Replicas Included Inside

The Great War

A World War I Historical Collection

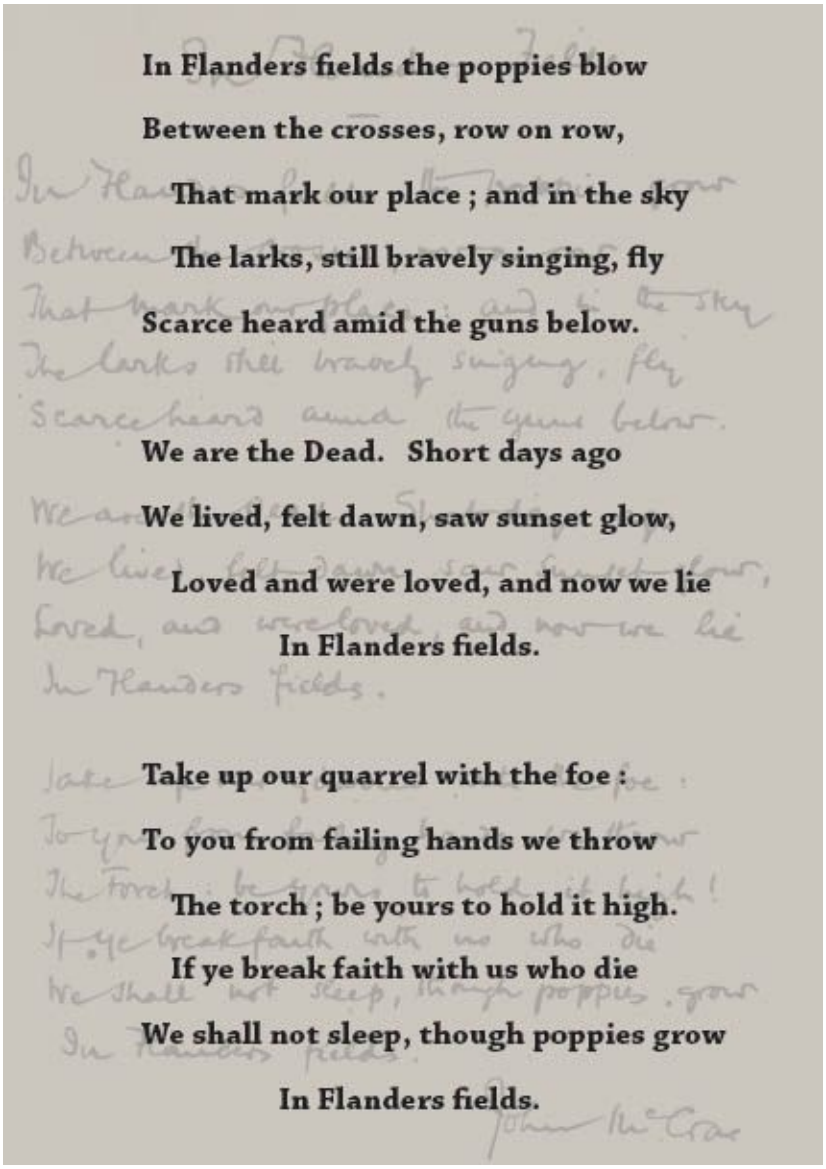
Robert J. Dalessandro
Erin R. Mahan

The Great War

"In Flanders Fields" was written in 1915 by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a 42-year-old physician in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. His friend Alexis Helmer was killed on May 2, 1915, in the second battle of Ypres, in the Flanders region of Belgium. McCrae himself performed the burial service that same day; noticing how quickly poppies tended to grow around the graves of those killed at Ypres, he was inspired to write the poem. "In Flanders Fields" became one of the most popular verses of its day and was put to a great many wartime uses, like this Canadian victory-bond poster.

McCrae became seriously ill in January 1918, and died soon afterward at a military hospital in France.

In Flanders Fields



From *In Flanders Fields and Other Poems* (1919), by Lt. Col. John McCrae, MD (1872–1918). In the background is a copy of the poem written in longhand and signed by McCrae.

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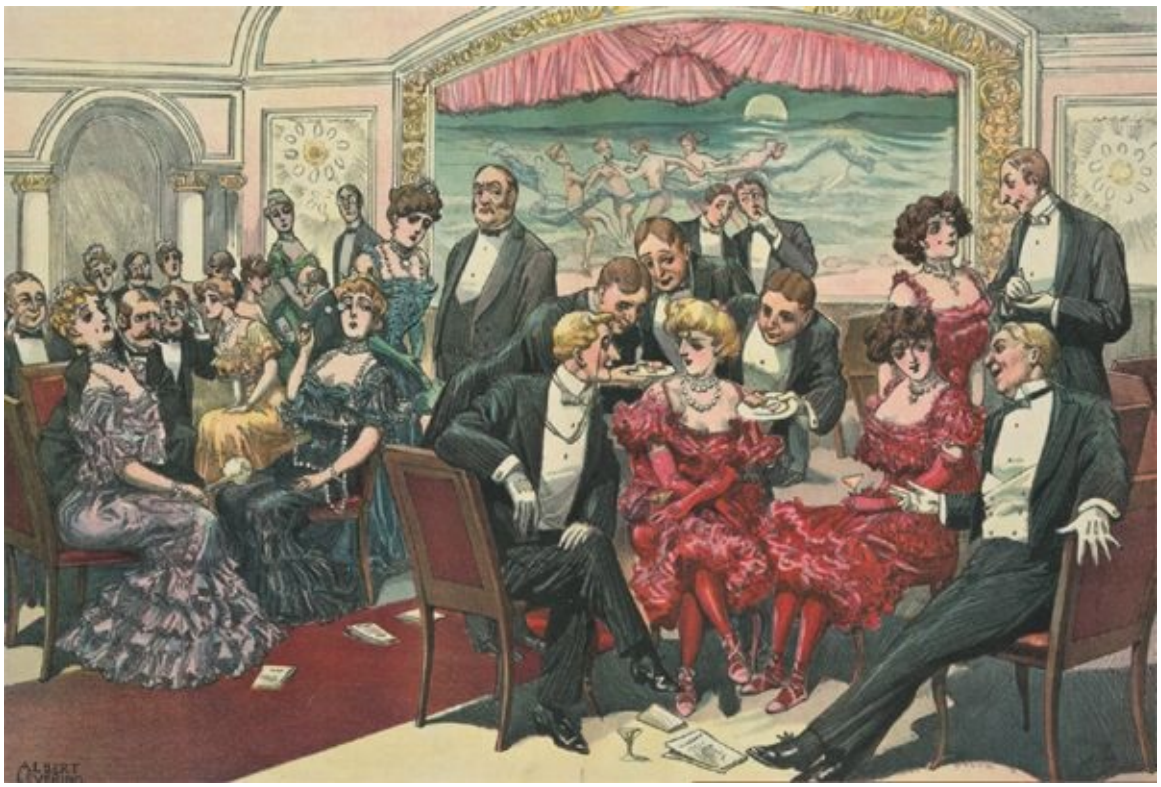


The gentry's thirst for extravagance seemed insatiable. In 1914 life was very good for some segments of society.

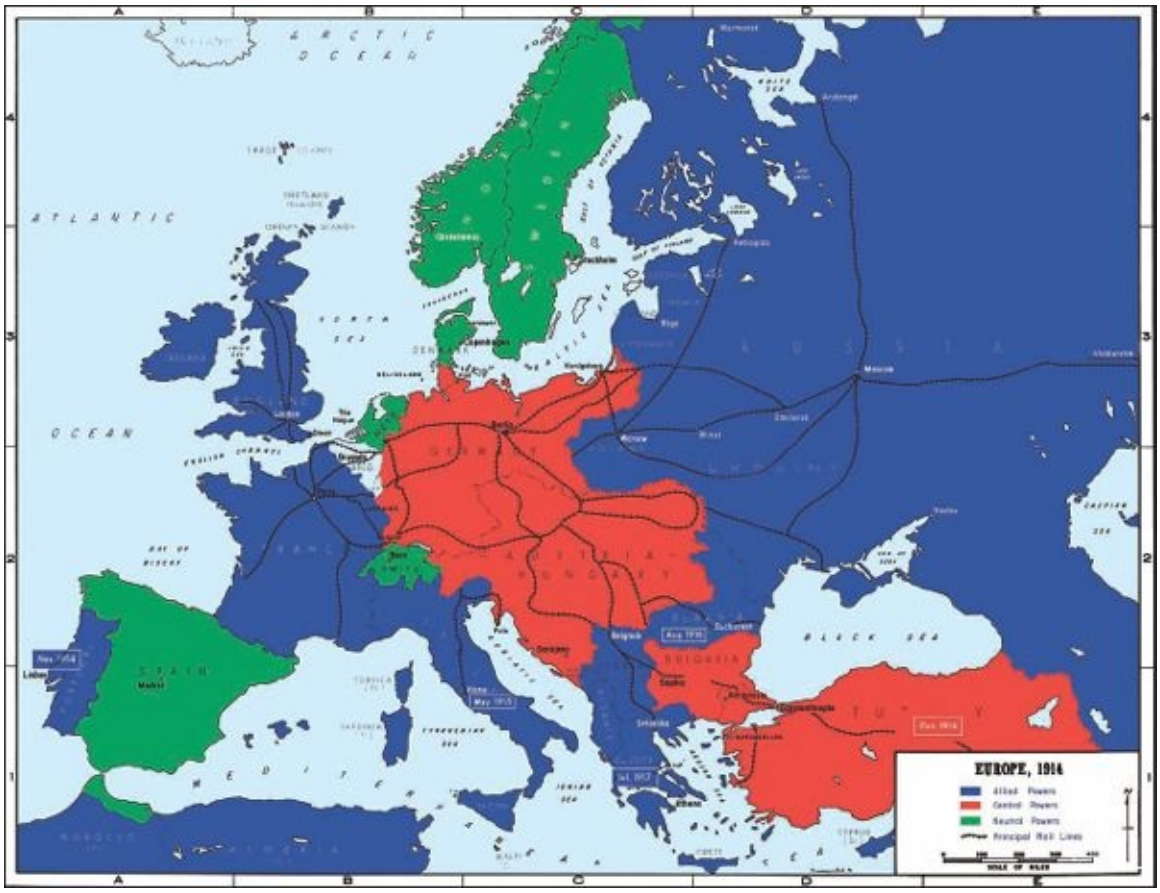
The fighting in Europe that broke the tranquility of the summer of 1914 was later called the war to end all wars. After those opening shots led to a conflagration that overcame the Continent and ultimately the world for the next 31 years, Europeans would recall with nostalgia sunny days and picnic outings, carefree with a promise of abundance from vineyards and fields. In the years that followed, their memories of the final days of that seemingly blissful summer were darkened by the onset of a four-year conflict of a magnitude greater than any before in history. Known as the Great War or, later, the First World War, it engulfed Europe in a barbaric bloodletting that decimated a generation of men, toppled royal dynasties, and transformed the political landscape of the Continent.

The crisis that descended on Europe that summer had been simmering for many years. Causes for the war defy any simple or single explanation. Traditional accounts point to the collapse of "old diplomacy," of a European alliance system based on a balance of power that unraveled with a series of secret agreements and the precipitating event of the assassination of the heir to the Habsburg Austrian throne. This explanation still has merit. Yet the European powers had weathered severe crises in the immediately preceding decades. France and Germany had nearly come to blows over control of Morocco in 1905 and then again in 1911. And in 1912 and 1913 the Great Powers had worked quite effectively in localizing two Balkan wars.

Flawed diplomacy and judgment failures by the leaders of the Great Powers alone are

insufficient explanations for the outbreak and also—more importantly— for the duration of the First World War. A catastrophe on the scale of World War I only makes sense when the immediate causes are meshed with larger societal trends taking place early in the 20th century. Perhaps most prominent was the industrialization of the Western powers, which was largely complete by the end of the first decade of the 1900s. Critics of industrialization decried the dehumanizing and isolating effects of this process. As the following chapters reveal so vividly, the seemingly callous ease with which young men were sent by the thousands to their deaths could be partly attributed to the mechanization of war, a byproduct of the great industrialization. The commercial and colonial rivalries among the Great Powers did not make the Great War inevitable but certainly sharpened conflicts. The rise of the middle class, rather than mitigating class conflict, in many ways heightened social divisions and affected perceptions about the European monarchies that had reigned for centuries. The propaganda machines that fueled stamina among the populations to endure the four-year slaughter of their youth reflected the ruling powers' need to maintain the old social order. Finally, increasingly rampant nationalism across central and eastern Europe bred discontent and a thirst for belonging and self-identification. The vast multi-ethnic empires became a tinderbox waiting to be lit. As the sun set on the last days of August 1914 so too would it set on the old world order.

Europe on the eve of the war was tied together with a series of complex alliances. Here, future enemies Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and Sir Winston Churchill of Britain participate in military maneuvers.



Europe in 1914: German unification, and the geographic position of the German Empire in central Europe, forever changed the status quo.

Thousands of miles away from the troubles of Europe, America was content to follow the longstanding advice of George Washington and not enter into entangling alliances.

The Exposition Universelle of 1900 was held in Paris, France, from April to November 1900, to celebrate the achievements of the past century and to accelerate progress into the future. The Art Nouveau style was universally present at the Exposition. The fair displayed, in view of more than 50 million people, many machines, inventions, and architectural feats, including escalators, the Eiffel Tower, Ferris wheels, Russian nesting dolls, Campbell's soup, diesel engines, talking films, and the Telegraphone (precursor to the modern-day sound recorder).

America had been the benefactor of thousands of immigrants from central and eastern Europe seeking opportunity in the "new world" in the years just prior to World War One. This Jewish ghetto in New York was typical of the

crowded living conditions they faced upon arrival.

With all of the fascinating progress in science and invention, it seemed as if man could accomplish anything, including flight.

Symbolic of the labor strife brewing in industrialized countries, the Army of the Commonweal in Christ, or Coxey's Army, was a 6,000-man protest organized by Ohio businessman Jacob Coxey. It marched on Washington, D.C., in 1894 and again in 1914 to protest labor conditions and economic policies. The demand for women's suffrage was another social pressure before the war. Gender roles and rights would add to the social tensions of the movements of labor and nationalism during the early 1900s and later play a significant role in war production.

World industrialization had fragmented society into the “haves” and “have-nots”. Although working conditions for laborers in Western Europe and America were significantly better than those of their Russian counterparts, sweatshops like this one were common.

A society soap-bubble party: the wealthiest few citizens of the world lived a life that could not even be imagined by the lower classes.

The summer of 1914 was remembered for its wonderful weather; here, three young beachgoers enjoy a summer treat —fresh peaches.

Great Britain's Royal Majesty Queen Victoria. She married her first cousin, Prince Albert of the German state Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Their nine children and 26 of their grandchildren married into royal and noble families across the European continent, earning her the nickname "the grandmother of Europe." By her death in 1901, her empire controlled one third of the world's population.

Mighty Great Britain on the Eve of War

In the years prior to 1914, the countries of Europe had been ruled by powerful dynasties which had essentially remained unchanged for centuries. These empires and kingdoms had much in common. All were socially stratified, ruled by the titled heirs of long-in-power aristocratic families, the most powerful of them having descended from the same matriarch, Queen Victoria of Great Britain. At the time of her death in 1901, she was survived by nine children, thirty-four grandchildren, and thirty-seven great-grandchildren. This populous family formed marital alliances with the most influential courts of Europe. Thus, Victoria's son Edward became uncle to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, as well as many other royals. As with many large families, there were conflicts between dynasties manifested in acts of deception and outward aggression. In August 1914, the monarchies of Europe were about to undergo a radical transformation and would have found incomprehensible the extent of the tragedy that lay over the horizon.

Herbert Henry Asquith, the first earl of Oxford and Asquith, served as the Liberal prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1908 to 1916. He led a series of reforms including domestic insurance and a reduction of power of the House of Lords. He led the nation into the Great War but a series of military and political crises led to his replacement in 1916.

Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901 as the last British monarch of the House of Hanover. Her consort, Prince Albert, was of the German Saxe-Coburg-Gotha dynasty, as was their son, Edward VII, who reigned from 1901 to 1910 as the last British ruler of this German line. His successor, George V, decided that the name of the royal house was too strongly affiliated with Germany and changed it to the House of Windsor in 1917.

King George V of England, grandson of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, was first cousin of Tsar Nicholas of Russia and Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. He ruled the British Empire from 1910 until his death in 1936. While other empires in Europe fell as a result of the Great War, he expanded the United Kingdom to its greatest extent.

Great Britain maintained its status as the principal super power, ruling over a third of the world population with a mutually accepted relationship between the royal family and an elected parliament. As a fully industrialized nation, it was the wealthiest European power, possessed of a vast colonial empire. Dominance of the world's seas through the Royal Navy was of critical importance to the security and quality of life of its citizens. The relative status of its navy was the primary element in British interactions with other nations. Queen Victoria's widespread, often fractious, family connections throughout Europe may have been a factor in Britain's quest for "splendid isolation" in dealing with foreign-policy issues.

By 1914, Britain's colonies and territories included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Rhodesia, Hong Kong, Gibraltar, India, and some holdings in the West Indies. None of the countries would escape involvement in the ensuing global war. There were additional British claims in West Africa, Sierra Leone, and Rhodesia. The aftermath of a three-year war (1899–1902) against the Boer republics in South Africa showed a need for policy reform in the areas of colonial government and military finance.

