Another reason the battle of the Somme was so tragic was because of the lies when it came to recruiting people. There were many reasons people volunteered; some volunteered for honour or duty, some for an adventure, some for the money, some to start a new life and some volunteered so they could leave prison. During August and September 1914 736,000 British men volunteered to be in the British army. There was a lot of pressure put on people to join, there were posters everywhere saying your Queen and Country needs you and the war will be over by Christmas, which was a form of propaganda. Any young man of age seen in the street without an army uniform would be given a white feather, which was a sign of cowardice. As I mentioned before pals battalion is a group of friends who join and fight together this was good because they knew each other and were more likely to join if their friends were. However many people did not want to join, but ended up joining any way because their friends were, it was peer pressure. This factor tells us that many people did not want to join and that is another reason why the battle was such a tragedy. However I do not think this factor is as important as the other factors to why the battle was a tragedy.

Finally the leadership was terrible, “lions led by donkeys”. They were over optimistic; they thought it would be an easy mobile war and that the sheer number of British soldiers would overwhelm the Germans. Therefore they did hardly any planning and just used old 19th century tactics. Also, as I said in paragraph two there was a lack of communication because General Haigs HQ was so far back and this meant that they had to use a time plan which resulted in gridlock. Being so far away also meant that General Haig received inaccurate information saying that the battle was going well “the wire was never so well cut”. This was because no one wanted to admit to him that the battle was not going well at all. However near the end of the battle of the Somme they started using better tactics such as starting the attack at 5:45am while it was still dark. But by then thousands of people had already died. I think this factor links with the second paragraph about lack of planning and if the leaders had planned and used better tactics less people would have died and this would have prevented the battle of the Somme from being such a tragedy.

There were many reasons why the battle of the Somme was such a military tragedy. The first was that there were so many causalities, 420,000 British soldiers died, and all that they gained was 26kmx6km of land. The second was the lack of planning and old 19th century tactics. They started the attack at 7:30 while it was light, they were made to carry a lot of weight and they had to walk across no mans land. The third reason was that the conditions were absolutely terrible. There were rats and lice everywhere, people were starving, many people died of disease and many people developed conditions such as trench foot and shell shock. The forth reason was the lies in recruitment. It was hardly a choice whether you wanted to join up or not, even though many people did want to join up and though is would be an adventure. A lot of people were pressured into joining because their were posters everywhere saying it your duty to join, their were women handing out white feathers, some people would be bullied into it by peer pressure and by 1916 conscription was introduced which meant you had to join. The fifth reason was the terrible leadership. They were over optimistic and they thought it would be an old fashioned mobile war. Their wasn’t much planning, soldiers were given the wrong shells to cut the barbed wire, there were untrained people operating the artillery guns and most of the artillery shells didn’t work. It was ordered that they were to attack when it was at 7:30am while it was light and worst of all the soldiers had to walk across no mans land carrying a lot of weight. Also their was a lack of communication which resulted in people dying because of gridlock, messages not getting there in time and General Haig thinking the battle was going well. I think this is the most important reason to why the battle was such a great military tragedy. I think that if they had better, more experienced leaders, that would have used better tactics then the amount of deaths, the lack of planning, the terrible conditions and the lies in recruitment could have been prevented and the battle of the Somme would not have been such a great military tragedy.