



THE LOCHNAGAR CRATER MEMORIAL

The Attack by 34th Division on 1st July 1916

Signalling the beginning of the battle, the two great mines at Y-Sap in Mash Valley and Lochnagar in Sausage Valley were detonated at 0728hrs on 1st July 1916.

The 34th Division were all 'Pals' battalions who had answered Kitchener's call and as yet were untried in battle. They were to make a flanking assault on the German front lines around La Boisselle. The division comprised 15th and 16th Royal Scots (Edinburgh City), 10th Lincolns (Grimsby Chums), 11th Suffolks (Cambridge Pals), eight battalions of Northumberland Fusiliers (Tyneside Scottish and Tyneside Irish).

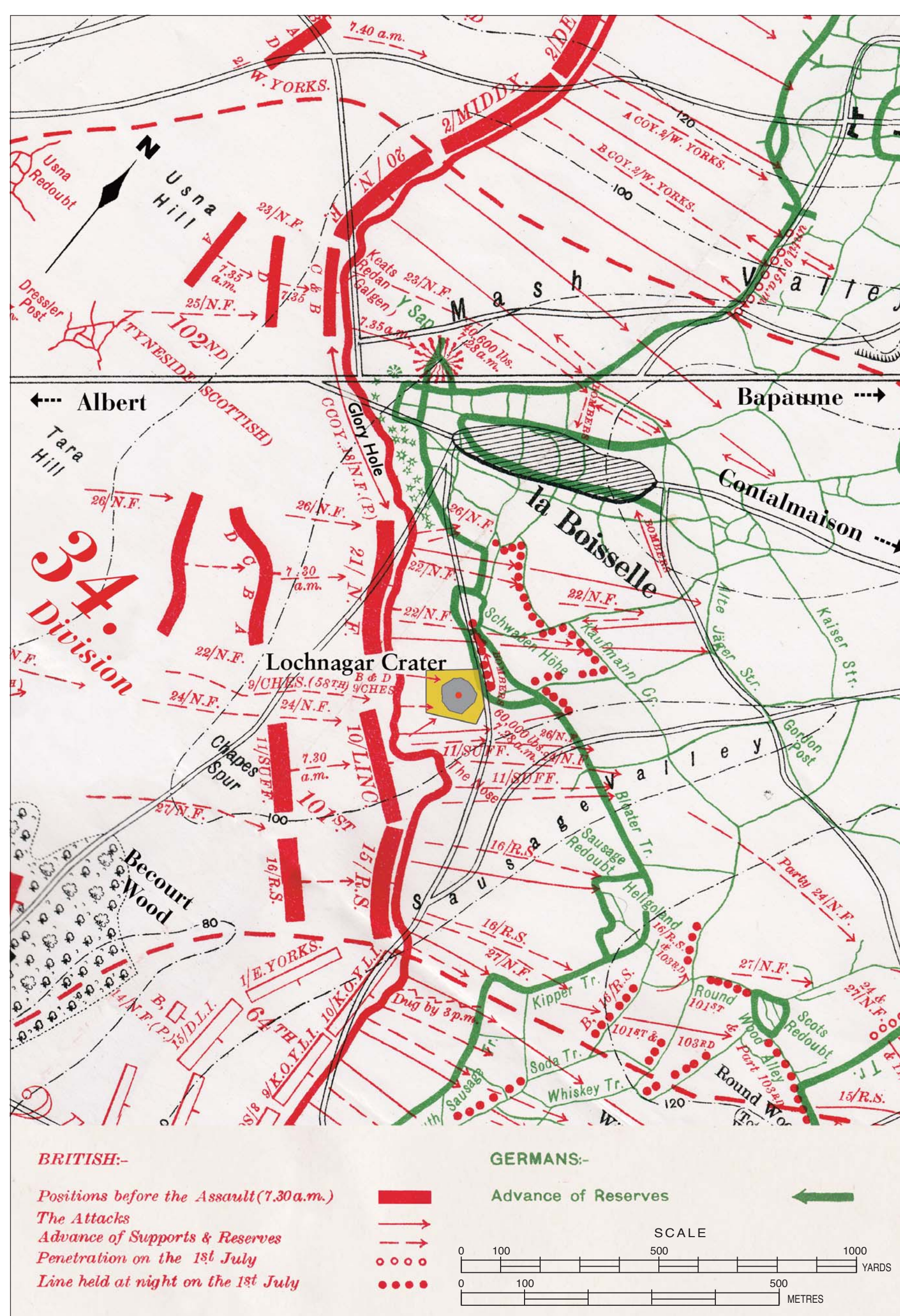
Two minutes after the mines exploded, whistles blew and men climbed from the relative safety of their trenches.