During the period of 1908 to 1916, Herbert Henry Asquith, the first earl of Oxford,

was prime minister. A member of the Liberal Party assertive in dealing with domestic policy, he was faulted for his indifference and lack of leadership when addressing defense issues. His appearance in golf attire while presiding at a military council, and his habit of drinking prior to staff meetings, prompted questions of competence from Field Marshal Lord Herbert Kitchener, director of the War Office. The field marshal was a widely acclaimed war hero known as "Kitchener of Khartoum" for his defeat of the Mahdi forces in the Battle of Omdurman in the Sudan in 1898. Asquith, and the Liberal Party over which he presided, would not politically survive the duration of the Great War. Kitchener would emerge as a hero to the nation.

Britain's Royal Navy controlled the worldwide sea-lanes through ships like the HMS *Monarch*, pictured here. The Orion-class battleships were the first battleships in the Royal Navy to feature an all-big-gun armament on the centerline. The *Monarch* would be present at the battle of Jutland.

The first lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, had a clear vision of Britain's role in world events that inspired him to take swift action in protecting the interests of his country. Under his capable direction, the British navy was at war strength in 1914 and prepared for any crisis. Sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary, believed that the preservation of France was vital to the security of Britain and that German supremacy on the Continent would isolate the island nation.

These government leaders served both the king and Parliament as they worked to ensure the security and supremacy of their homeland. As 1914 approached, the country faced a major challenge to defuse the threat of an Irish insurrection that was dividing the loyalties of the British Army, thus directing the nation's focus toward domestic rather than international issues.

Imperial Germany on the Rise

The crushing defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and 1871 had strengthened the Kingdom of Prussia's position as a world power and united the German empire. By the 20th century, Germany had become a rival to Britain as a highly industrialized confederation. Its ambitious leaders subscribed to the dangerous credo that "industrialization made fighting armies possible."

On January 18, 1871, while Paris was under German siege, a splendid assembly of rulers representing kingdoms, duchies, cities, and principalities of the 25 constituent German states gathered in the Hall of Mirrors of the Palace of Versailles to formalize the unification of Germany. Brilliant with 357 mirrors, the gallery was the most notable adornment of the elaborate palace built by King Louis XIV in 1678. The grandeur of the marble pilasters and arches provided a fit setting for the opulence of the plumed and sashed celebrants. Prussian king Wilhelm I, the head of the new German Empire, acknowledged the presence of its first chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, a man who had forged the unity of the nation. The incongruity of a gathering at Versailles to celebrate a new German Empire was noted by the demoralized French citizens. This collective memory was etched in the minds of most French who viewed the First World War as an opportunity to settle this old score. Very much by design the treaty ending the Great War would do just that, with the French as the victors and the Germans as the vanquished.

Prussian iconic statesman Otto von Bismarck. Victor of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, architect of German unification and European balance of power, his statecraft helped preserve the peace until 1914.

Anton von Werner's portrayal of Wilhelm I proclaiming himself as emperor of united Germany in the Hall of Mirrors in the palace of Versailles, France. Bismarck stands at center-right wearing a white Garde-du-Corps uniform.

The second battleship squadron of the German navy sailing to the North Sea.

As a consummate politician and practitioner of a "politics of realism," Bismarck applied his skills to negotiating a series of European alliances designed to protect Germany from its potential enemies and to isolate France. This Bismarckian system of agreements was defensive in purpose, specific in its requirement that there had to be an act of aggression to compel the various treaty members to honor their agreements. It would require a direct attack by another nation to generate a war. By controlling the terms of these alliances, Bismarck created an imbalanced shift of power favorable to Germany. These alliance systems, in place from 1871 until 1914, successfully prevented a world war for more than 40 years.

The death of Wilhelm I in March 1888 marked the end of the harmonious relationship

between Kaiser and chancellor. The imperial successor, an unwell Friedrich Wilhelm III, died after 99 days. Friedrich's son, Germany's new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, was vain and impatient, and often acted in haste with no regard for the consequences. Eager for approval, he harbored a lingering resentment toward Great Britain and France, feeling that they had not accorded Germany the respect and recognition it merited. Acutely conscious of his withered left arm, a defect present since birth, he made great efforts to conceal it under clothing. His acrimonious relationship with Bismarck, fed by his seething jealousy, prompted Bismarck's dismissal in March 1890. This resulted in a downward spiral in the success of Germany's diplomatic relationships with other countries.

In 1898 and 1900, German naval laws enabled the Kaiser to pursue his obsession to challenge the supremacy of the British fleet, by developing a powerful German navy under the leadership of Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz. This was intended to strengthen Germany's position in future international negotiations.

A restless, ambitious nation as it approached 1914, Germany reminded the world of its strong armies and its proud militarism through parades and celebrations of previous victories. It was a vast industrial power, leading in scientific advancements in chemistry and electronics, with substantial growth in manufacturing that created increased conflict between the working class and wealthy elite. In November of 1912, the Social Democratic Party came into power and challenged the public tax burden levied to support the military. This undermined the Kaiser's ambitious plan to strengthen the German armies. Hoping to unite the divided population, he characterized the British and French as potential enemies collaborating to destabilize Germany.

German Kaiser Wilhelm II. Crowned in 1888, his imperial ambitions, impetuous and militant temperament, and dismissal of the architect of German unification, Otto von Bismarck, propelled Germany on a course to war.

France in Decline

In 1914, France was the only Great Power in Europe without a monarchy. The Third Republic, begotten in 1870 by the defeat of the French Empire in the Franco-Prussian War, lasted until another military defeat in 1940. During this period, France established colonies in Indochina, Madagascar, Polynesia, and sections of West Africa. This created a challenge to Britain's plans for colonial expansion throughout Africa. In the years following 1871, a renewed spirit of patriotism swept the French nation. Though relationships between anti-republican and democratic factions were volatile, both groups remained committed to recovering the disputed territory of Alsace and Lorraine—lost during the Franco-Prussian War—from Germany.

Raymond Poincaré, a seasoned politician and expert in law, served as president of France from 1913 to 1920, during the Third Republic. A conservative leader who capably balanced domestic and international issues, Poincaré was outspoken about his strong distrust of Germany, and worked to establish a partnership with Russia. His effective leadership inspired the term *Poincarism*. After 1911, as Germany expanded its military

strength, Poincarism represented a wave of French patriotism and renewal as the country faced its aggressive neighbor.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a decline in manpower and essential investment capital diminished France as a Continental power. It had to unite a static population that was divided politically and spiritually. As 1914 approached, France was struggling with a population shortage of eligible soldiers. Its neighbor, Germany, had twice the number. This ratio, perceived as a threat to national security, generated a movement urging citizens to increase their birthrate as a patriotic duty. Animosity toward Germany further united French citizens as they continued their pledge to reclaim the areas of Alsace and Lorraine. Alarmed by Germany's military superiority, France strengthened its relationship with Russia.

Imperial Russia on the Brink

The House of Romanov ruled Russia from 1613 until 1917. From 1894 until 1914 Russia was ruled by the last of the tsars of this royal family. Nicholas II was a weak monarch, detached and unprepared for leadership, with little interest in politics and devoted to family matters. The German heritage of his wife, Alexandra (a daughter of the German grand duke of Hesse, and a granddaughter of Queen Victoria), alienated the Russian population, which regarded her with suspicion.

The empire lagged far behind other European nations in manufacturing and industrialization, the consequence of a regime that feared progress. In a population that had barely emerged from a system of feudalism, the leaders believed that economic development would encourage demands for political reform. Russia had a stratified society comprised of a minority of aristocrats, an overwhelming majority of peasants, and a small group of members of the upper-middle class who did the work of running the country. Russian nobility and gentry owned approximately 15 percent of the land. Agricultural production was terribly inefficient. Peasants, who still lacked steel ploughs, relied on the antiquated three-crop rotation system that left large tracts of land fallow. At the turn of the 20th century, Russian peasants produced about one-third less spring wheat per acre than their German counterparts and just over 50 percent of English production. Businesses, trades, police organizations, and military staffing came under the direction of a small middle class. They could appoint officers to the army, but the highest ranks were reserved for the aristocracy. Corrupt nobles confiscated the profits from the endeavors of the lower classes. All of these social and political weaknesses contributed to public discontent.

In 1904 the Japanese navy attacked the Russian fleet harbored at Port Arthur, Manchuria, without a declaration of war. A subsequent attack on the Russian fleet in Tsushima Strait nearly destroyed it. During the years before the attacks, relations between the two nations had been strained. Russia's ambition to expand its territory toward China conflicted with Japan's plan for taking areas on the Chinese and Asian mainland. The Treaty of Portsmouth signed by Prime Minister Count Sergei Witte ended the war, leaving the Russians humiliated and diminished in prestige.

"Bloody Sunday" further damaged the world's perception of Russia. On January 22,

1905, a peaceful procession of workers led by a clergyman submitted a petition stating their loyalty to the tsar, along with a list of grievances. As the demonstrators stood in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, troops under orders fired on the crowd, killing nearly 1,500 people. Public outrage was swift. Riots, worker strikes, naval mutinies, and violent acts of retaliation forced the dysfunctional ruling aristocracy into negotiating a parliamentary form of government. This parliament, or *Duma*, was designed to divide the demonstrators between those who accepted the terms and those who continued to rebel. The first Duma was dissolved on July 21, 1906. The second Duma also was dissolved. The third Duma, established on March 5, 1907, was designed to support the aristocracy. The tsar reasserted his authority but the unrest among his people was just beginning.

Paris was a city of pleasures. Its cafes, all-night clubs featuring the latest music and follies dancers, and a host of other attractions were in sharp contrast to the Victorian morals of England and Germany. Here, in an ad for absinthe, a man leers lasciviously at his pretty companion.

By the early 1900s, Paris was considered the center of Western civilization, dominating the world's intellectual, social, and arts scene.

French president Raymond Poincairé, a conservative leader committed to social stability, was elected to office in 1913. Poincairé attempted to strengthen the office of the presidency of France. Although generally unsuccessful in this endeavor, he managed to dominate foreign policy, focusing on bolstering the Franco-Russian alliance and drawing France ever closer to war.

Italy: Searching to Restore Past Glories

Italy on the eve of the Great War was a nation with pretensions of great status but only nominally a Great Power. The country was unified during the same period that Bismarck forged German unification. In 1870 Italy exploited the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War. When Prussia forced a French withdrawal from Rome, Italy (in fact a region of the Piedmont) seized the opportunity to expand its territory and invaded Rome, claiming it as the new capital. Italy was ruled by a Piedmontese king, Victor Emmanuel II, of the House

of Savoy dynasty. Called the "Father of the Fatherland," he symbolized the movement that united the country and expanded its territory. This expansion included the Papal States, which resulted in the king's excommunication by the Catholic Church.

To many Italian nationalists, Italy was united in name only. Uprisings in the agricultural southern areas of the kingdom widened the cultural and ethnic contrasts with its more industrialized northern territories. King Umberto I inherited the throne in 1878. In contrast to his father, he was despised by liberal segments of the population as he took a more severe approach to challenging their rights. Many regarded his unbridled ambition and close ties to Germany and Austria-Hungary with suspicion when he signed a Triple Alliance with them in 1882.

At the turn of the century, the economic growth, increased commerce, and industrialization in the north improved the quality of life of its citizens, often with financial supplements to the south. This did not reconcile their cultural differences. The agricultural south remained backward and illiterate while the economy in the north flourished. In 1914 the divide between northern and southern Italy was severe. The south remained an agricultural semi-feudal society while the north enjoyed industrialization.

Jealousy toward France, and bitterness that France had obtained a protectorate over Tunisia in 1881, largely dictated Italian foreign policy in the 14 years before the Great War. The Italians built a substantial navy and conducted a tariff war against the French. Despite the conclusion of the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, which conferred Great Power status, Italy was deprived of a foothold across the Mediterranean until 1911, when it seized Libya. Compared with the other Great Powers of Europe, the colonial holdings of Italy remained minimal. And on the eve of the war, although the Italian military had approximately 300,000 troops, only a small percentage of these soldiers had adequate training.

The Ottoman Empire as the "Sick Man" of Europe

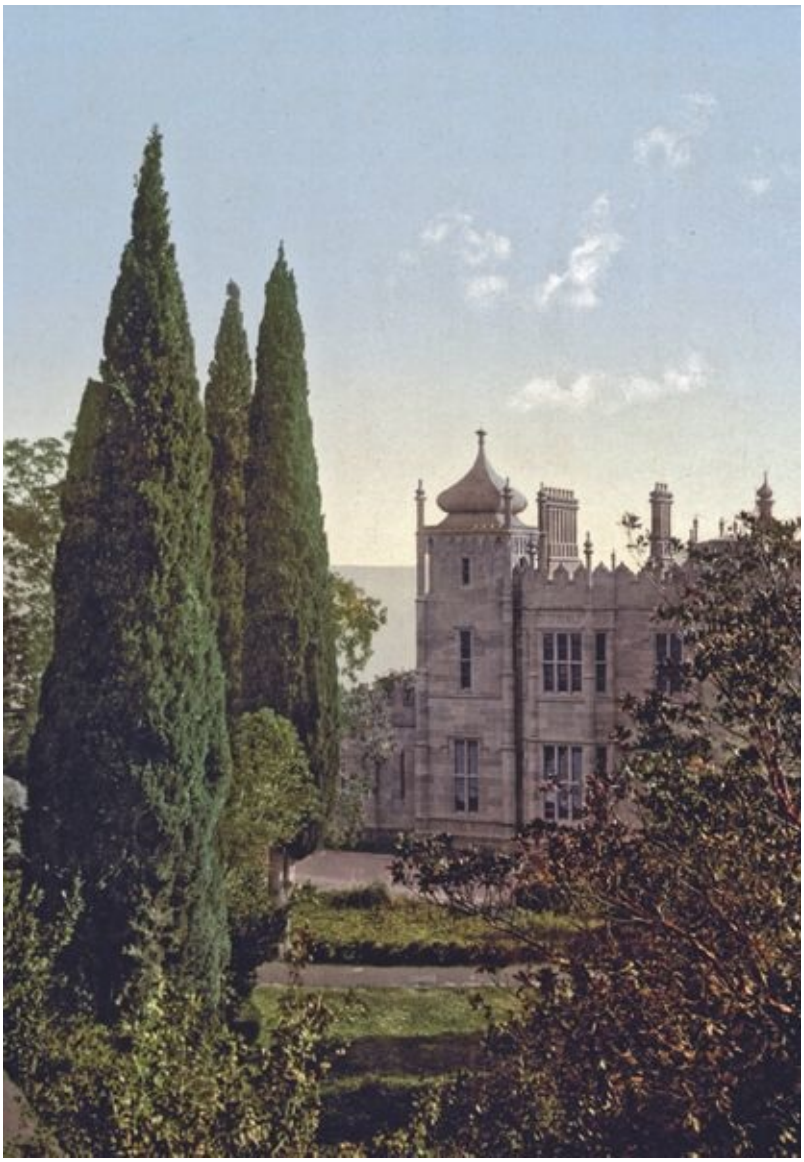
In the 1890s the Ottoman Empire, also known as Turkey, was called the "Sick Man" of Europe. The early Ottoman dynasty, of Turkish origins, had created one of the largest and most enduring civilizations in history, but its strength had been undermined by the growing independence of local governors and politicians. As the European Great Powers expanded their borders and colonies, they waited to capitalize on the Ottoman Empire's loss of territory. The expanse of this once grand multi-ethnic kingdom stretched from the Aegean to the Adriatic, and included parts of Western Asia and North Africa. For centuries, it had controlled land travel between the east and west, forcing other countries to develop new commercial sea routes. As the land routes diminished in importance, the nation's power weakened.

From 1876 until 1908, the empire was ruled by Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey. His tyrannical practices caused many subjects to flee, taking refuge in other countries. The sultan's execution of Christians and other atrocities caused many to call him Abdul the Damned. Challenges from neighbors to the east and west (who sought to increase their territories) and divisive ethnic uprisings within the empire's borders became frequent. When a Serb uprising occurred in 1875, Russia had championed the cause of its kindred

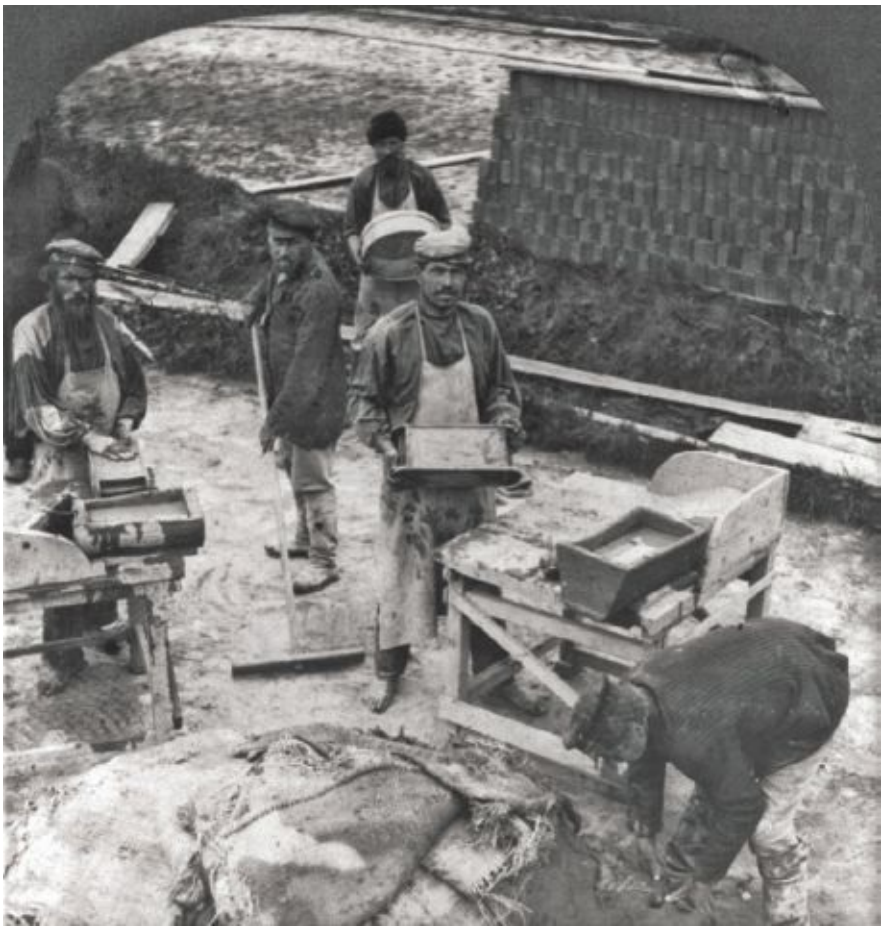
Slavs and attacked Turkey. The empire's devastating defeat in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 further aggravated its instability.

