

The end of the battle

Narrator: The Somme in 1916 alone cost the British Army 415,000 men. The French lost 195,000. And they were still attacking at Verdun. The British, too, had not finished. On November 19th, as the mud closed in and winter imposed a little silence, Haig told his Army commanders...

General Haig: The date at which the 4th, 5th and 3rd armies should aim in making offensive preparations is February 1st.

Narrator: Over 80 German divisions passed through the fire of the Somme. Carefully, the Germans concealed their loss. They were frank about its effect.

Captain Von Hentig: The Somme was the muddy grave of the German field army and of the faith in the infallibility of German leadership.

German soldier: Hans is dead, Fritz is dead, Wilhelm is dead. There are many others. I am now quite alone in the company. God grant that we may soon be relieved. Our losses are dreadful. This is almost unendurable. If only peace would come.