

## Devastated Landscape near Ypres with Destroyed British Mark IV Tank (1917)

### Abstract

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By November of 1914, German troops advancing toward the Channel coast had been pushed back and halted by British and French forces at the Belgian town of Ypres in West Flanders. At approximately the same time, fighting in the west assumed the general form of a war of attrition carried out in the trenches. The area around Ypres became a focal point of severe but mostly static fighting for nearly four years, and the town itself was almost completely destroyed by concentrated artillery barrages. As this view of the devastated landscape near Ypres suggests, the immense firepower concentrated in the Third Battle of Ypres (June to December 1917) utterly sealed the destruction inflicted by previous clashes. One particular aspect of fighting on this section of the front line was that, apart from the fiercely contested elevations, it mostly took place in lowlands bordering the North Sea. Artillery bombardment destroyed the canal system and created huge shell craters, turning the ground into a muddy wasteland, which bogged down operations and made conditions for soldiers even more difficult. The destroyed British Mark IV tank featured in this photograph serves as a reminder of the failure of all aspirations to reintroduce movement into the campaign.

### Source

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