Russian tsar Nicholas II ruled from 1894 until he abdicated in March 1917. His reign saw Russia go from a foremost Great Power of the world to economic and military collapse. Here the tsar is seated with wife and children. Clockwise from left are son, Alexei; Alexandra, the tsarina, wife; and daughters Maria, Olga, and Anastasia.

Russian peasants take a break from their grueling work. Living conditions for peasants in Russia was comparable to those of the serfs of Middle Ages Europe.



Superficially, Russia seemed like a bucolic paradise. This beautiful photo of the tsar’s palace belies social decay and revolution seething just below the surface.



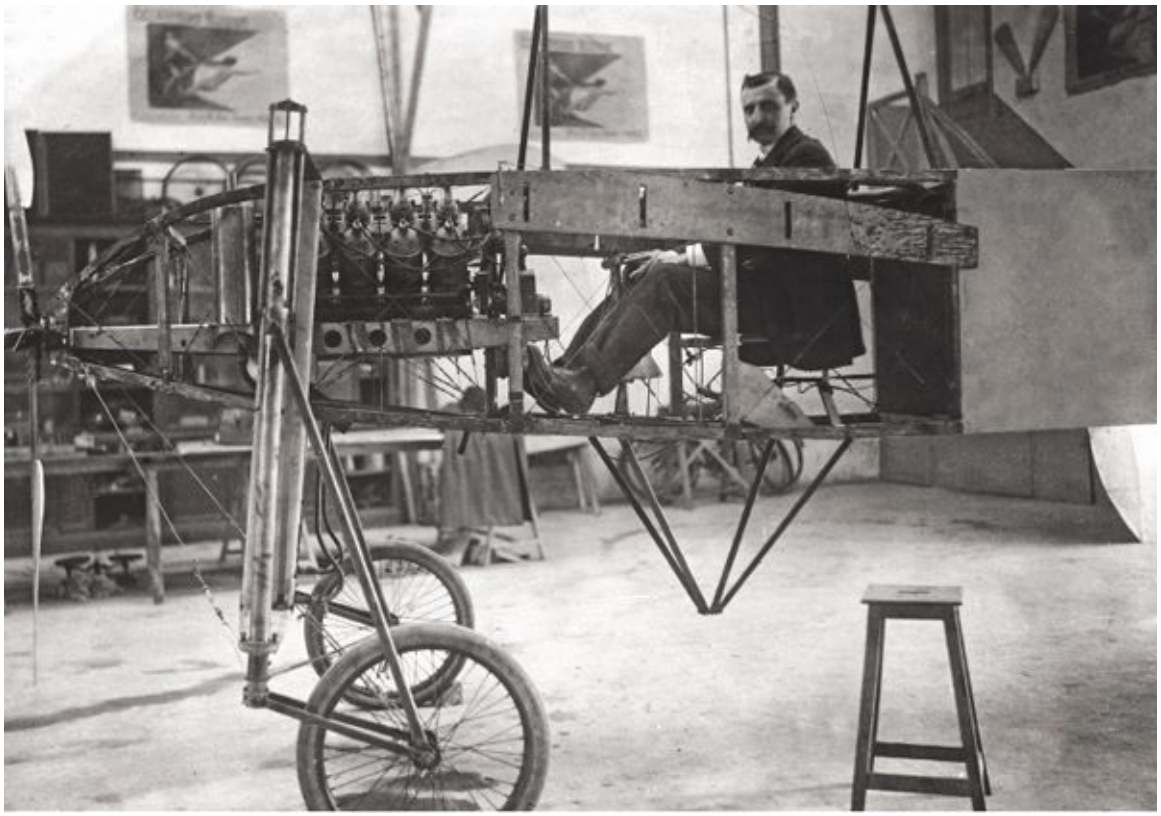
Working conditions for the average Russian were appalling. A Russian diarist characterized life in Russia as no more than slavery.

German chancellor Bismarck believed (presciently) that a major world war could be triggered in the Balkans. Europe's most powerful nations agreed. On June 13, 1878, Austria-Hungary, France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Turkey met at a conference in Berlin to carve up much of European Turkey. Their first action was to revise the Treaty of San Stefano, which had created an independent Bulgarian state earlier that year, on March 3, 1878. Bulgaria was divided into three territories, with the largest portion remaining a part of Turkey as an independent principality. Montenegro and Serbia were declared independent, but with less territory, as was Romania as it ceded Bessarabia to Russia. Austria-Hungary received the right of occupation in Bosnia-Herzegovina (it would annex the territory in 1908). France received access to Tunisia, and Great Britain assumed oversight of Cyprus.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey was present at the Berlin conference. The treaty brought gains to other nations while leaving the Ottoman Empire with an enormous loss of prestige and territory. In 1908 a revolution displaced the sultan. The new rulers, called the Young Turks, reformed the Turkish government, marking the beginning of the Second Constitutional Era. Wary of Turkey becoming subservient to Germany, the leaders nonetheless believed that an alliance with the Kaiser would offer a greater advantage than terms from Britain, France, and Russia. In 1909 a tenuous friendship was established between Winston Churchill and the Committee of Union and Progress in Constantinople (the Turkish capital), but the British refused a later request from Turkey for an official alliance. Turkish leaders hoped to restore the country to its former glorious stature, even as most of the world viewed it as corrupt and in decline.

The Balkan Wars further diminished Turkey's status as it experienced territorial losses. In 1912, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia united to form the Balkan League. These nation states had won independence from the Ottoman Empire, but many segments of their ethnic populations remained under Turkish control. The League members attacked Turkey on October 8, 1912, in an attempt to expand their borders and recover their citizens. Turkey had logistical problems in transporting troops as most were in Asia and the Aegean Sea offered the most direct route. The Greek navy overpowered the Ottoman fleet and Turkish troops were defeated in several actions. On May 30, 1913, the Treaty of London ended the conflict.

King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy would reign for 46 years, through both world wars. A personally shy man, he disliked the stress of Italian politics but frequently intervened in the pre-war years to mediate parliamentary crises.



Louis Blériot, French aircraft inventor, crossed the English Channel from Calais to Dover on July 25, 1909, in 36-1/2 minutes. The English newspaper *The Daily Express*, which sponsored the event, declared that "Britain is no longer an Island." Attack from the air would add another dimension to the battlefield in the coming war.

King Peter I of Serbia, a Western-educated monarch, attempted to liberalize Serbia with a goal of creating a Western-style constitutional monarchy. Although he chose to retire following the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 he remained a lightning rod for Serbian nationalism.

After the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1908, rule of the Ottoman Empire was dominated by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which became known as the Young Turks. Outsiders believed the Committee-led government was run by the dictatorial triumvirate of the interior minister and grand vizier, Pasha Mehmed, the minister of war, Pasha Ismail, and the minister of the navy, Pasha Djemal; however, modern scholarship suggests that the government was loosely headed by the party's central committee. In this photograph Pasha Ismail and Djemal visit the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

The treaty's terms generated changes in territory that were challenged by the allies. An independent Albania created a crisis for Serbia as it blocked its sea access. Serbia demanded compensation for this loss by insisting on territory from Bulgaria's share in Macedonia, and Bulgaria challenged Greece over Salonika. The former allies could not reach an agreement and they mobilized their armies. On June 29, 1913, Bulgaria declared war on its former allies. Turkey and Romania joined the allies in defeating Bulgaria. On August 13, 1913, the Treaty of Bucharest ended the conflict. Bulgaria submitted to the terms which established a revised map of boundaries in the Balkans. Serbia doubled in size and population even as its army and military supplies were devastated. Still, this land expansion empowered the rebellious Slavs. The Sick Man of Europe continued to decline.

Russia and Germany were at constant loggerheads in the Balkans. Constantinople sat at the end of the 50-mile-long Dardanelles Straits. This narrow exit from the Black Sea marked Russia's only shipping outlet to other world ports. Noting the importance of a partner with the power to separate Russia from supplies and allies, Germany sent soldiers to Turkey on a mission to restructure the Turkish army in 1913. German support continued as it invested in Turkish railways, sent diplomats to Constantinople, and encouraged the

Committee of Union and Progress in plans to liberate and unite millions of ethnic Turks living in Russia and Asia. Russia was outraged. On July 28, 1914, Turkey requested a secret alliance with Germany that would take effect in the event of either country going to war with Russia. Germany signed immediately, but the Turks hesitated, seeking assurance that Germany could win. Britain pushed the Turks into committing to the Kaiser when it seized two warships that had been commissioned by the Ottomans to be built in English shipyards at a cost of $30 million. On August 3, 1914, Turkey committed to the agreement with Germany.

The Balkan and Bosnian crises demonstrated how easily the instability of those regions could disrupt the equilibrium of all of Europe. The implications of the wars were considerable as the smaller nations showed how unwilling they were to conform to the patterns devised for them by the Great Powers.

Austria-Hungary: A Cumbersome Empire

A multi-national empire like Turkey, Austria-Hungary had Bosnians, Croatians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Poles, Romanians, Slovenes, and Slovaks among its population. The Germans and Hungarians were the largest of these ethnic groups. The country had been ruled by the Austrian Habsburg dynasty until the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 redistributed the imperial territories. National discontent had driven the formation of a dual monarchy. In contrast to other kingdoms, it was divided into two distinct parts: the Magyars of Hungary and the Germanic people of Austria, both ruled by Emperor Franz Joseph, who had been in power since 1848. Although he controlled the combined army and treasury, the two components maintained separate parliaments and prime ministers.

The Hungarian Magyars believed that they were a master race and dominated their Slav minorities, ruling in an oppressive manner. The western German monarchy ruled a population of Slavs, Poles, and Serbs, and southern areas of the Alps. In contrast to the heavy-handed Magyars, the Germans of Austria recognized their ethnic blend of citizens as equals. Capitals for the kingdoms were Budapest, representing the Hungarian sector, and Vienna, for the Austrian faction. The disparity in the governing approach of the dual monarchies made it necessary for Franz Joseph to rule with absolute authority.

The military system fell under the authority of the unified government that directed overall policy. The Joint Army, called the Imperial and Royal Army, stood at almost half a million during peacetime. The major portions of troops were reservists who added more than one million soldiers. In support of the Joint Army, both nations had a separate military, each relying heavily on reserve units that added another million to their troop strength.

Special interests and disagreements between the two nations diminished the efficiency of the military system. Ethnic diversity created communication issues, as many soldiers did not understand the Hungarian or German languages. Others were illiterate. Disputes about the designated language of command in the Hungarian army and condescension in ranks among officers toward conscripts adversely affected troop morale. The railway system had expanded throughout the empire and adequately supported commercial

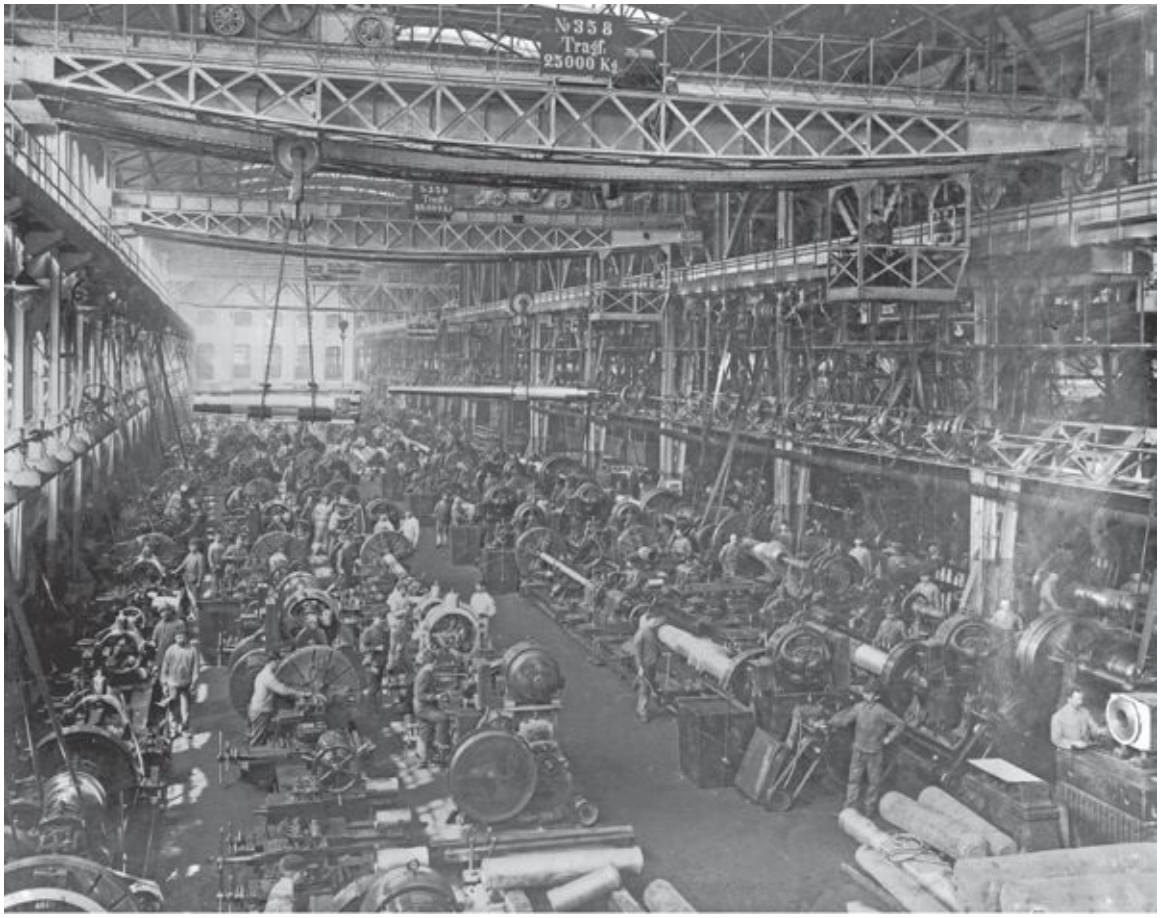
interests, but its network could not meet the demand for rapid troop transport between fronts in the event of war.

Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. His preoccupation with the Bosnian crisis culminated in Austria-Hungary's declaration of war against the Kingdom of Serbia and activated a system of alliances resulting in world war.

While publicly denying any interest in expansion, the Austrian-Hungarian government harbored plans to acquire territories in the Ottoman Empire: Bosnia and Herzegovina. When Russia proposed a plan to divide the Balkan regions in 1876, the foreign minister of the Dual Empire refused to participate and promoted a supportive relationship between the monarchy he served and Germany. In 1878, the European congress in Berlin, scheduled to meet on June 13, offered an opportunity for Austria to claim areas of the Balkans. The Austrian foreign minister met with British officials and agreed to endorse British interests at the conference in return for Britain's support of Austria-Hungary's plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina. Britain pledged to agree, but the conference had unofficially ended. After secret diplomatic machinations, Austria-Hungary deftly acquired the rights to the appropriation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, an act that engendered feelings of betrayal in the Russians and prompted outrage in Serbia, which had a large ethnic population in Bosnia. A bitter Russia was forced by Germany to concede to the agreement.

Determination to liberate the Serbs oppressed by foreign rule became the primary objective in Bosnia for the Serbian government. In 1908, Austria strengthened its control

by officially annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina. In response, Serbia called for the liberation of Bosnian Serbs while secretly using their military to create and train a terrorist group known as the Black Hand. An anarchist faction of this group found an opportunity to direct world attention to its cause, changing the course of history, when six members traveled to Sarajevo in 1914.



Germany's Krupp factory came to symbolize industrialization on the eve of World War I. Here the massive artillery guns that would destroy a generation were cast.

A Web of Treaties: The Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente

In the years immediately before the outbreak of the Great War, the powerful European nations were divided into two opposing alliances: the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente.

In 1882 Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy formed the Triple Alliance. Initiated by Germany's Chancellor Bismarck, the alliance was designed to create a great world empire for Germany. As a component of this plan, Germany promoted close relationships with Turkey and several Balkan states, extended its colonies, and forged a military and naval expansion program that would establish its position as the ranking European Great Power.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand, his wife Duchess Sophie, and their children (left to right) Ernst, Maximilian, and Sophie. As the presumptive heir to the Hapsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire, his assassination set into motion a series of diplomatic blunders that led to world war.

Italy was reluctant to join its potential enemy, Austria-Hungary, but feared the French effort to colonize parts of Africa and challenge Italy's plan for expansion. Bismarck directed Italy to sign the agreement. Terms of the Triple Alliance stated that if one or more of the allies were attacked by more than one power, the other members would come to the defense of the attacked power. Italy was also assured that if France attacked it alone, Germany and Austria would rush to its aid. However, if one of the powers launched an aggressive war, the others would remain neutral. The signing members pledged secrecy and renewed the contract in 1887, 1891, 1902, and 1912.

