

SEPTEMBER 1914

THE ADVANCE IS STOPPED, TRENCH WARFARE BEGINS

The Great War lasted 1,566 days. The Wilmslow area suffered fatalities in all but 9 of the 52 months the conflict encompassed. Surprisingly, in view of what the month was to hold, September 1914 was one of these 9 months. The French had suffered terribly during the Battle of the Frontiers – 27,000 died on one day alone in August - and they withdrew to within 30 miles of Paris. The institutionally weak Russian Army's invasion of East Prussia was stopped at Tannenberg in late August (described by Solzhenitsyn in his monumental novel 'August 1914') and they retreated in disarray after the Battle of the Masurian Lakes in September.



However the French rallied in September. They brought up to 6,000 reservists as close to the Front as they could – many in Parisian taxis – and along with the British Expeditionary Force from **6 – 12 September** turned the tide at the **Miracle of the Marne**. Here the Germans were pushed back in one of the most decisive strategic battles in World history; their hopes of a quick victory were dashed. Hastily pursuing the enemy, the **1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment** crossed the **River Aisne** on **14th September** and engaged in a lengthy 3-week struggle. They tried, unsuccessfully, to dislodge their opponents from the **Chemin de Dames Ridge**. Here trench warfare officially began.



For the next few weeks each of the combatants tried to outflank the others in the Race to the Sea. The Western Front became a continuous 400 mile trench system running from Nieuport to the Swiss border. Movement had given way to stalemate and paralysis. These 'Killing Fields of Flanders and France' awaited the young men who, back home 100 years ago, were volunteering in droves, little knowing what awaited them.

By the end of September 761,000 had enlisted across the country.





Some of the taxis which took French reservists from Paris to the Front.

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