



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 07 October 2020 – Morning

A Level History A

Y315/01 The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792–1945

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the impact of technological developments on the First World War. [30]

Passage A

The impact of technological change on the conduct of the war on land during the First World War was more widespread than that of air and naval warfare. Within months of the outbreak of war in 1914 it had been realised that the internal combustion engine might be used to drive fighting vehicles as well as transportation. Within two years the first ‘tanks’ were in action. But the design and use of these early armoured fighting vehicles was geared primarily to the requirements of trench warfare. They were seen primarily as mobile fire power to help the attack break into the enemy’s defensive lines. However, once the initial breakthrough was over it was not too difficult to find means of countering them. The most spectacular breakthrough of the war, that achieved by the Germans on the Western Front in March 1918, was not the work of tanks at all but of infantry. The Germans deployed not in long lines of riflemen which had been usual, but as small groups of storm troopers, armed with mortars, light machine guns and grenades. Bypassing strong points and penetrating wherever they found weakness, they operated with an independence and flexibility that had hardly been seen in Europe since the skirmishes in the early campaigns of the French Revolution. But the value both of armoured vehicles and these storm units was limited once they outran their communications and their artillery cover. The first was dependent on highly vulnerable telephone lines and the second on field guns which had to be moved up over a devastated battlefield and re-ranged for new targets. It was practical problems such as these that made the more ambitious ideas put forward by the supporters of armoured warfare seem unrealistic for future development.

Adapted from: M. Howard, *War in European History*, published in 1976.

Passage B

During the last three months of war, the full military lessons of the fighting were implemented. From mid-1916 World War I had been characterised by the accumulating weight of firepower, especially artillery. At the beginning of 1917 problems – target acquisition, accuracy, survivability, destructiveness and effective cooperation with other arms – remained to be solved; but in the last two years of the war solutions emerged, thanks to the mobilisation of the resources of modern industrial states and their scientific and technological infrastructures. Techniques of sound ranging and flak spotting made the identification of enemy guns more certain. There was better ammunition – mostly high explosive rather than shrapnel. The deployment of gas and smoke shells made battlefield deception another option. Creeping barrages of incredible density required mass production on a previously unheard of scale. The combined effect of more powerful and accurate artillery, supported by ground-attack aircraft and tanks was to increase operational speed. The tank was one of the most important technological innovations to emerge from World War I. The British deployed tanks in the field as early as September 1915 but their influence on the battlefield was disappointing until the British used them in large numbers at Cambrai in November 1917. In 1918 the British and French integrated tanks into an effective tactical framework, together with infantry, artillery and ground-attack aircraft.

Adapted from: J. Bourn, ‘World War I: the decisive conflict, 1917–1918’, in J. Black (ed.), *War Since 1900: History Strategy Weaponry*, published in 2010.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** 'Generalship had a greater impact on the conduct of war than the quality of soldiers.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1792 to 1945? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Alliances had a more significant impact on the outcome of wars in the period before 1865 than after.' How far do you agree with this view of warfare in the period from 1792 to 1945? **[25]**
- 4*** 'Domestic factors played little part in the outcome of wars throughout the period from 1792 to 1945.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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