The other alliance, formed in 1907, was the Triple Entente of France, Great Britain, and Russia. These nations were aware of the combined power of the Triple Alliance and their dangerous situation if they were required to act alone against those countries. (Belgium declared its neutrality and was not associated with either the Triple Alliance or the Triple Entente. Its neutrality was guaranteed by all members of both groups with the exception of Italy.) Events prior to 1914 had nearly incited war between the two factions and each incident increased to some extent the animosity that was building among them.

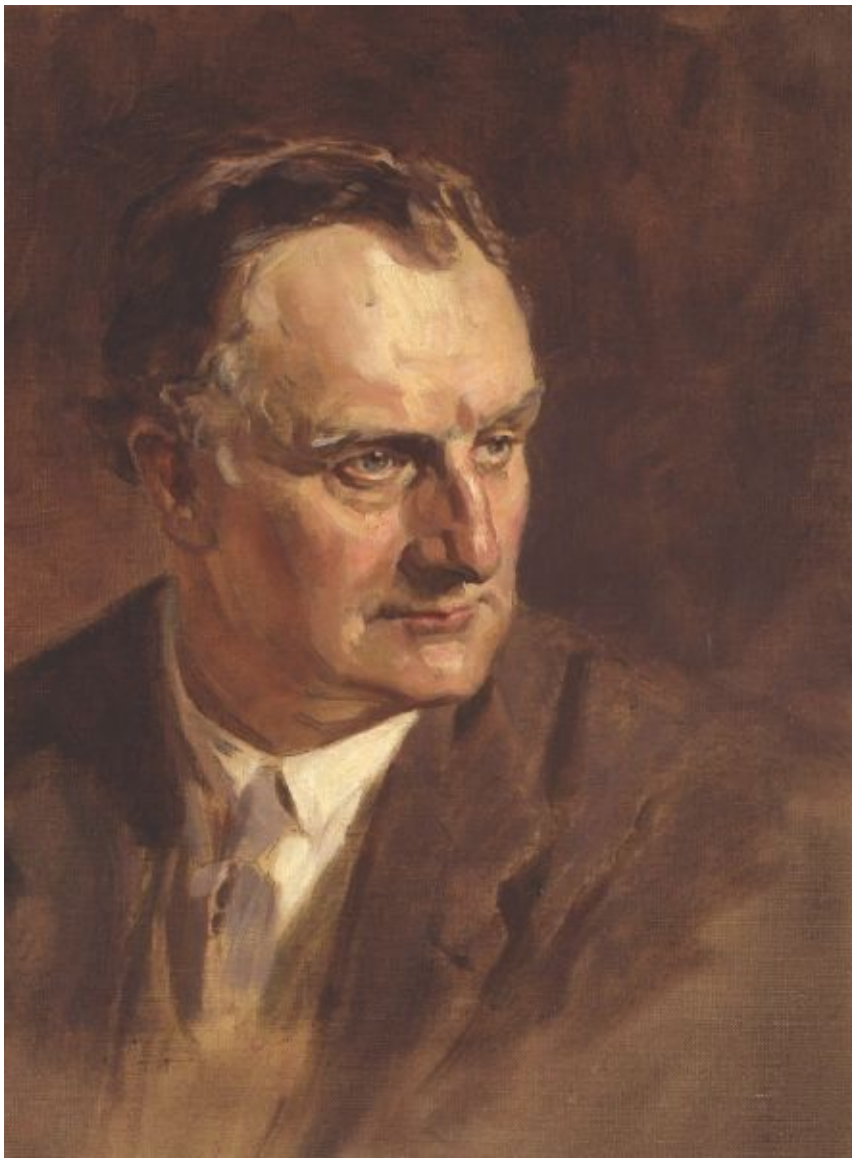
These agreements were a part of the Bismarkian system designed to secure and maintain Germany's status as the most powerful nation on the Continent and to isolate France. However, with Bismarck's dismissal by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1890, German diplomatic relationships deteriorated. On the eve of the Great War, Bismarck's carefully constructed network of alliances began to unravel. Germany and Austria-Hungary no longer remained at the center of these agreements. Other treaties were signed among former allies while Japan partnered with Great Britain. Meanwhile, a confident United States remained officially aloof from these European affairs.

The Flash Point

The breaking point came when the heir to the throne of Austria, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated on June 28, 1914, while inspecting troops in the Austrian city of Sarajevo, near the Serbian border. He had traveled with his wife, Sophie, who was also fatally shot. The assassin was Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Black Hand faction of a Serbian nationalist group. Although there was no proof, Austria at once accused Serbia of having instigated the crime and assumed a belligerent attitude in the diplomatic negotiations that ensued. Serbia had been demoralized by two wars and went to great lengths to prevent another with its powerful neighbor, submitting to nearly all the demands made by Austria and agreeing to arbitrate the others. Austria, however, confident of the support of Germany in a war of aggression, refused to accept the proposals and declared war on Serbia on July 28.

Tsar Nicholas of Russia, quick to fill the role of defender of the Slavs, ordered mobilization of his armies in order to protect Serbia. This action transformed a local dispute into an international crisis, triggering a series of other troop mobilizations throughout Europe. The animosities of the last four decades immediately came to the fore. It was with great fanfare that declarations of war followed—the world was to be up in arms.

On the evening before the war began, the British foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey, made a statement before Parliament that exemplified the prevailing sentiment: “The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.” Europe, the world, and mankind would never again be the same.



Sir Edward Grey, Britain’s foreign minister at the start of the war.

Chronology of Events

Pre-1914

1907, August 31	Conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Entente
1908–1909	Tension between Russia and Austria over the October, 6, 1908, annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
1912–1913	Balkan Wars (Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece versus Turkey)

1914

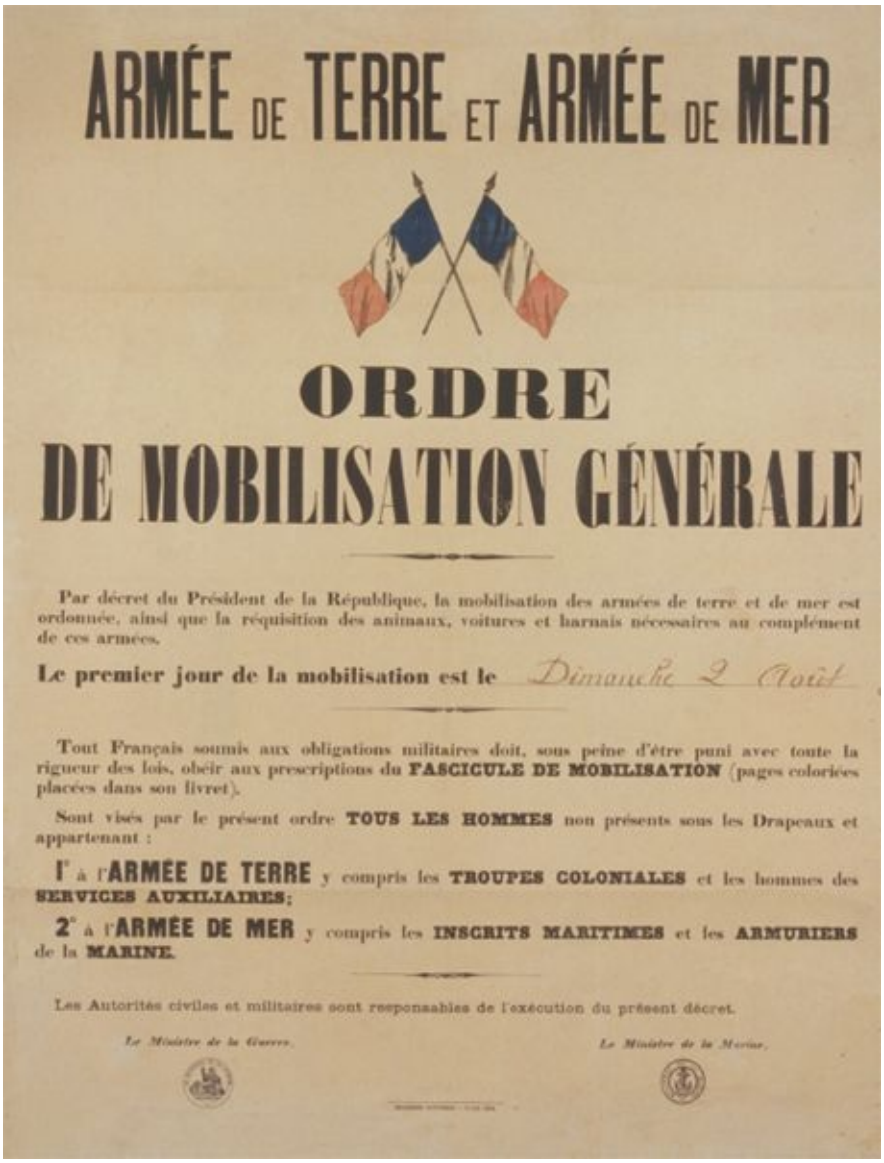
June 28	Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo
July 5	Kaiser Wilhelm II promises German support for Austria against Serbia
July 25	Serbia mobilizes
July 26	Austria mobilizes on the Russian border
July 28	Austria declares war on Serbia; the British fleet mobilizes
July 29	Germany mobilizes
July 30	Russia mobilizes
August 1	Germany declares war on Russia; France mobilizes
August 2	Germany invades Luxembourg
August 3	Germany declares war on France; Germany invades Belgium
August 4	Britain declares war on Germany
August 5	Austria declares war on Russia
August 9–22	British Expeditionary Force sails to France
August 10	France declares war on Austria
August 12	Austria invades Serbia

August 14	Battle of Morhange, Sarreboug
August 17–30	Battle of Tannenburg
August 20	Brussels falls to Germany
August 23	Japan declares war on Germany
August 26–September 4	Battles of Mons
August 26	Battle at Le Cateau
August 30	First Battle of Lemburg

2

A War of Attrition

The War Begins: The Invasion of Belgium



ARMÉE DE TERRE ET ARMÉE DE MER

ORDRE

DE MOBILISATION GÉNÉRALE

Par décret du Président de la République, la mobilisation des armées de terre et de mer est ordonnée, ainsi que la réquisition des animaux, voitures et harnais nécessaires au complément de ces armées.

Le premier jour de la mobilisation est le Dimanche 2 Août

Tout Français soumis aux obligations militaires doit, sous peine d'être puni avec toute la rigueur des lois, obéir aux prescriptions du **FASCICULE DE MOBILISATION** (pages coloriées placées dans son livret).

Sont visés par le présent ordre **TOUS LES HOMMES** non présents sous les Drapeaux et appartenant :

1° à l'**ARMÉE DE TERRE** y compris les **TROUPES COLONIALES** et les hommes des **SERVICES AUXILIAIRES**;

2° à l'**ARMÉE DE MER** y compris les **INSCRITS MARITIMES** et les **ARMURIERS** de la **MARINE**.

Les Autorités civiles et militaires sont responsables de l'exécution du présent décret.

Le Ministre de la Guerre. *Le Ministre de la Marine.*

The French Mobilization Order set the day of mobilization of French forces as August 2, 1914.

Reservists departing for the front in Paris, France, at the Gare de l'Est.

A French infantry soldier embraces a young lady at a cafe. The streets of Paris were charged with excitement as troops left for war.

The Ulster Volunteers marching out of Belfast, Ireland, 1914.

Forty days. That was the time German military planners had calculated it would take for Russia to mobilize its army and force Germany into a two-front war. It was the time frame that the Schlieffen plan allotted for sweeping through Belgium and defeating France.

Count Alfred von Schlieffen, Germany's chief of the General Staff from 1891 until 1906, spent years devising a plan to attack France via Belgium. The plan revolved around the idea of *envelopment*, an outflanking maneuver fashioned after a favored method of Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general who won the battle of Cannae by employing such tactics. According to Schlieffen's plan, Germany would attack France from the north with a mighty right-wing sweep through Belgium while a smaller left wing would beat back any resistance at the border by Alsace-Lorraine. The might of the German right wing would crush France in one quick, lightning stroke, allowing Germany to get back to her other border in time to meet the Russian army.

Success hinged entirely on timing. Anything but a speedy victory over the French would dilute German strength at the Russian front. If Germany was to avoid a protracted war of attrition (where one side wears down the other to the point of collapse), a quick, decisive victory in France was key. German military doctrine revealed a deeply rooted fear of a war of attrition and the Germans put their faith in meticulous planning to prevent it.

The Schlieffen plan required the violation of Belgian neutrality. Germany had long viewed Belgian neutrality strictly in terms of her own needs and, despite being one of the signed guarantors of the neutrality agreement (the Treaty of London, 1839), had little actual respect for it. Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg reflected this view on the evening of August 4, 1914, in a speech to the Reichstag. He asserted that it was wrong but "necessary" to violate Belgium, later referring to the neutrality agreement as a "scrap of paper." Schlieffen himself had once insisted that Belgium could not be considered neutral because she had fortified so heavily at the German border.

Using the pretext of self-defense against France, Germany issued Belgium an

ultimatum: give the German army free passage or suffer the consequences. The Belgians, with only six divisions to Germany's thirty-four, prepared to defend themselves. They understood that acquiescing to Germany's demands would not only make them an accomplice to German expansion but also subjugate them to German rule. At the same time, the German First, Second, and Third armies gathered at the Belgian border. Regardless of Belgian wishes, the Germans planned to violate their neutrality as an act of "necessity."

War was greeted with jubilation in August 1914—shown here in the streets of Paris as it was across most of Europe. In this photo a proud French soldier is escorted to the station by his family.

Canadian Highlanders explain pay and benefits to eager recruits in Montreal shortly after the outbreak of the war.

Aviation in the Great War

Army field clerk Will Judy of the headquarters, U.S. 33rd Division, remarked presciently in his journal: "The airplane gets half our entire attention. It goes everywhere; it brings destruction; it moves quickly; it is a great spy; it does the work of a thousand rifles; it scares us; it makes us helpless against its dropping death; it seems to be most of the war."

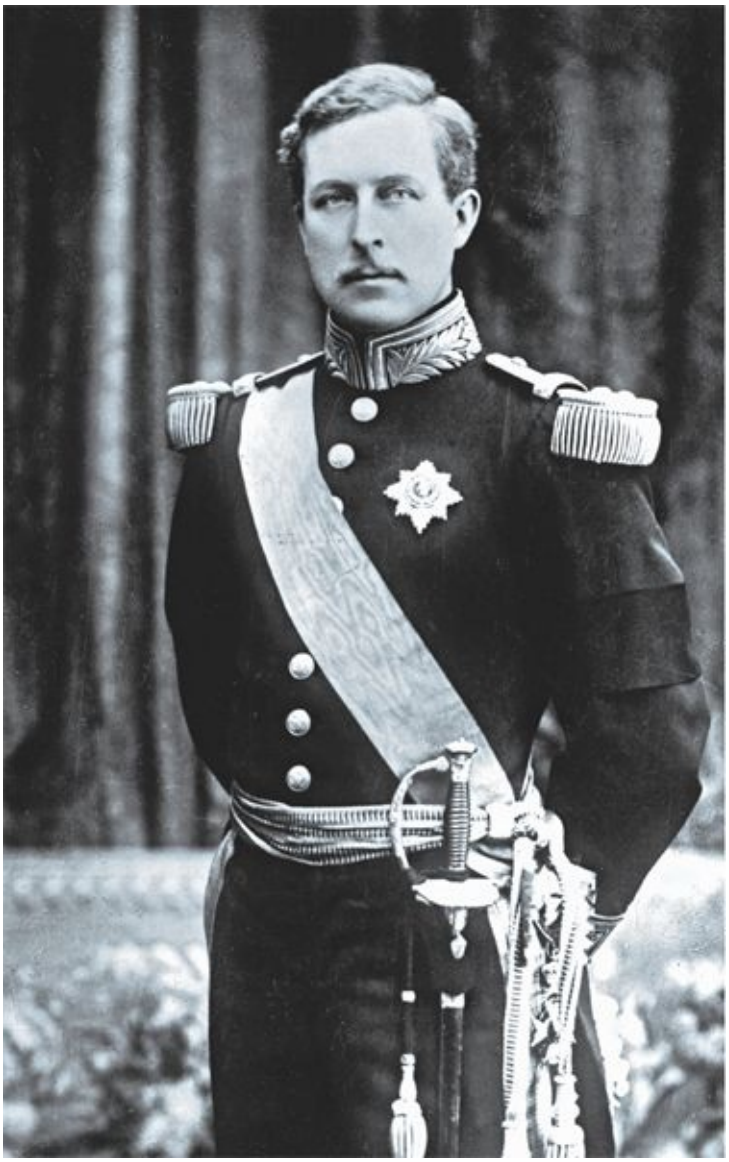
Powered flight, a technology barely two decades old, evolved significantly during the course of World War I. The airplane and its combat formations quickly took on expanding roles far beyond the air-to-air dogfights that became a Great War cliché. The airplane provided a wide array of missions, including artillery observation, reconnaissance, air-to-ground attack, and bombing, including medium- and long-range missions.

The air war created its own host of heroes, many of whom became household names, including Germany's first ace (and its first pilot Pour le Mérite winner), Lieutenant Max Immelman; Baron (Captain) Manfred von Richthofen, the commanding officer of the Flying Circus and the war's highest-scoring ace, credited with 80 victories; and Germany's highest-scoring ace to survive the war, Lieutenant Ernst Udet, with 62 kills.

