

34 – Divisions which fought at Verdun and the Somme

Statements in the book

34: ‘By the end of 1916, 60 per cent of all German divisions had fought at Verdun or the Somme or both.’

36: ‘We can identify twenty-four that fought and suffered appreciable casualties at both Verdun and the Somme: OHL apparently saw them as the workhorses of the army during 1916.’

Update and comment

To define the size of the German army at the time of the battles of Verdun and the Somme, I calculated the total number of divisions on the latest date of formation of any division which fought in either battle. This was 223rd Infantry Division, formed on 27 September 1916. On that date, 197 divisions were in existence (including 223rd Infantry Division).

Participation of individual divisions in the two battles is set out in the second table below. This shows that 118 infantry divisions fought at Verdun, the Somme or both, representing 59.9% of the 197 divisions then available; the other 79 fought at neither battle. 24 of the 118 fought and suffered appreciable casualties in both battles, i.e. were seriously engaged: they are the ‘workhorses’.

A couple of definitions. ‘Appreciable casualties’ means over 1,000; ‘neither’ below means the division was on the Western Front for at least part of 1916 but did not take part in either Verdun or the Somme.

Supporting evidence

Battle	No. of divisions	% of the 118 divisions	% of total divisions
Fought at Verdun	51	N/A	26
Fought at the Somme	94	N/A	48
Seriously engaged at both Verdun and the Somme (i.e. from the previous 2 categories)	24	20	12

Participation of individual divisions in the two battles:

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
1.	1st Guard Infantry Division	Somme twice	
2.	2nd Guard Infantry Division	Somme twice	

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
3.	3rd Guard Infantry Division	Somme	
4.	4th Guard Infantry Division	Somme three times	
5.	1st Infantry Division	Verdun	
6.	2nd Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
7.	3rd Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
8.	4th Infantry Division	Verdun twice	
9.	5th Infantry Division	Both, Verdun twice	Yes
10.	6th Infantry Division	Both, Verdun twice	Yes
11.	7th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
12.	8th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
13.	9th Infantry Division	Verdun	
14.	10th Infantry Division	Verdun	
15.	11th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
16.	12th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
17.	13th Infantry Division	Both	
18.	14th Infantry Division	Verdun twice	
19.	15th Infantry Division	Somme	
20.	16th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
21.	17th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
22.	18th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
23.	19th Infantry Division	Neither	
24.	20th Infantry Division	Neither	
25.	21st Infantry Division	Both twice	Yes
26.	22nd Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
27.	23rd Infantry Division	Somme twice	
28.	24th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
29.	25th Infantry Division	Both, Verdun twice	Yes
30.	26th Infantry Division	Somme	

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
31.	27th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
32.	28th Infantry Division	Somme	
33.	29th Infantry Division	Somme	
34.	30th Infantry Division	Both	Yes
35.	31st Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
36.	32nd Infantry Division	Somme	
37.	33rd Infantry Division	Verdun	
38.	34th Infantry Division	Verdun twice	
39.	35th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
40.	36th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
41.	37th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
42.	38th Infantry Division	Both	Yes
43.	39th Infantry Division	Both, Verdun twice	Yes
44.	40th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
45.	41st Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
46.	42nd Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
47.	50th Infantry Division	Verdun	
48.	52nd Infantry Division	Somme	
49.	54th Infantry Division	Verdun twice	
50.	56th Infantry Division	Both, Somme twice	Yes
51.	58th Infantry Division	Both, Somme twice	Yes
52.	83rd Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
53.	84th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
54.	86th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
55.	87th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
56.	88th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
57.	89th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
58.	91st Infantry Division	Eastern Front	

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
59.	92nd Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
60.	101st Infantry Division	Eastern Front (Macedonia)	
61.	103rd Infantry Division	Both	Yes
62.	105th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
63.	107th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
64.	108th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
65.	109th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
66.	111th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
67.	113th Infantry Division	Both	Yes
68.	115th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
69.	117th Infantry Division	Somme	
70.	119th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
71.	121st Infantry Division	Both	Yes
72.	123rd Infantry Division	Somme	
73.	183rd Infantry Division	Somme twice	
74.	185th Infantry Division	Somme three times	
75.	187th Infantry Division	Neither	
76.	192nd Infantry Division	Verdun	
77.	195th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
78.	197th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
79.	199th Infantry Division	Verdun	
80.	200th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
81.	201st Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
82.	204th Infantry Division	Neither	
83.	206th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
84.	207th Infantry Division	Somme	
85.	208th Infantry Division	Somme	

