1914-1918: Dashed Dreams of Decisive War

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The North Sea
Underwater Warfare
THE SCHLIEFFEN PLAN 1905

This plan to invade France through neutral Belgium and to surround Paris was accepted a number of years before the war actually broke out. The actual German advance was made on May 25. It was the invasion of Belgium that brought Britain into the war against Germany.
Kenneth Forbes, right, in the British Army. The call to become a war artist in 1915 was unexpected, but perhaps not unwelcome. He had been wounded twice and gassed. “I had been in the front line trenches for over two years and had just been promoted to second-in-command of the 9th Machine Gun Co., which included the rank of Captain, when I received an order to report to Gen. Rawlinson...” he informed me that I was to report to the Canadian War Memorials, London, and be transferred to the Canadian Army.”
Vimy Ridge -- Artillery

- 245 heavy guns (mostly 60-pounder (54), 6-inch howitzer (104), and 8-inch and 9.2-inch howitzers (36 each), but also 12-inch (4) and 15-inch howitzers (3).
- One heavy gun for every 20 yards of front, as compared to one per 57 yards at Somme.
- 480 18 pounders; 138 4.5-inch howitzers; 120 trench mortars.
- 1-8 April 1917 553,000 rounds (13,005 tons)
- 9 April 212,000 rounds (4,299 tons)
landscape of the western front in this painting, which was originally entitled The Victims. As in a late medieval altarpiece, below their feet rests a skeleton, a form of memento mori. Some of the living are clearly dying, their legs metamorphosing into the quagmire through which they march.

A future governor general of Canada, Lord Tweedsmuir, had a poor opinion of the British artist's work. "I am very doubtful about Eric Kennington," he wrote, "his whole style of work is utterly remote from and undescriptive of the western front, and is no use for purposes of record. He might just as well paint his pictures at home."

Kennington's own assessment of his war art is interesting, and perhaps ironic given the powerful imagery in The Conquerors. "I did not attempt to depict any of the horror & tragedy, realizing that it was too vast & that I was not capable...."

Nevertheless, he enjoyed being a war artist. "I had a warm reception everywhere artists are welcomed at front. The difficulty is that if an artist remains back he is safe & comfortable & does not really see the war, & if he goes really 'forward' he sees the war, and life is so disturbed and full of apprehensions, dangers and sudden changes that he cannot really apply himself to his work."
The Fleets Collide
1ST QUARTER OF UNRESTRICTED S/M WARFARE: FEBRUARY-APRIL, 1917
WESTERN APPROACHES, CHANNEL & EAST COAST

No Ocean Convoys:
No Coastal Convoys:
French Coal Trade Convoys
Running (Night Sailings).
Of 2583 Ships sailed in F.C.T.C.a in March
and April, 5 only were sunk. == 0.2%