The Allies had their own share of champions, including French fighter pilot Captain René Fonck with 75 victories; French daredevil Captain Georges Guynemer, with 54 victories; and British aces Major Edward Mannock (with 73 combat credits), Lieutenant Colonel William A. Bishop (72 kills), and Captain Albert Ball (recipient of the Victoria Cross and credited with 44 victories). American aces included Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, with 26 air conquests, and the "Balloon Buster," Lieutenant Frank Luke Jr., with 18 kills.

By the Armistice, air power had proved a vital element of future warfare. Civilian and military leaders marveled at the potential demonstrated during the crude bombings of London and Paris, experiments with parachutes, and the aircraft's prospect as a combat multiplier.

A German war poster with an aviation theme.



King Albert I remained in Belgium, personally leading his small army against the Germans, while the government withdrew to Le Havre, France.

Due to the favorable terrain, roads, and railways that Belgium offered an army on the move, the right-wing sweep of the Schlieffen plan had to smash through the Belgian fortress cities of Liege and Namur—significant obstacles to any invading army. Built in the late 1880s, the forts encircling these cities were revolutionary for their time. Steel-capped, subterranean, and strengthened with armor-plated concrete, they had been impenetrable to the heavy artillery of the era. However, by August of 1914, the German army had the necessary firepower available in the form of 305-mm and 420-mm siege cannons. These guns, typically reserved for naval vessels, were so massive that the Germans had to break them down into pieces to move them.

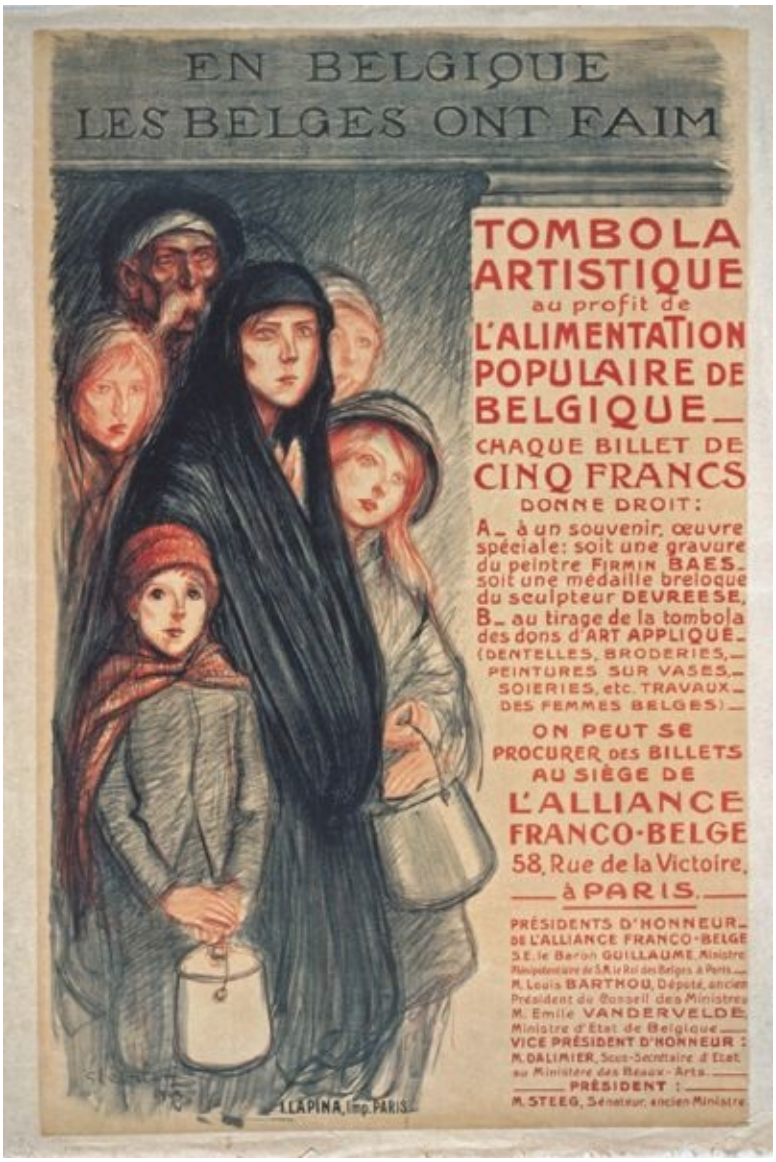
On the morning of August 3, the German delegation received notice that Belgium would not allow Germany through her territory. By August 4, the invasion of Belgium had begun. A detachment from General Karl von Bulow's Second Army, led by General Otto von Emmich, crossed into the Belgian frontier and made a beeline for the Meuse valley. By August 5, Emmich's troops were massed in front of the forts at Liege, ready to attack. The Germans, expecting little to no resistance from Belgium, were shocked when the Belgians opened fire.

King Albert of Belgium ordered General Gérard Leman, commander at Liege, to hold

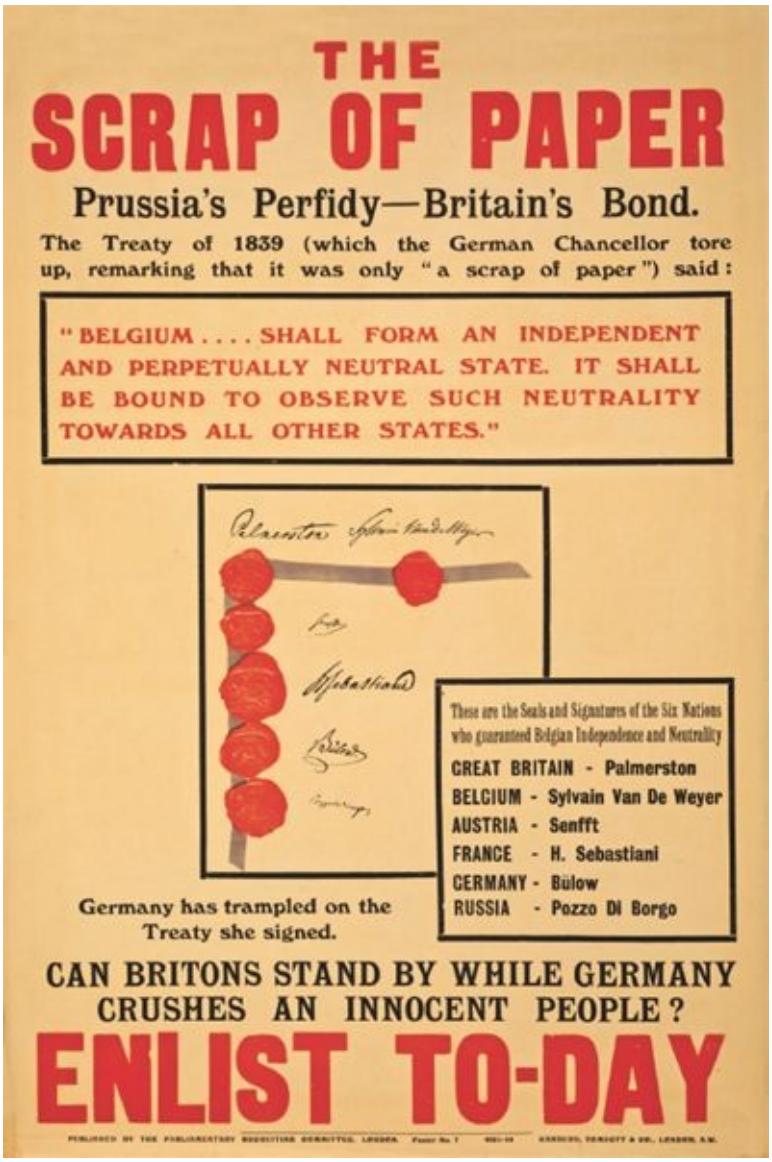
to the end. Although German general Erich Ludendorff penetrated the outer ring of forts and entered the city of Liege on August 6, 11 of the 12 forts still held. Once the Germans were inside the city, it took heavy shelling from the 420-mm howitzers to complete the siege of the remaining forts. The last fort to fall, Fort Loncin, where Leman had moved his headquarters, saw its magazine explode on August 15, after two and a half hours of bombardment. The Germans found General Leman trapped under debris from the explosion. They took him to General von Emmich alive but unresponsive. When he came around, Leman asked the Germans to bear witness that he had been taken unconscious.

Bavarian villagers celebrating the outbreak of war gathering around a field piece.

Propaganda inflamed the Allied nations. In this example, a column of indifferent German soldiers pass an executed Belgian soldier.



A French poster appeals to citizens for contributions for starving Belgium refugees. The plight of the people of Belgium following the German invasion was widely used as a propaganda tool on both sides of the Atlantic.



This British poster asks, "Can Britons stand by while Germany crushes an innocent people?" The violation of Belgium by Germany was the triggering event for Britain's entry into the war.

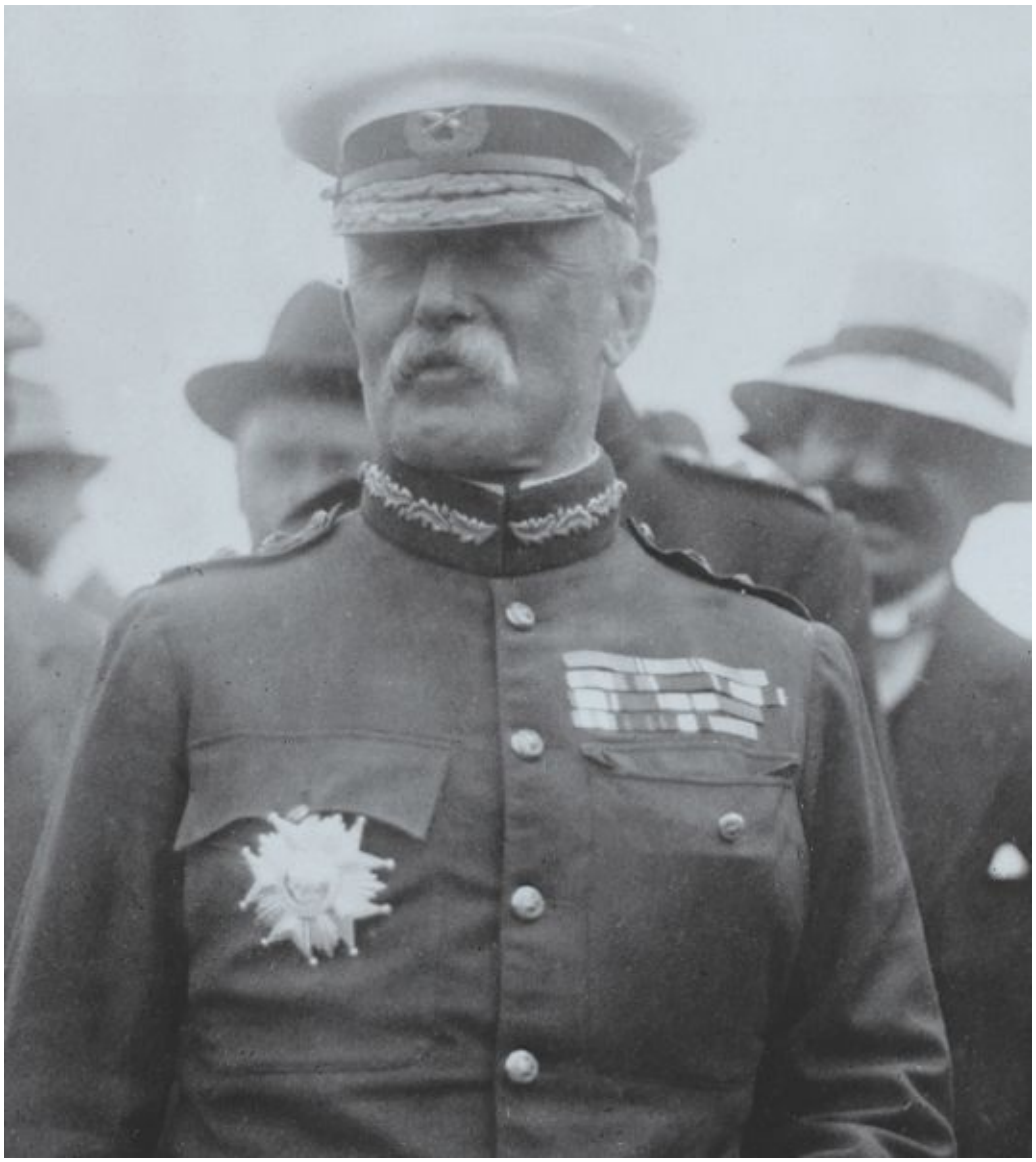
On August 16, the last two forts of Liege fell. The Germans broke down the heavy guns that were used to destroy the Liege defenses and moved them to Namur. On August 21, the howitzers pounded Namur's forts with their two-ton shells until the last fort fell on August 24. The initial foray into Belgium, for which the Germans had scheduled 48 hours, had lasted nearly 20 days. The stubborn 10-day defense at Liege had also provided sufficient time for the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to land and take a position in southern Belgium on the extreme left flank of the French line of defense, directly in the path of the German First and Second armies.

The Belgian resistance at Liege and Namur shocked and angered the German army and the reprisals were swift and brutal. Enraged, jumpy, and frequently drunk, the German soldiers feared phantom snipers in every village they encountered. No evidence was necessary for the cry of "sniper!" to go up in the ranks. The slightest suspicion of civilian resistance provided the Germans with sufficient reason to loot and burn the luckless village in question to the ground.

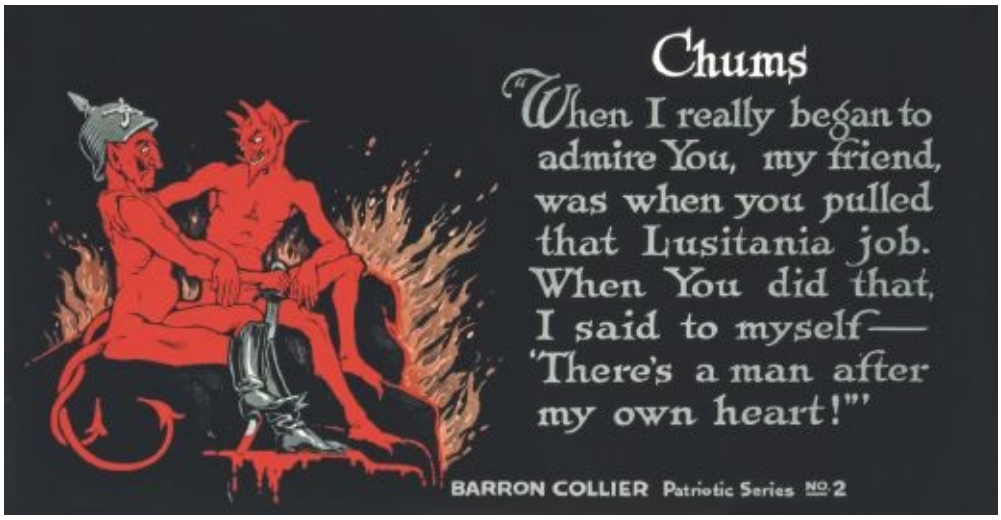
German troops often pulled unarmed civilians from their homes, marched them into the village square, and there, under the summer sun, lined them up and shot them. They bayoneted to death those unlucky enough to survive the shootings. In the first few weeks

of invasion, they indiscriminately murdered hundreds of civilians: men, women, children, and babies. The gratuitous burning of the university library at Louvain underscored the barbaric tenor of the "Rape of Belgium" and turned public opinion around the world against Germany. Despite worldwide condemnation, the Germans continued to view the invasion and their actions as self-defense. As the chief of the German general staff, Helmuth von Moltke, wrote, "Our advance on Belgium is certainly brutal but we are fighting for our lives and all who get in the way must take the consequences."

A German recruiting poster: a soldier stands holding a grenade in one hand and a rifle in the other; in the background is a barbed-wire obstacle and flames. The text encourages with the slogan, "Your Fatherland is in danger. Register!"



Field Marshall Sir John French, commander of the British Expeditionary Force, arrives in Paris, France. The BEF was insignificant in terms of field strength, but proved Britain's willingness to support her allies.



The Kaiser was often depicted by the Allies as being in league with the Devil. This illustration portrays Satan congratulating the Kaiser on the sinking of the *Lusitania* (see chapter 3).

On August 14, while the right-wing arm of the Schlieffen plan was bogged down in southern Belgium, the French First and Second armies, under generals Auguste Dubail and Édouard Castelnau respectively, began carrying out General Joseph Joffre's General Instruction No. 1, which dictated an offensive attack on the German armies in Alsace-

Lorraine. Similar to the enveloping movement of the Schlieffen plan, Joffre's Plan XVII envisaged five armies in a line from the Swiss border to Abbeville on the Somme. Three armies would hold the line, while the two southernmost armies in the line would launch an attack through Alsace.

The French War Ministry had adopted Plan XVII in May of 1913. Rooted in the idea that victory would favor those with the strongest fighting spirit, Plan XVII glorified a great French offensive fuelled by *élan*. The fever of élan gripped the War Ministry and the French focused on the offensive to the detriment of other considerations. When General Victor Michel advocated a plan of defense rather than offense, his colleagues scoffed. He had reckoned that by virtue of France's geographical makeup, Germany must sweep down through Belgium in order to attack effectively and that France must adopt a defensive stance. His idea of a defensive plan rather than an offense full of élan, guts, and glory was out of the question. The minister of War, Adolphe Messimy, duly relieved General Michel of his command and the French, flush with pride but short on heavy artillery, proceeded with Plan XVII.

