

# General haig essay



**ASSIGN  
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Did General Haig Deserve To Be The Butcher of the Somme In June 1914 a Serb assassinated Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austrian Empire. Austria decided to take revenge against Serbia and invaded. However, Serbia had an alliance with Russia, and Russia with France. Germany came to the aid of Austria. One by one, the powers of Europe were pulled into war by their alliances. This source is taken from a book called "Investing History a World Study By 1916". The French were fighting at Verdun for 2 years in trench warfare and no one was winning.

The French were on the brink of defeat so they asked the British could they attack on the Somme Valley to give the French some breathing space. The British bombarded the German trenches for 7 days non-stop. Over 3 million shells hit the German trenches. However the Germans built underground bunkers made out of concrete. On July 1st 1916 the first waves of the British soldiers went over the top and were ordered to walk to the German trenches at walking pace thinking that all of the Germans were dead when the bombardment stopped however then the Germans came out of the bunkers and shot the British down with machine guns.

On the first day of the battle 20, 000 British soldiers were killed and 30, 000 soldiers were injured or wounded. Sir General Haig was in charge of the British at the time. People think that Haig should be remembered as the "butcher of the Somme" because he sent thousands of British soldiers to their deaths. Some people thought that Haig was a donkey leading lions. Over 1 million men volunteered to fight in 1914 thinking it would be over by Christmas but the battle of the Somme kept going until November 1916 the

battle lasted five months. By the time the battle ended 420, 000 British soldiers were dead.

It was the biggest British military disaster in British history, based on British and German first hand accounts on the battle. The other interpretation of Haig is that he was just doing his job because he was just sending men as he was ordered to do. Source 1A is a valid source to find out the truth about General Haig because a private Fred Pearson on the Western Front, was commented on Haig in a local newspaper in 1966 and he said " The biggest murderer in the Somme of the lot was Haig I'm very bitter; always have been and always will be and everybody else that knew him.

He lived 50 kilometres behind the line and that's about as near as he got. I don't think he knew what a trench life was like and they made him an earl and gave him ? 100, 000. I know what I'd given him. I think this is reliable because the person who wrote this source is that he was there on the western front and he experienced what the war was like and what Haig was doing. Source 1B and source 2 is good to find out the fact that General Haig was a butcher of the Somme. P. Smith, a private in the 1st border regiment fighting on the Somme, writing in his diary July 1916.

Said, " It was pure bloody murder. Douglas Haig should have been hung drawn and quartered for what he did on the Somme. What this means is that Haig sent Millions of the young generation to their deaths and no one had really to replace them in their villages or towns. The cream of British manhood was shattered in less than six hours. This is reliable and useful because Private P. Smith was actually there at the battle of the Somme and

he saw thousands of friends, family, killed and he foresaw Haig's doing. Haig was a second-rate commander in a unparalleled and unforeseen circumstances. He was not endowed with any of the elements of imagination and vision and he certainly had none of that personal magnetism which has enabled great leaders of men to inspire multitudes with courage, faith and a spirit of sacrifice he was incapable of planning vast campaigns on the scale demanded on so immense a battle". This was written by David Lloyd George, British Prime Minister during the First World War, writing in his War Memoirs (1935). This is reliable because

Source 6 is valid information about finding the truth about Haig because it's a cartoon and in it the major general is addressing the men before 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. " This source was written in a cartoon to make fun out of the generals as seen in the cartoon. It was written in (February 1917) a cartoon from the British satirical magazine punch.

Source 7 is a good evidence to find out the truth about Haig because in this source Blackadder is trying to change General Haig's mind about going over the top but Haig doesn't change his mind. [This is taken from the BBC TV comedy series, Blackadder, which continually portrayed Haig and the generals as fools and murders. In this scene Blackadder is trying to persuade Haig to get him sent home while Haig plays games with toy British soldiers.

The series was broadcast in the 1990s. ] I' am now going to look at source 8  
in this source John Laffin writing in his history book