Over 75% of men became casualties, as in many places the attackers had to cross 800 yards (730 metres) or more of open ground to reach the German wire. They were soon decimated in no-man's-land, survivors seeking refuge in the newly-formed Lochnagar Crater.

Battalions of the Tyneside Scottish attacked up through Mash Valley spurred on by their pipers, between Y-Sap Crater and La Boisselle to their right. Machine guns proved the downfall of these brave men and few made the 500 yards (460 metres) to the German lines. The Tyneside Scottish attacking the Schwaben Höhe strongpoint alongside Lochnagar Crater had a shorter distance but equally ferocious machine-gun fire again meant few reached their objectives.

The Tyneside Irish had the greatest distance to make their attacks, setting out from the reserve positions nearly a mile (1.6 km) behind the British front line. Men were cut down as they moved slowly from the exposed hills. Some did make it forward, with a small group eventually reaching their objective of Contalmaison, only to be lost later.

The 34th Division took approx. 6,500 casualties, the highest of any that day.



L'assaut de la 34^{ème} Division le 1^{er} juillet 1916

À 07h28 le 1^{er} juillet 1916, les détonations des deux grandes mines à Y-Sap dans Mash Valley et à Lochnagar dans Sausage Valley donnent le signal du début de la bataille.

La 34^{ème} Division se compose de « Pals » battalions (bataillons de « copains ») ayant répondu à l'appel de Kitchener mais qui n'ont encore jamais combattu. Elles doivent attaquer les lignes allemandes autour de La Boisselle par les flancs. La division se constitue des 15^{ème} et 16^{ème} Royal Scots (Edinburgh City), du 10^{ème} Lincolns (Grimsby Chums), du 11^{ème} Suffolks (Cambridge Pals), et de huit bataillons de Northumberland Fusiliers (Tyneside Scottish et Tyneside Irish).

Deux minutes après l'explosion des mines, le coup de sifflet est donné et les hommes sortent de la relative sécurité des tranchées.

On déplore plus de 75% de victimes, car les soldats doivent souvent traverser plus de 730 mètres de terrain découvert pour atteindre les barbelés allemands. Ils sont rapidement décimés dans le no man's land et les survivants cherchent refuge dans le cratère de Lochnagar, tout juste formé.

Encouragés par leurs joueurs de cornemuse, des bataillons des Tyneside Scottish donnent l'assaut à travers Mash Valley, entre le cratère de Y-Sap et La Boisselle qui se trouve sur leur droite. Les mitrailleuses déciment ces hommes courageux et ceux qui atteignent les lignes allemandes à 460 mètres sont peu nombreux. Les Tyneside Scottish qui attaquent le point fort allemand de Schwaben Höhe à côté du cratère de Lochnagar doivent parcourir une distance plus courte, mais face au feu tout aussi féroce des mitrailleuses, peu réussissent à atteindre leur objectif.

Les Tyneside Irish ont la plus grande distance à parcourir, ils partent des positions de réserve à un peu plus de 1,6 km derrière la ligne de front britannique. Des hommes sont abattus lors de leur lente progression depuis les collines exposées. Certains réussissent à avancer malgré tout, un petit groupe atteignant même Contalmaison, leur objectif, mais ils seront perdus plus tard.

La 34^{ème} Division déplore environ 6500 victimes, plus qu'aucune autre ce jour-là.



The Lochnagar Crater is privately owned by Richard Dunning MBE and is dedicated to Remembrance, Respect and Reconciliation.
www.lochnagarcrater.org



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thanks the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) for its support with this visitor information project.

The men of the 34th Division who died on 1st July 1916 are commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at various local cemeteries. The CWGC commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died in the two world wars. For more information visit www.cwgc.org or download the free CWGC War Graves App.



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