The German Sixth and Seventh armies offered limited resistance to the initial French incursions into Alsace, choosing to prepare for a counterattack once the French had overextended themselves, rather than contest every mile of territory. On August 20, the German armies checked Dubail's attack and then, with the aid of superior artillery as well as the advantage of having the movements of the Sixth and Seventh armies coordinated by one general (Konrad Krafft von Dellmensingen), proceeded to maul the French armies and force them to retreat back behind the River Meuse. On Dubail's right, Castelnau's armies faced similar treatment and fell back behind the banks of the River Meurthe, the spot from which they had launched their attack six days earlier.

Despite the repulse of the French First and Second armies, the French Third and Fourth armies pushed into the Ardennes, an area teeming with entrenched Germans awaiting the oncoming enemy. The French charged forward with fixed bayonets into a hornet's nest of German machine-gun fire and soon found themselves retreating back to their starting-off point.

It was now the Germans' turn to overextend their lines. Flush with the successes of the Sixth and Seventh armies, Moltke, contrary to his judgment and personal doctrine of adherence to the Schlieffen plan, acquiesced to the requests of Dellmensingen and Bavaria's Crown Prince Rupprecht, commanders of the Sixth Army, to pursue the attack on the French forces. Similar to what had befallen the French armies, the German attacks broke against the stubborn French defenses at the Meurthe. What became known as the Battle of the Frontiers proved costly for the French, who lost 300,000 men.

While the right flank of the French army had checked the German counterattack at the Meurthe, the left flank (held by the French Fifth and 100,000 men of the BEF) remained in jeopardy.

This British poster depicts a veteran asking a young soldier to continue the tradition of honor, fighting for Britain on faraway fields.

On August 22 at Mons, the BEF, who for the previous eight days had engaged in maneuvers to keep themselves sharp, received word that elements of the German First Army were spotted en masse swinging farther west than Mons and threatening to encircle them. Meanwhile, the pressure from Bulow on General Charles Lanrezac's Fifth Army, which was responsible for checking the German offensive at the Sambre, threatened the BEF's right flank.

At the Sambre, Lanrezac faced elements of the Second and Third German armies. His Fifth Army held the high ground just south of the Sambre and defended the bridges spanning the river with relatively light contingents, in accordance with military doctrine of the time. On August 22, therefore, German divisions found several unprotected bridges after driving off the few French that were present. Lanrezac, realizing that the Germans had crossed south of the river, creating a gap in the French front, counterattacked. Similar to what had happened to their armies in Alsace-Lorraine, the French ran straight into a barrage of rifle and machine-gun fire from entrenched troops—with bloody results. Many of the regiments suffered upward of 50 percent casualties and still did little to quell the influx of Germans. By midnight Lanrezac advised Joffre of his intention to retreat.

Fortunately for the BEF, Bulow, coordinating command of the First and Second

armies, had pulled General Alexander von Kluck's First Army in tight to the right flank of the Second, eliminating the threat of encirclement to the BEF. Despite Lanrezac's pleas for the BEF to turn toward Bulow and attack the Germans' right flank, BEF commander General John French, recognizing the threat posed to his army if he remained at Mons, planned to retreat. He moved too late and the BEF soon found themselves face to face with the German First and Second armies, the latter having pushed back Lanrezac from the Sambre and now turned toward Mons.

As the German forces charged forward, they faced withering fire from the BEF veterans of the Boer War, whose acumen with both spade and rifle brought the German attack to an abrupt halt. Only after hours of shelling did the BEF withdraw from their positions at Mons. The battered British corps wanted to withdraw to Saint Quentin; however, roads clogged with refugees and exhausted troops forced the BEF to bivouac in Le Cateau for the night of August 25.

On the morning of August 26, the Germans struck again. Not having had time to entrench and prepare defenses, the British leveraged every stone wall, fence, and any other obstacle capable of providing cover, and continued to pour rifle fire into the advancing Germans. Similar to the earlier day's battle at Mons, German artillery would prove decisive, forcing the British to pull back.

The French army was unable to implement reforms prior to the outbreak of war. Its uniform of 1914 was utterly

antiquated, consisting of a cloth kepi, a dark blue coat, and red trousers.

Germans in their well-protected trenches on the Belgian frontier, aiming at their enemy.

The outgunned Belgians continued a spirited defense of their homeland against the approaching Germans. Here a Belgian gun crew prepares in the defense of Antwerp.

German plans called for a quick defeat of the Belgian forts, which proved far more formidable than anticipated. This view from Diest, Belgium, conveys the power of these fortifications.

Belgium swore to resist Germany's aggression. This barricade on the Liege road proved a fruitless attempt against the German juggernaut.

An angry French mob smashed this German shop in Paris after the violation of Belgium.

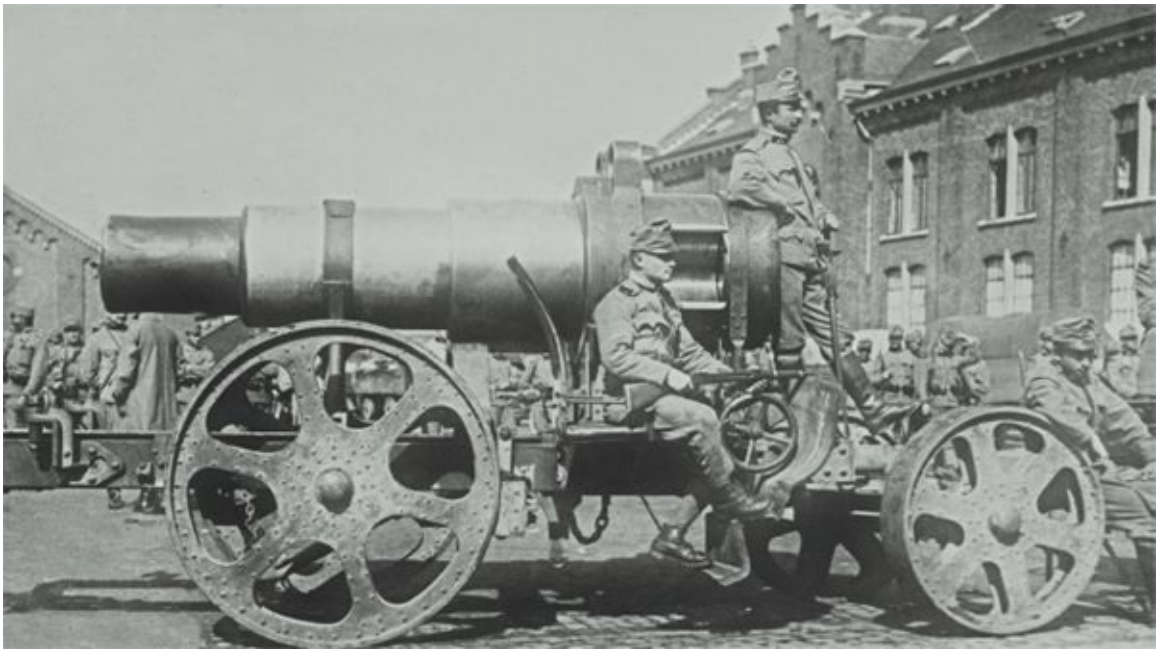
German soldiers, flush with victory, enter Brussels crossing the Place Charles Rogier on August 20, 1914.

French soldiers taking a break to eat on the march toward Belgium.

An Indian soldier preparing a meal in France.

German Landsturm troops in formation after the capture of Antwerp. The Landsturm were Germany's third-line reserve troops.

Belgians re-entering Termonde, where King Albert had conducted a heroic defense in personal command of the army.



An Austrian gun in Belgium. Heavy Austrians siege guns like this one gave the Germans an overwhelming advantage in firepower against the Belgian forts.

In spite of the British propaganda machine's depiction of the brutish Hun, there were many instances of German humanity toward the vanquished Belgians. Here German sailors aid Belgian refugees returning to Antwerp.

Victorious German soldiers buying fruit from lovely Belgian mademoiselles.

As ground warfare began, thousands of civilians fled their homes. This view captures a wagonload of refugees from Belgium arriving in Paris.

German soldiers moving by cart through Brussels.

General Gérard Leman, the defender of Liege. His tenacious defense of the forts defeated the Schlieffen Plan.

Count Helmuth von Moltke the Younger (so called to distinguish himself from his famous field-marshal uncle, called "The Elder") became Germany's chief of staff in 1906. Many Germans believed that Moltke was not qualified for the position and had gained it through his personal friendship with the Kaiser. Moltke seriously weakened the Schlieffen plan by diverting forces from the Western Front. His health broke down during the Marne campaign and he resigned and was succeeded by General Erich von Falkenhayn.

Marshall Joseph Joffre, commander in chief of the French armies. He was criticized for his conduct of the battle of Verdun, which ultimately cost him his position.

French Zouaves stopping to get a drink in the early days of the war. France's colonial empire supplied a variety of

uniquely uniformed troops, including these Zouaves, mainly recruited from the population of the French colonies in North Africa.

French Spahis at Furnes, Belgium. The Spahis were recruited from the French North African colony of Algeria. Born horsemen and attired in their native dress, they were used as light cavalry.

Over the four days of fighting, the BEF had lost nearly 13,000 men—and, more than the loss of manpower, General French lost confidence in Lanrezac, as well as much of his nerve. The BEF began a withdrawal that took them to the east of Paris, coming to a halt just north of the Seine.

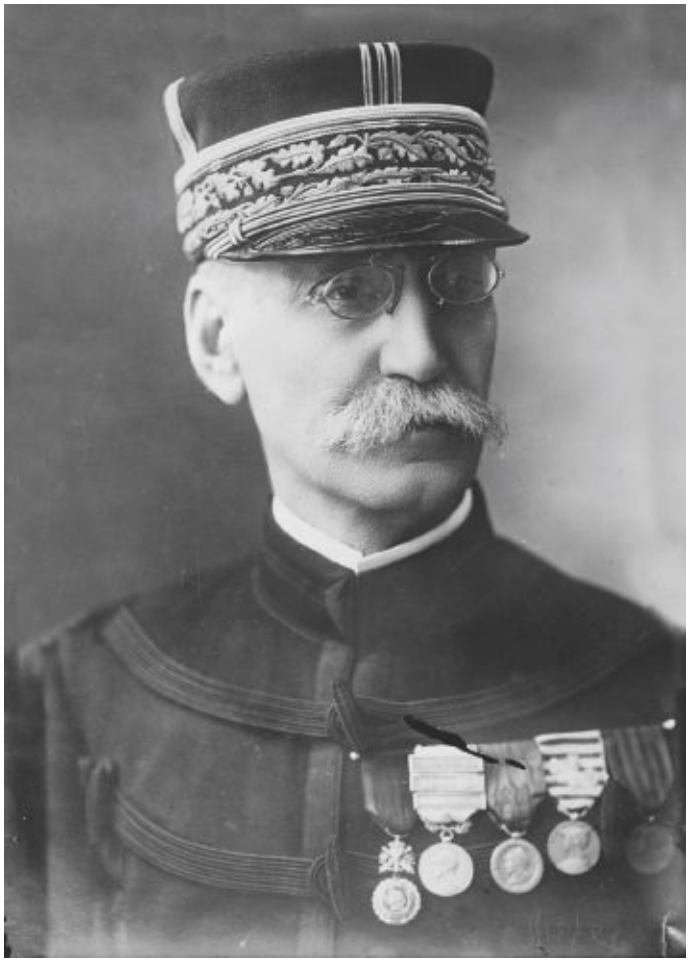
Retreat to Marne

On August 24, Joffre reassessed his situation. Plan XVII had failed. The mass of the German Army bore down on his left flank. The BEF on the far left struggled to hold ground in front of Kluck's First Army. Lanrezac's Fifth Army was falling back in front of Bulow's Second and Baron Max von Hausen's Third. General Fernand de Langle de Cary, whose Fourth Army aligned to Lanrezac's right flank, had issued a gloomy report of retreat and heavy losses in the Ardennes. Joffre's offensive had died in a hailstorm of German firepower; however, his forces on the right, fighting the German Sixth and Seventh armies on the eastern frontier, remained strong enough to hold the line in Lorraine.

While Joffre blamed a "lack of offensive spirit" for the thwarted French efforts, he also took note of French tactical errors and took immediate steps to remedy them. Going forward, the French infantry would advance only with ample artillery cover and they would entrench themselves wherever they took ground. Reconciling himself to the idea that retreat would allow his armies to regroup, Joffre drafted General Order No. 2, which called for a renewed offensive along a line between Paris and Verdun.

Now recognizing the true threat of the German right wing, Joffre set about strengthening his left flank. After meeting with generals French and Lanrezac to explain the aims of General Order No. 2, which counted on the BEF to secure the left flank, Joffre sensed French's reluctance to commit his troops. Loath to count on the BEF strategically, Joffre also created the Sixth Army, comprised of forces from Lorraine and headed by General Michel-Joseph Maunoury, to further reinforce his left flank.

Meanwhile, the German juggernaut rolled forward in the wake of the failed offensive. Paris, directly in its path, had not yet prepared for the siege. With its blind faith in the ultimate success of the French offensive, the French War Ministry had not felt much urgency to prepare an active defense. Now they panicked. The German armies would knock down their doors in 12 days and Paris had hardly begun digging trenches, erecting barbed wire, and provisioning the city. Worse still, the city had no army. Minister of War Messimy put out the distress call to General Joseph Gallieni, the famed military commander of the French colonies. Gallieni agreed to become commander of the armies of Paris but only if he could get three active corps from Joffre. Joffre initially refused, but ultimately agreed to put Maunoury's Sixth nominally under Gallieni's command.



General Joseph Gallieni, military governor of Paris. He was responsible for forming the taxicab army.

While Joffre made these adjustments with General Order No. 2, the First and Second armies of Castelnau and Dubail were engaged in ferocious fighting holding their ground in Lorraine. Now taking the defensive entrenched stance, the French spirit of élan turned into something stronger and more bloody-minded. Crown Prince Rupprecht attacked furiously but could not smash through the French defense where General Ferdinand Foch's XX Corps not only held their line but began gaining ground.

A German patrol reconnoitering enemy positions in France.

German soldiers advancing in southwest Belgium.

The German army in Belgium, on their way to the front.

The Great War in the Middle East

Indicative of the global nature of the conflict, the Middle Eastern theater of the Great War stretched from the Caucuses to northern Africa and present-day Iraq and Iran, and encompassed most of the Arabian Peninsula. Waged primarily between the Ottoman Empire and Russian and British forces, it would shape much of the region for decades to come.

There were five main campaigns: the Sinai and Palestine campaign, the Mesopotamian campaign, the Caucasus campaign, the Persian campaign, and the Gallipoli campaign. There were the minor North African campaign, the Arab campaign, and the South Arabia campaign. Russian forces engaged in the Persian campaign, while late 1914 saw the British land the Indian Expeditionary Force at the mouth of the Tigris River and move inland, occupying Basra on the way to Baghdad, aiming to reach the Ottoman capital.

In 1915, British forces moved further into Mesopotamia to Kut and began to make moves toward Baghdad. The Turks consolidated their forces, and by spring all attention was focused on the Gallipoli campaign. Russian forces continued their campaign in Persia, and the Turks made an attempt to capture the Suez Canal. By October, the British push toward Baghdad stalled and they began to fortify positions around Kut-el-Amara, while the Turks and their German advisors strengthened their positions, eventually investing the city. The siege of Kut began and, in a horrendous display of medieval siege war, the defenders slowly succumbed to attrition. The British began talks with the Arab tribes who were seeing weakness in the Ottoman Empire.

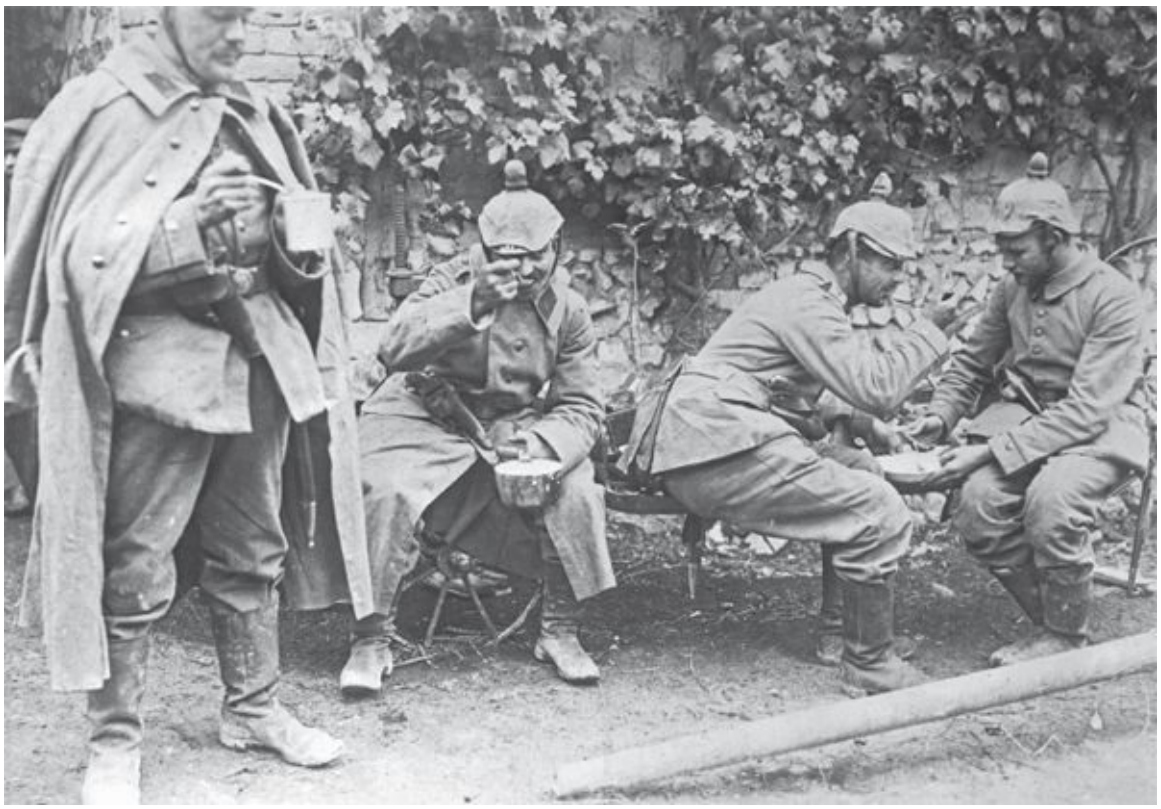
The year 1916 began with tribes in the Arabian Peninsula rallying with the British under T.E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”) to begin harassing the Turkish forces and their Arab allies. The British garrison at Kut finally surrendered on April 29, and more than 50 percent would die in forced-labor camps before the war ended. The Turks launched a second attack across the Sinai to capture the Suez Canal, and the British responded in strength, attacking into Palestine but failing to capture Gaza.

