



Today a century ago on 18 November 1916, the *Battles of the Somme* had finally petered out in atrocious, wintry conditions after 141 days of relentlessly intensive fighting.



The British and French had advanced about 6 miles on the Somme, on a front of 16 miles. By that day, the Heights of Thiepval were at least conquered – but that had been a target on day 1. At the eastern side of the front the British army had succeeded in fighting their way up the hills and over excellent German defensive positions so that the flatter land to the east was ripe for attack. Again that was the dream of day one that the heights would be captured and the cavalry would charge to victory of the fleeing Germans on that flat land.

The problem was the weather and the absolute exhaustion in of the armies: attack would have to await the Spring and the addition of newer armies with young conscripts predominating

In achieving this, the cost was thought to be 419,654 British and 202,567 French casualties, against 465,181 German casualties.

Tewkesbury had lost 29 of its men.

Naturally ordinary people would be aware that this battle had been very costly in terms of dead and wounded. Yet the Army Commanders consider it to have been a victory – even if they would agree it had been very costly.

What the Allies did not know at the time was that the German High Command had made a decision on 26 August what would make the battle seem more successful. The reason was not revealed until 14 March 1917.



Meanwhile the war had spread to Greece and there was revenge to be gained in Palestine and Iraq after serious defeats in both during 1916.