonel		<i>Oberst</i>	
	Lieutenant Colonel	Battalion	<i>Oberstleutnant</i>	
	Major	Battalion 2nd in command	<i>Major</i>	
<b>Junior Officers</b>	Captain	Company	<i>Hauptmann</i>	cavalry captain
			<i>Rittmeister</i>	
	Lieutenant	Platoon, Gruppe	<i>Oberleutnant</i>	
	Second Lieutenant	Platoon, Gruppe	<i>Leutnant</i>	
			<i>Fähnrich</i>	ensign/cadet
			<i>Kadett</i>	cadet
<b>Enlisted Men</b>				
<b>NCOs</b>	Sergeant	Platoon 2nd in command	<i>Feldwebel</i>	
			<i>Sergeant</i>	
	Corporal	Section, Zug	<i>Unteroffizier</i>	
	Bombardier (Artillery)			
	Lance Corporal	Section, Zug	<i>Gefreiter</i>	
<b>Men</b>	Private (infantry)	None	<i>Musketier</i>	Musketeer (Prussian) Infantryman Soldier (Bavarian) Soldier (Saxon)
			<i>Infanterist</i>	
			<i>Soldat</i>	
	Rifleman (infantry)		<i>Schütze</i>	Also: sniper, skirmisher, machine-gunner
	Guardsman		<i>Grenadier</i>	Grenadier ( <i>Guard regiment</i> )
			<i>Landsturmmann</i>	Reservist
	Trooper (mounted)		<i>Kavallerist</i>	
	Gunner (artillery)		<i>Kanonier</i>	
	Sapper, Pioneer		<i>Pionier</i>	

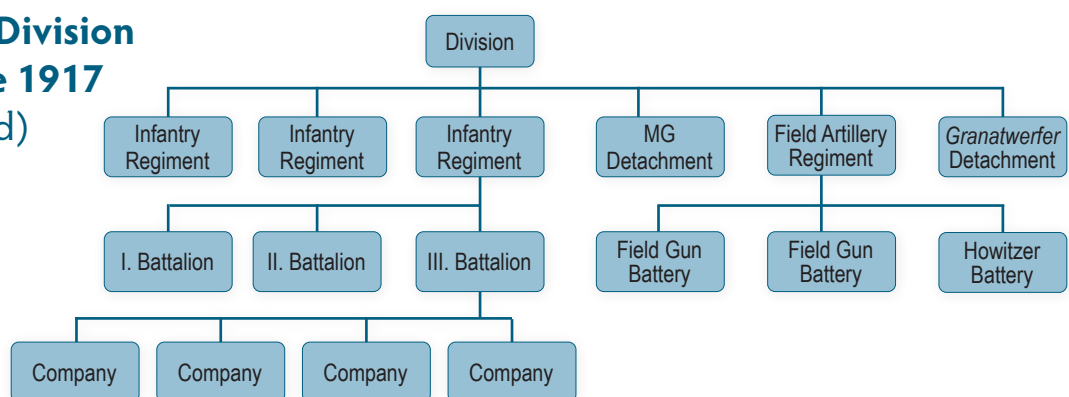
1. Infantrymen on both sides were given various names reflecting regimental histories and traditions. All were deployed the same way.
2. *der Reserve (d.R.)* denotes a reservist, e.g. *Leutnant d.R. Infanterie* Daniel Hach: *Infantry Reservist Second Lieutenant Daniel Hach*.

## Military structure, 1917

### British Army



### German Division structure 1917 (simplified)



German military structure closely resembled the British model in the important respects. A key difference is that the *Regiment* replaces brigade. The number of battalions and artillery units in a *Division* also differed.



## Front Line

- April 1915 - June 1917  
— December 1917