In March of 1917 the British relief column reached Kut too late for the defenders, but

continued in force and captured Baghdad. Russian successes in the Caucuses brought the Ottomans to their knees and they signed a peace treaty with Russia in December. Lawrence's Arab Revolt aided the Palestine campaign with its asymmetrical warfare, consisting of hit-and-run tactics. This allowed the British to capture Gaza (and ultimately Jerusalem) by Christmas 1917.

1918 was a year of continued hit-and-run fighting by the Arab tribes and Lawrence as the Ottoman troops struggled to hold on. Events on the Western Front drew troops away, and stalemate continued until the eventual Armistice of Mudros on October 30, 1918, effectively ending the war in the Middle East.

German soldiers at Vise, Belgium, taking a break to get some water.



German artillerists on the firing line, Verdun.

The Battle of the Marne

By September 3, Kluck's First Army had drifted 40 miles east of Paris. In pursuit of the BEF and the Fifth Army, Kluck now had his left flank south of the Marne and maintained only a small shielding force north of the Ourcq. Bulow had pushed further south to the area of the Petit and Grand Morin, while Hausen's Third and Duke Albrecht of Württemberg's Fourth neared the Marshes of St. Gond.

On the French side, Joffre now had the Sixth Army on his extreme left flank, northwest of the Ourcq, and the Fifth Army, now under the command of Franchet d'Esperey, in the area around Provins facing the First and Second German armies. To the right of the French Fifth, the Ninth and Fourth armies held positions on either side of the Marshes of St. Gond facing the German Third and Fourth armies. Joffre's reorganization of troops meant the Allies now had the advantage in manpower. More than one million French and British faced 750,000 Germans.

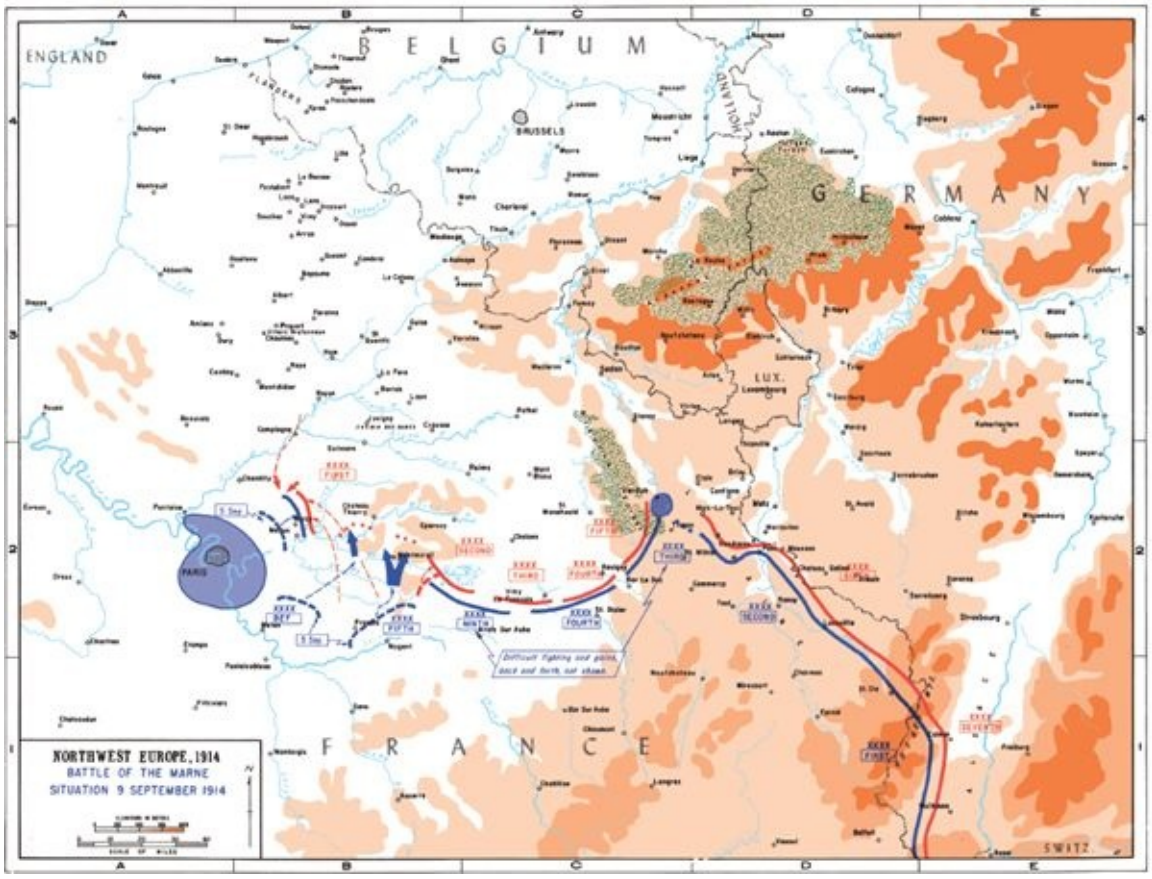
On September 4, Joffre planned the attack. General Instruction No. 6 called for the Sixth Army to attack east into the German First's right flank while the BEF, General Louis Franchet d'Espèrey's Fifth Army, Foch's Ninth Army, and de Langle de Carey's Fourth Army attacked northward.

On September 5, the French Sixth Army began its advance toward the Ourcq, positioning themselves for a surprise attack on the German First's right flank the next day. By mid-morning, they unexpectedly came under heavy fire from the IV German Reserve Corps under General Hans von Gronau. Gronau held his line until evening when he pulled back toward the main elements of the German First. His action not only eliminated the French element of surprise, it also saved Kluck's army from encirclement and a likely annihilation. Kluck reacted quickly. Over the next three days, he shifted forces from south of the Marne to north of the Ourcq and turned his forces to face the threat to his right flank.

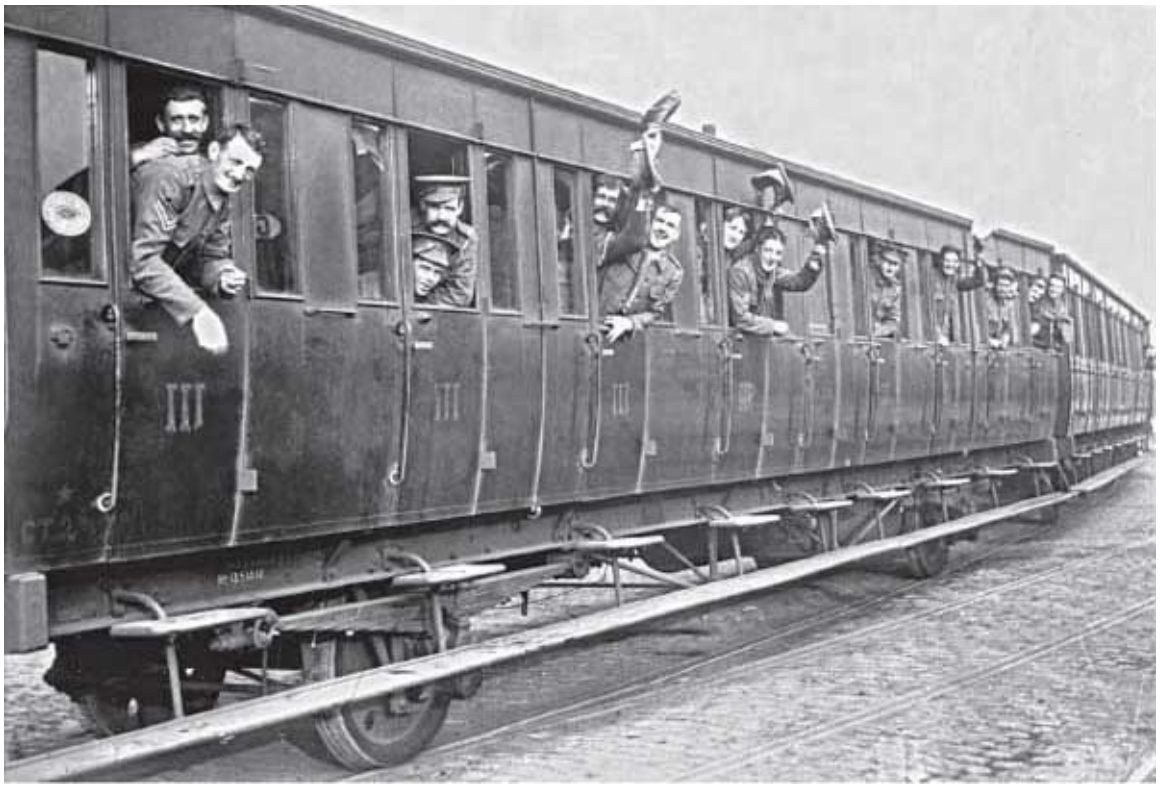
However, on September 6, the German right wing began splitting open. Bulow, under attack all day by d'Esperey's Fifth Army, pulled his right flank back behind the Petit Morin, fearing that the Second Army could not withstand further French attack. This action created the initial gap that Kluck would soon widen.

On September 8, General Maunoury, commander of the French Sixth Army, called on Gallieni for reinforcements to push home his advantage against Kluck's right flank. Sensing the severity of the situation, Gallieni, rather than dispatch all the reserves at once by train and risk a railway breakdown, sent regiments to the front by taxicab. Hundreds of Parisian cabs drove the soldiers of the Sixth Army to the front, fortifying Maunoury's left flank.

This taxicab was one of the vehicles that transported troops as part of General Joseph Gallieni's "Taxicab Army" on September 7, 1914. Gallieni became a national hero for his brilliance during the Marne Campaign.



Women have always played an important role in encouraging enlistments.



Railroads played a major role in both mobilization and troop movement during the war. Here British troops play to

the camera in provincial France.

A French dragoon patrol moving toward the front early in the war. French cavalry operations failed to perform effective reconnaissance, screening, and flank-security missions, marking the arm as obsolete. Although they were the embodiment of the offensive spirit, their tactics harkened back to the armies of Waterloo.

For all of Gallieni's and Maunoury's efforts on September 8, the French Sixth could not gain the advantage. Over the previous three days, Kluck had steadily turned his army to face Maunoury and shore up his right flank. By the morning of September 9, his army not only outnumbered Maunoury's, but also overlapped the Sixth Army's flanks and threatened them with encirclement. However, by attempting to encircle the Sixth Army, Kluck severed his connection with the rest of the German right wing. While his maneuvering stalled the French attack, it also widened the gap between the First and Second armies to 35 miles.

To Bulow's left, Hausen's Third Army faced problems as well. Hausen had rested his troops on September 5 and had fallen behind the Second and Fourth armies. When the French attack began on September 6, both Bulow and Duke Albrecht, leading the German Fourth Army, called upon Hausen for reinforcements. Hausen's original orders from Moltke called for him to move toward Troyes-Vendeuvre. Not knowing whom to obey, Hausen tried to obey all of them by splitting his army into three.

While the reinforcements to the Second and Fourth armies arrived too late to offer much assistance, Hausen did find some success against Foch's Ninth Army. Recognizing that the French must have some weakness in their line of battle, he correctly deduced that it lay right in front of him. Having suffered at the hands of the Ninth Army's artillery fire throughout September 7, Hausen planned a night-time bayonet charge across the Somme for the next day. The attack forced Foch's Ninth to retreat six miles; however, Foch's lines held with the help of reinforcements from d'Esperey. Reporting back to Joffre that evening, Foch said, "Hard pressed on my right, my center is falling back, impossible to move, situation excellent. I attack."

On September 8, Moltke had no word yet from the First and Second armies since Joffre's attack commenced on the 6th. Aware of the gap that had formed between Kluck's and Bulow's armies, Moltke feared that the French Sixth Army along with an advancing

BEF threatened to envelop the German First Army and force a retreat. After meeting with his chief of staff, Moltke dispatched one of his staff officers, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hentsch, to assess the situation on the German front. Moltke had also given Hentsch his proxy, thereby giving him power to act and call for a general retirement if Hentsch deemed it necessary.

Hentsch began his reconnaissance immediately. His first three stops, at the Fifth, Fourth, and Third headquarters, left him optimistic. Prince Wilhelm of Prussia and Duke Albrecht, while both engaged in heavy fighting, planned offensive maneuvers for the next day. Hausen's Third, although repelled by Foch's Ninth earlier in the day, remained in good overall condition.

Hentsch's optimism waned at the Second Army's headquarters. Bulow and his chief of staff, Lieutenant General Otto von Lauenstein, advised Hentsch that without Kluck's First Army on their flank, they faced an untenable situation. Their troops were worn out. If the BEF and French Fifth advanced into the wide gap between the First and Second armies, the Allies could encircle the Second Army. Bulow and Lauenstein advised a retirement behind the Marne, which would solidify the gap between the First and Second armies. Hentsch agreed.

The next morning as Hentsch made his way to First Army Headquarters, Bulow had already begun his retreat on information that the BEF and the French Fifth had begun advancing into the gap. By retreating, Bulow now forced both the First and Third armies to follow suit. Moltke ordered the Fourth and Fifth to fall back as well. The entire German right wing began to retrace its steps to positions along the Aisne.

The order to withdraw the German armies back to the Aisne was Moltke's last. The German Supreme Command would replace him with Erich von Falkenhayn. Moltke's final orders left a lasting impact. By pulling back to entrenched defensive positions, he brought an end to the war of maneuver and set the stage for the war of attrition that would follow for the next four years.

1914: The Eastern Front

The Russian High Command, just like the German and French military high commands, had spent years planning their strategy in the event of a European war. Russia's Plan A called for a thrust of its troops from Warsaw into the Carpathians against Austria-Hungary. While the bulk of their forces would move south, the Russian plan also called for the First and Second armies to mount an offensive into East Prussia, an area the Russians recognized the Germans would leave lightly defended due to their plans to mobilize in the west.

With the First and Second armies, the Russians outnumbered the Germans in East Prussia by five corps in infantry and had seven cavalry divisions compared to the Germans' one. In pure manpower the advantage was even greater, as the Russian divisions contained a greater number of battalions relative to their German divisional counterparts. In all, the Russians had a four-to-one advantage. However, much of the advantage of the Russians' numerical edge would be negated by tricky geography, lack of coordination, and

poor communication systems, as well as fatigue.

German soldiers reading the news on the Russian front.

Russian soldiers in trenches. Although Russia had the largest of the European armies, its troops were poorly equipped and led. A British observer characterized them as a horribly cumbersome instrument.

In order to advance upon the German Eighth Army in East Prussia, the Russian armies first had to navigate the Masurian Lakes. The lakes formed a nearly impenetrable 50-mile barrier. Rather than try to force through the area, General Yakov Zhilinski, in overall command of the Russian armies in the Northwest, ordered General Paul von

Rennenkampf's First Army to move north of the lakes while General Alexander Samsonov's Second Army would move south of the lakes. In doing this, Zhilinski effectively split his force into two distinct units that would have a difficult time supporting each other while abreast of the lakes.

The German Eighth Army, commanded by General Max von Prittwitz, with the aid of a newly transferred staff officer from Alsace, Lieutenant Colonel Max von Hoffman, estimated that they would make contact with the Russian First Army sometime between August 15 and August 20. The Russians did not disappoint. On August 17, at Stallupönen, the Russian vanguard engaged with the German Eighth Army's I Corps, under General Hermann von François. While the majority of the German Eighth Army moved toward defensive positions on the Angerapp River according to Prittwitz's orders, François attacked eastward against orders. By the time news filtered back to Eighth Army headquarters, François's I Corps had stalled the much larger Russian force. However, having suffered heavy casualties, Prittwitz pulled the I Corps back.

Three days later at Gumbinnen, François, emboldened by his earlier foray at Stallupönen, pressed the attack again, this time augmented by the XVII Corps under General August von Mackensen and the I Corps Reserve under General Otto von Below. However, unbeknownst to the attacking Germans, the Russians had entrenched and fortified their positions in Gumbinnen. As the Germans pressed the attack, their casualties mounted. By late afternoon on the 20th, the Russians threatened to overwhelm the German advance and break through the German lines. However, a counterattack by Below, aiding Mackensen's failing flank, solidified the German line.

News of the developments at Gumbinnen caused Moltke consternation. Prittwitz had advised Moltke that the Eighth Army may need to retreat to the Vistula, leaving much of East Prussia to the invading Russians. Few within General Headquarters relished the idea, given that most of the army's inner circle hailed from estates in East Prussia.

