

THE FRONT LINE

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FOR HISTORY MATTERS

ROMANOV MASSACRE!!

Tsar Nicholas II, his wife, Tsarina Alexandra and their five children have been murdered in cold blood by the Bolsheviks bringing an end to a three-century long dynasty. Reports suggest that late on the night of the 16th July the family were brutally killed along with three of their servants and the family physician, Dr Botkin.

The family had been detained since the February Revolution last year, in which the Tsar was forced to abdicate following violent protest by industrial rioters, with the fate of the fallen monarchy being sealed by the mutiny of the Russian military as chaotic scenes developed across Russia. The protesters and military attacked not only the Russian police but also those loyal to the Romanov family and the Russian monarchy.

Following this uprising, a provisional Republican government was installed under Alexander Kerensky and the royals were taken into custody after the British offer of asylum was withdrawn by our King George V. After the Bolshevik Revolution, they were moved to a fortified mansion in the town centre of Yekaterinburg; renamed amongst those who knew of the family's location: 'The House of Special Purpose'. The building became the home of the Romanov's for the final 78 days of their lives.

Pleas for news of the Romanov family from concerned European diplomats were ignored during this time. However, despite this rumours suggest that the royals adapted to their unfortunate circumstances, with Grand-Duchesses Maria and Anastasia even befriending guards, not only to fend off boredom but also conspiring with them on how their family may escape.

The fate of the Romanov family seemed fairly uncertain until July when it became increasingly possible that the White Guard- anti-communists, still loyal to the Tsar- began to move towards Yekaterinburg looking almost certainly to capture it. Knowing the royals could be used as a symbol of freedom to anti-communists, the Bolsheviks set



The Imperial Family photographed at the time of the Romanov Tercentenary in 1913. All are now believed dead.

out to ensure they would not escape alive. Despite the current lack of concrete evidence, it is believed that Vladimir Lenin gave direct authorisation of the family's assassination himself. On the night of the 16th of July the family were roused by their family physician and as instructed by Bolshevik guards, told to dress warmly for a long journey. The royals were gathered in the basement, the young Tsarevich Alexei reportedly too sick to even stand. Local Commandant Yakov Yurovsky, charged with organising the execution, supposedly read aloud the death sentence from the Ural Executive Committee.

Reports say that the shooting squad was inexperienced. Some have said they were also drunk, making the 20 minute execution particularly brutal. Bullets are thought to have ricocheted off the bodies of the four Grand-Duchesses who had small diamonds sewn into their clothing as a way of the family being able to pay their way in the event they might escape. Tsar Nicholas II appears to have been the only one of the seven to have been killed instantly. The horrifying violence is said to have lasted around twenty minutes with the guards setting upon the tsarina and her children with bayonets and firing at their heads.

Reporter: Eleanor Gontier



FURTHER RATIONING LAWS!

As of July 15, new rationing laws have been introduced in Britain by the Ministry of Food. The Front Line has learned that this will affect butter, margarine, lard, meat, and sugar in particular - and everyone will gain a ration card for these items. This appears to be a positive step, ensuring that food is distributed equally; when sugar was rationed at the start of this year, records show that caloric intake nearly met pre-war levels. As readers will know, food shortages have been a problem throughout this war, with people having to queue for hours. The shortages have been attributed to increased food prices

due to reduced agricultural output, hoarding as a result of this, and physical restrictions due to the war such as naval blockades. The last of these has been particularly significant, with Germany attempting to halt food supplies to starve the nation and weaken morale. For example, in February 1917, the German Navy sank 230 ships bringing food and other supplies to Britain. However we have not lost our resolve, and therefore, this rationing is not only a way of guaranteeing supplies but resisting Germany - and we encourage our readers to embrace these new rationing laws: present hardships for future victory!

Reporter: *Rebecca Davies*

THE FRONT LINE RECOMMENDS:

ANASTASIA

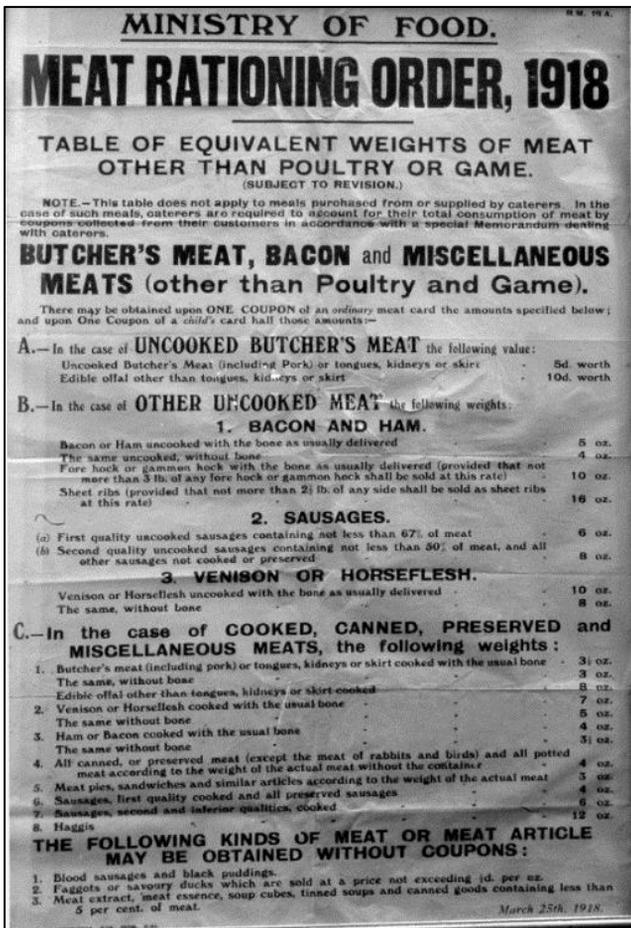
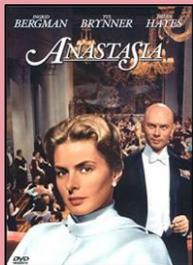
(1997 DISNEY ANIMATED FILM):

This light hearted Disney film, *very* loosely based on the Grand-Duchess Anastasia of the Romanov family with the film following her escape from the evil Rasputin; perfectly linked with the one hundred year anniversary of the Romanov family's execution. Despite the historical inaccuracies (Anastasia of course did not survive - the final discovery in 2007 of remains which have DNA confirmation proves this - nor was Rasputin an evil wizard!), 'Anastasia' highlights our ongoing fascination with the Romanov family, the people that surrounded them and in particular Anastasia herself, and provokes the question:

why was society so ready and eager to believe that she survived? What does this tell us about attitudes towards Russia and the Tsars in the century following their deaths?

For those more classically inclined, the less fantastic, somewhat more historically based 1956 20th Century Fox film, with Oscar-winning Ingrid Bergman, may be more to your liking.

Reporter: *Eleanor Gontier*



A recent meat rationing poster

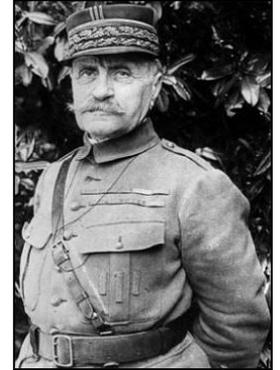


GERMANS IN RETREAT: THE SECOND BATTLE OF THE MARNE: A TURNING POINT?

The Second Battle of the Marne, which began on the 15th July, appears to have marked a key turning point for the war. Following the success of his four major offensives in France from March to June, the Chief of the German Supreme Command, General Erich Ludendorff, devised another offensive as a diversion in order to draw French troops away from the Flanders Front, against which he seems to have planned to direct his final decisive offensive. He believed that an attack through Flanders would give Germany a decisive victory over the British and Allied Forces. In order to draw the Allied troops away from Belgium and to hide his true intentions, Ludendorff planned a large attack along the Marne. In the diversionary attack, he intended to capture Rheims and split the French armies. But the French General, Ferdinand Foch, foresaw the coming offensive, and the Germans consequently met unexpected French resistance and counterattacks. The Front Line is happy to report that, supported by several hundred tanks, the Germans were overwhelmed by the French on their right flank, inflicting severe casualties.

This German defeat will hopefully mark the start of the new Allied advance. German troops did cross the Marne River at several points but were only able to advance a few miles. British, American, and Italian units assisted the French in their defence. In the southwest the Germans advanced only 6 miles (10 km) under heavy fire before progressing no further. On July 18th, the German offensive was called off just as a great Allied counteroffensive began that same day. Allied troops attacked the Germans' large Marne salient (i.e., a bulge protruding into the allied lines), taking the Germans by surprise. Three days later the allies crossed the Marne, and

the Germans retreated to their former Aisne-Vesle lines. The counteroffensive was decisive in shifting the balance of power in the West against an increasingly exhausted German army. The Second Battle of the Marne was an important victory for us all! Ferdinand Foch received



Left: German General Ludendorff. Right: newly promoted French Marshal Foch

the baton of a Marshal of France. Our forces took 29,367 prisoners, 793 guns and 3,000 machine guns and inflicted 168,000 casualties on the Germans. The battle has already led to an amazing morale boost for our troops: we hope that the strategic gains on the Marne will mark the end of a string of German victories and could promise even greater victories!

Reporter: Husaina Jodiyawalla



German troops advance during the battle