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
86.	211th Infantry Division	Somme	
87.	212th Infantry Division	Somme twice	
88.	213th Infantry Division	Somme	
89.	214th Infantry Division	Somme	
90.	215th Infantry Division	Neither	
91.	216th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
92.	217th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
93.	218th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
94.	221st Infantry Division	Somme	
95.	222nd Infantry Division	Somme	
96.	223rd Infantry Division	Somme	
97.	225th Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
98.	301st Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
99.	1st Bavarian Infantry Division	Both	Yes
100.	2nd Bavarian Infantry Division	Both	Yes
101.	3rd Bavarian Infantry Division	Somme	
102.	4th Bavarian Infantry Division	Somme	
103.	5th Bavarian Infantry Division	Somme	
104.	6th Bavarian Infantry Division	Both, Verdun twice	Yes
105.	10th Bavarian Infantry Division	Somme	
106.	11th Bavarian Infantry Division	Verdun twice	
107.	12th Bavarian Infantry Division	Eastern Front	
108.	14th Bavarian Infantry Division	Both	
109.	Alpine Corps	Verdun	
110.	1st Guard Reserve Division	Somme three times	
111.	2nd Guard Reserve Division	Somme	
112.	1st Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
113.	3rd Reserve Division	Eastern Front	

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
114.	5th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
115.	6th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
116.	7th Reserve Division	Both	Yes
117.	9th Reserve Division	Both	Yes
118.	10th Reserve Division	Both	Yes
119.	11th Reserve Division	Both, Somme twice	Yes
120.	12th Reserve Division	Both, Somme twice	Yes
121.	13th Reserve Division	Verdun twice	
122.	14th Reserve Division	Verdun twice	
123.	15th Reserve Division	Somme twice	
124.	16th Reserve Division	Somme twice	
125.	17th Reserve Division	Somme twice	
126.	18th Reserve Division	Somme twice	
127.	19th Reserve Division	Both	Yes
128.	21st Reserve Division	Verdun	
129.	22nd Reserve Division	Both	Yes
130.	23rd Reserve Division	Somme twice	
131.	24th Reserve Division	Somme three times	
132.	25th Reserve Division	Verdun twice	
133.	26th Reserve Division	Somme	
134.	28th Reserve Division	Both, Somme twice	
135.	33rd Reserve Division	Verdun	
136.	35th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
137.	36th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
138.	43rd Reserve Division	Verdun	
139.	44th Reserve Division	Both, Somme twice	Yes
140.	45th Reserve Division	Somme	
141.	46th Reserve Division	Somme twice	

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
142.	47th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
143.	48th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
144.	49th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
145.	50th Reserve Division	Somme twice	
146.	51st Reserve Division	Somme	
147.	52nd Reserve Division	Somme	
148.	53rd Reserve Division	Somme	
149.	54th Reserve Division	Somme	
150.	75th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
151.	76th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
152.	77th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
153.	78th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
154.	79th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
155.	80th Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
156.	81st Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
157.	82nd Reserve Division	Eastern Front	
158.	1st Bavarian Reserve Division	Somme	
159.	5th Bavarian Reserve Division	Somme	
160.	6th Bavarian Reserve Division	Somme	
161.	8th Bavarian Reserve Division	Somme	
162.	9th Bavarian Reserve Division	Neither	
163.	30th Bavarian Reserve Division	Neither	
164.	39th Bavarian Reserve Division	Verdun	
165.	Guard Ersatz Division	Verdun twice	
166.	4th Ersatz Division	Somme	
167.	5th Ersatz Division	Somme	
168.	8th Ersatz Division	Somme	
169.	10th Ersatz Division	Somme	

Running number	Division	Present at Verdun and/or the Somme?	Workhorses
170.	19th Ersatz Division	Verdun	
171.	Bavarian Ersatz Division	Both	Yes
172.	1st Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
173.	2nd Landwehr Division	Verdun	
174.	3rd Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
175.	4th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
176.	5th Landwehr Division	Verdun	
177.	7th Landwehr Division	Neither	
178.	8th Landwehr Division	Neither	
179.	9th Landwehr Division	Neither	
180.	10th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
181.	11th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
182.	12th Landwehr Division	Neither	
183.	13th Landwehr Division	Neither	
184.	14th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
185.	15th Landwehr Division	Neither	
186.	16th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
187.	17th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
188.	18th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
189.	19th Landwehr Division	Neither	
190.	20th Landwehr Division	Neither	
191.	25th Landwehr Division	Neither	
192.	47th Landwehr Division	Neither	
193.	85th Landwehr Division	Eastern Front	
194.	1st Bavarian Landwehr Division	Neither	
195.	6th Bavarian Landwehr Division	Neither	
196.	1st Naval Division	Neither	
197.	2nd Naval Division	Somme twice	

Sources

Weltkrieg, Vol. X, Anlagen 2 and 3, and Vol. XI, Anlage 4. *Weltkrieg*, X, Anlage 2 covers from 12 February to 28 August only on the East Bank at Verdun, and to 20 June only for the West Bank.