HOW IS MELTING ICE REVEALING THE DANGERS OF WORLD WAR ONE?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Melting ice in the Italian Dolomites has revealed hundreds of weapons left behind from World War One. During the fighting between Italy and Austria-Hungary from 1915 to 1918, soldiers battled at extreme heights in what became known as the White War. They dug tunnels through glaciers, carried heavy guns up cliffs and faced freezing temperatures, avalanches and falls. Many weapons were buried under snow and ice when the war ended. This summer, the Italian army recovered and destroyed about 250 explosives, including grenades, mortar shells and artillery rounds. The work is dangerous because some of the weapons can still explode. Scientists and historians say the discoveries are happening more often because warmer temperatures are causing the glaciers to shrink faster. The melting ice is exposing both the remains of the war and a warning about how climate change is changing historic landscapes.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The story connects World War One with climate change. Ice preserved weapons, buildings and personal objects for more than a century, but the same ice is now disappearing. The White War also reminds us that soldiers did not fight only in muddy trenches. Some faced battles in freezing mountains where nature could be deadlier than the enemy.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

“Why were mountains as dangerous as enemy soldiers during the White War?”

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/melting-ice-in-the-italian-dolomites-exposes-hundreds-of-world-war-i-munitions-vestiges-of-the-vertiginous-winter-war