With the aid of Hoffman, Prittwitz recognized that a retreat to the Vistula could not work given the Second Army's presence. They realized that despite the heavy casualties of the I and XVII corps, they had stalled Rennenkampf's advance. Believing that Rennenkampf posed little threat, Prittwitz shifted his focus to Samsonov's Second Army. Hoffman proposed moving François's I Corps south by rail to reinforce General Friedrich von Scholtz's XX Corps' right flank facing Samsanov. Prittwitz agreed. Unfortunately for Prittwitz, he had called Moltke and told him of his plans to retreat prior to his council with Hoffman. While Prittwitz began to shift his armies toward Samsonov, Moltke planned to find Prittwitz's successor.

By the 23rd of August, Prittwitz's successors arrived at Eighth Army Headquarters. As German armies were commanded by a duo, Moltke had chosen Erich Ludendorff as the chief of staff and brought General Paul von Hindenburg out of retirement to command. They proved a formidable pair, as would be displayed not only at Tannenberg but throughout the war.

Meanwhile, after Gumbinnen, Rennenkampf mistook the German withdrawal for a retreat to the defenses of Koenigsberg and did not push the pursuit. Rather he began planning the siege of the Koenigsberg defenses, leaving Samsonov isolated and

unassisted. Further, because the Russians believed the Germans to be in retreat, General Zhilinski urged Samsonov to speed up his deployment and also move his left wing farther west to improve the chances of encircling the German Eighth Army. Unbeknownst to Rennenkampf, the Germans had intercepted the First Army's radio transmissions, confirming Rennenkampf's lack of pursuit and apprising them of Samsonov's movements.

South of the Masurian Lakes, Samsonov continued his push forward, opposed only by a single German corps, the XX Corps, under General von Scholtz. On August 24, Scholtz pulled his divisions back in response to Samsonov's advances. However, by this time, François's, Mackenson's, and Below's corps had arrived on Scholtz's flanks, forming a battle line shaped like a crescent that began to envelop the Second Army as it continued its northward advance. By August 25, Samsonov began to suspect that he faced a much larger force as reports arrived of heavy troop buildup on his left flank (François's I Corps). When he reported his suspicions back to Zhilinski, Zhilinski dismissed the reports as imagined and prodded Samsonov forward.

On August 25, Hindenburg gave the order for the I, XVII, and XX corps to attack. While Scholtz and Mackensen began their offensives, François refused, stating that his artillery had not yet reached the front. His disobedience actually proved fortuitous for the Germans.

Samsonov continued his push northward as he faced little opposition on his center and left flank. On his right flank, Samsonov engaged with Mackensen's troops, who counterattacked and broke the Russian line with their superior artillery but could not follow up their initial victory due to fatigue. However, in the center, Samsonov pressed on, brushing aside what little opposition lay directly in front of him, ignoring the increasing risk to his left flank and unaware of the situation on his right.

On August 27, François finally moved the I Corps into action. However, instead of attacking directly into Samsonov's left flank as Ludendorff ordered, he pushed eastward, where he faced little opposition. By August 29 he had reached Willenberg and there met troops from Mackensen's divisions that had pursued the Russians south. They had closed the pincers and encircled the Russian Second Army. In the process, the Germans captured 92,000 troops and inflicted another 50,000 casualties—one of them General Samsonov, who shot himself during the retreat.

While Hindenburg and Ludendorff scored a decisive victory at Tannenberg, the battle did not decide the outcome of the Eastern front, nor did it portend future results.

The German Eighth Army turned their attentions back to Rennenkampf in the north. On September 7, the Germans made contact with the now outnumbered First Army above the Masurian Lakes. However, Rennenkampf fought off the attacks and began to extricate his armies so as not to fall prey to Samsonov's fate. Six days later, Rennenkampf successfully crossed back into Russian territory with most of his army intact, and by the end of September, after having regrouped and reinforced with the Russian Tenth Army, he returned and pushed the Germans back to the lines at the Angerapp, the same positions they had reached earlier in August.

German soldiers relaxing during a lull in the action in trenches on the Eastern Front. Although the Eastern Front saw far more maneuver over its vast distances than the Western Front, warfare there also featured the ubiquitous trench.

The Race to the Sea

This French cartoon illustrates the French soldier of the winter of 1914. He smiles, stating, "We are the Poilus!"—the "hairy ones," an affectionate term for France's infantrymen.

After the First Battle of the Marne halted the German advance in September 1914, both the German Sixth Army and the French Tenth Army tried to get around each others' northern flanks. This resulted in a series of plodding, ladder-like movements over the next two weeks that brought the armies to the outskirts of Lille on October 8.

As the French and German armies battled their way north, the remnants of the Belgian army attempted to break the defenses that had them penned in at Antwerp, to no avail. By September 27, the Germans brought the heavy siege guns used at Liege and Namur to Antwerp and began to break the outer defenses. By October 4, a division of Royal Marines landed in Antwerp to assist the besieged Belgian army. By October 6, however, German advances forced the city's defenders to evacuate to the northwest. As the Belgians retreated, two recently landed divisions of the BEF joined them in moving to positions behind the Yser River.

By October 11, the BEF crawled its way north and arrived in the outskirts of Ypres, completing a line that stretched continuously from the Marne to the English Channel. Ypres itself, however, remained contested.

Ypres

By October 20, the BEF had secured much of Ypres. However, while they controlled the city, they did not have control of the surrounding hills, which offered superior defensive positions. As they moved to secure the hills—Passchendaele, Broodseinde, Gheluvelt, Messines—they ran into the German troops attacking west along a front that stretched from the La Bassee canal to the estuary of the Yser in the north. The Germans attacked with the Fourth and Sixth armies, a much larger force than the British or French had anticipated.

At Ypres the BEF, although severely outnumbered, held their ground. As in earlier battles, the superiority of the professional British soldier's rifle fire took its toll on the attacking Germans, leaving them with 100,000 casualties, many of them university students who had volunteered during the patriotic hysteria at the beginning of hostilities.

On October 27, north of Ypers, the Belgians lost a third of their remaining force. This prompted King Albert to order the opening of the sluices at the mouth of the Yser, flooding the plain and effectively nullifying further German advance along the 10-mile front that the Belgians held.

By October 31, Falkenhayn renewed and narrowed his offensive on Ypres, in the area of the Menin Road. Here German attacks threatened to break through the British defenses in numerous areas; however, each time, small pockets of resistance held their line just long enough for reinforcements to arrive.

The last German push occurred in mid-November around Nuns's Wood, north of the Menin Road, attacked earlier. Again the British army held their line. By the end of November both sides had exhausted themselves, and they began to dig their trenches in earnest.

While staving off the German attacks around Ypres, the BEF had suffered nearly 25,000 dead. This spelled the end of the experienced, professional "Old Contemptibles" (as surviving members of the regular army later nicknamed themselves, after the Kaiser's legendary command to destroy General French's "contemptible little army"). As the war progressed they would be replaced by the recruits and conscripts of what became known as "Kitchener's Army." However, the Old Contemptibles had extracted a heavy price. The Germans had suffered 50,000 dead.

Neuve-Chapelle

By the beginning of 1915, an increasing number of British troops had replaced the French along the line around Ypres. In preparation for a larger battle in the Artois region, Sir John French wanted to capture the town of Neuve-Chapelle and, if possible, break through the German lines and move on to Lille and Auberge.

The battle began March 10 with an artillery barrage at 7:00 a.m. This allowed the British to bring their leading attack force to within 100 yards of the German line. An hour later, as the British infantry moved forward, they faced little opposition as they entered the front line of the German defenses. As the British continued their advance, the German defenders who remained stiffened their defense, especially on the flanks of the British

attack, where the artillery bombardment was least effective. There the two remaining German machine guns took their toll on the attackers. After an additional six hours the British succeeded in capturing the village. Still, they could not break through the German lines.

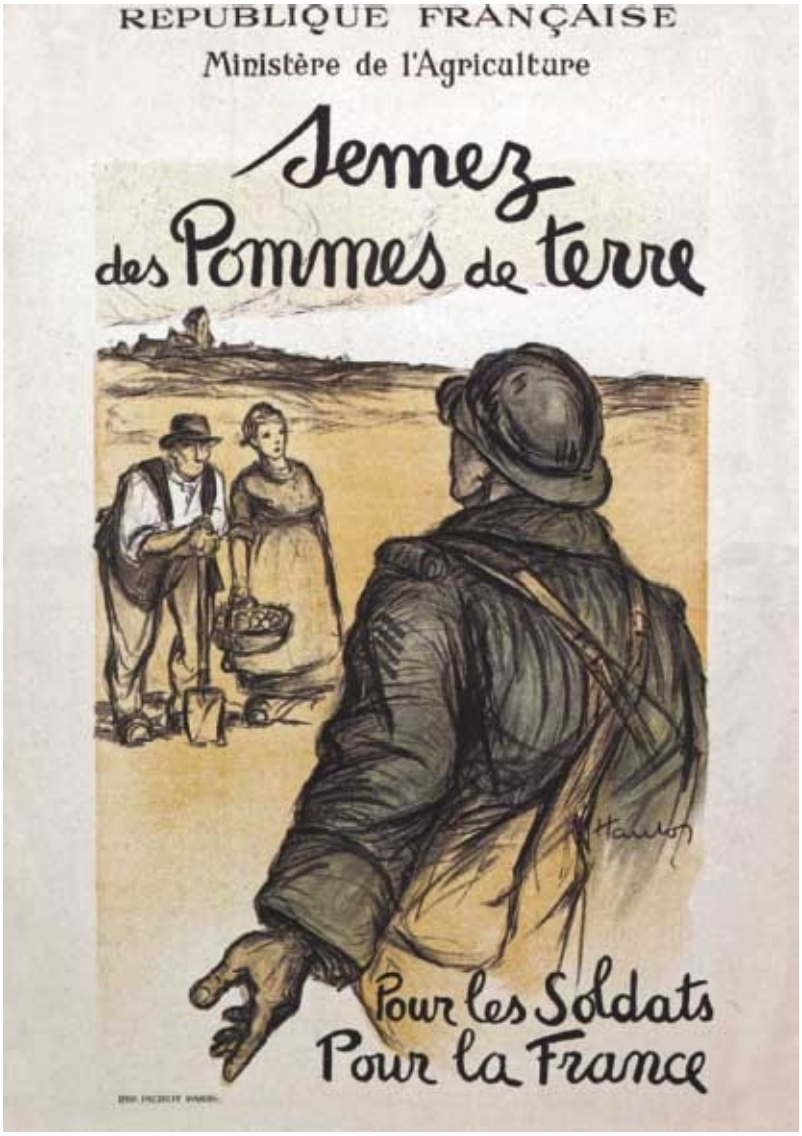
The next morning the German commander, Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, ordered his Sixth Army to counterattack. The British, having had time to secure their defensive positions, inflicted heavy casualties in repulsing the German attack.

In the brief three-day battle the British suffered more than 11,000 casualties and the Germans almost 9,000. In many ways the Battle of Neuve-Chapelle fore-shadowed how many of the subsequent battles of 1915 would develop on the Western Front. Initial attacks would find some successes in the early parts of battle. However, as the battle progressed, counterattacks and fatigue would take their toll, allowing the defenders to usually hold their line and prevent any significant breakthrough.

Second Ypres

At 5:00 p.m. on April 22, German artillery began a barrage on the northern part of the Allied defenses of the Ypres salient. As the barrage continued, the Canadian troops, near the tip of the salient, noticed a greenish-yellow cloud rolling toward the French forces to their left. As the Canadians watched the cloud engulf the French trenches, they became aware that the firing from French forces almost stopped completely. As the cloud came nearer the Canadians who abutted the French line, their throats and eyes began to burn—their first clue that the cloud was more than burnt gunpowder. By this time, the French Territorials had all but abandoned their lines and moved rearward, clutching their throats, trying desperately to catch a breath. The chlorine gas the Germans used literally drowned the men it affected, flooding their lungs with fluid. Behind the cloud, the German infantry came forward, staying well behind the poisonous fog that led their advance. The first use of gas on the Western Front had created a four-mile gap in the Allied lines and 50,000 Germans moved to exploit it.

The German advance had reached to within two miles of Ypres. Two hours after the initial attack, the Germans began to stall. Having underestimated the effectiveness of the gas, their commanders failed to give orders to the troops leading the attack. Therefore, as night fell, the Germans began to entrench. As they did, the Canadian reserve divisions, having little to fear from the dissipated gas, began to counterattack. Although badly outnumbered, the Canadians managed to stall the German advance.



This poster appeals to farmers to give potatoes for the soldiers fighting for France.

Over the next two weeks the Germans would continue to attack along the Ypres salient, including launching additional gas attacks. However, during that time, the Allies identified the gas as chlorine and had their troops wrap their faces with damp cloths, which rendered the gas harmless. British and French reinforcements solidified the lines and the Germans could make no more progress.

Gas would continue to be used on both sides for the remainder of the war. In addition to the chlorine gas used at Ypres, both sides would introduce other varieties as well, including phosgene and "mustard." However, as wind direction limited its use and the introduction of gas masks countered its effectiveness, gas would never again have the same impact on the Western Front as it had with its initial introduction.

Aubers Ridge / Vimy Ridge

In the beginning of May 1915 the Allies planned an offensive in the Artois region, aimed at breaking through to the Douai plain. French forces would attack toward Vimy Ridge while, to their north, the BEF would attack toward Aubers Ridge.

On the British front, engineers had, for the second time on the Western Front, tunneled

under the German positions and detonated mines to signal the start of the attack. Unfortunately for the British, the initial detonation represented the high point of their attack. Infantry had little impact on the German defenses, due to insufficient artillery bombardment and general confusion in the British lines.

The French attack on Vimy Ridge fared slightly better. There, they gained the heights of the ridge and could see the Douai plain below. However, the Germans quickly brought up reserves and pushed the French, who had held their reserves too far to the rear, off the ridge.

Champagne and Loos

By the end of May, still not having broken through the German lines, the Allies began to prepare for yet another offensive. Recognizing that they had not coordinated the attacks between French and British forces effectively, they planned to attack the Artois and Champagne regions in concert. In Artois, the British would attack at Loos while the French would again attack at Vimy Ridge. In the Champagne region, the French focused their attacks on the towns of Tahure, La Folie, and La Main de Massige.

The attack originally was planned for the end of August, but delays in moving the French units from their locations on the Somme—as well as overall preparations for the offensive—caused the Allies to hold off until the end of September. In the meantime, the Germans had ample time to reinforce their defenses as word of the Allied attacks leaked out. Falkenhayn, as early as January, had already instructed his commanders to build defensive lines that included a second and even third row of trenches, in most places more than three miles behind the first line of defenses. If an attack on the first line began to break through, the German defenders would fall back to the second line, where they could easily regroup under the cover of their artillery positioned at this section of the line, waiting to counterattack and recapture their trenches.

The British began their attack at Loos with gas. Unlike the initial gas attack by the Germans at Ypres, instead of moving toward the German line, the gas hung in no man's land or spread back to the British lines, hindering their advance. The attack did not improve from there. German machine guns stopped the initial six divisions from reaching their lines, while logistical problems prevented the British reserves from joining the attack until the next day. The next day's attack met a similar fate, although the Tommies did manage to reach to the second line of German defenses. The British suffered more than 8,000 casualties in the first two days at Loos—over 50 percent of their engaged force. Undeterred, they would continue their attacks for another three weeks, gaining no ground but suffering an additional 40,000 casualties.

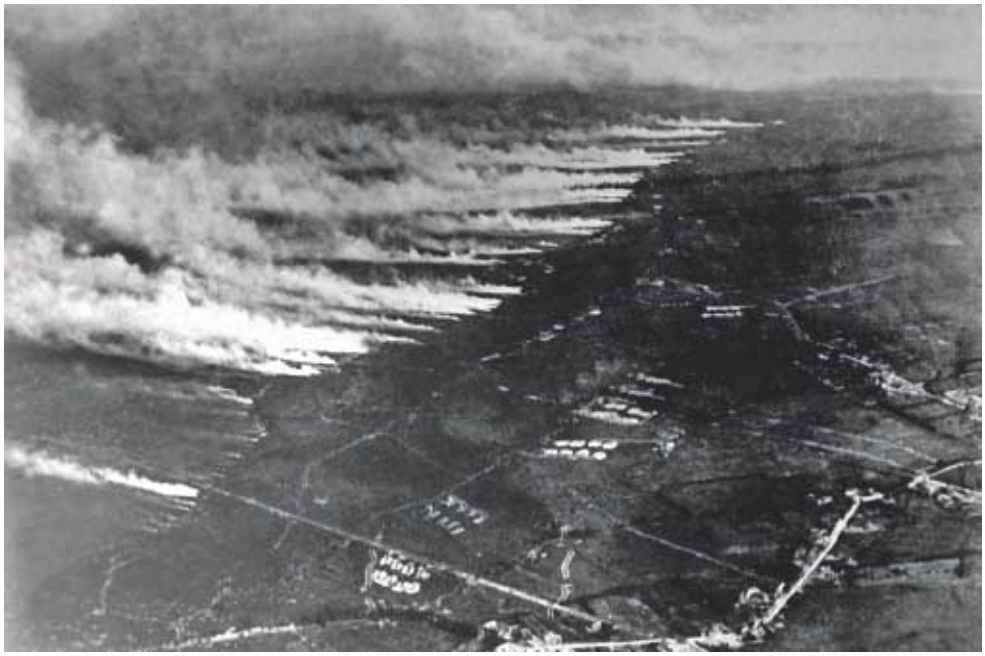
The French advance suffered a fate similar to that of their British allies: little ground gained at the expense of exorbitant casualties. By the end of October, having absorbed nearly 150,000 casualties, the French called off any further attacks.

General Sir John French. After retreating in the face of German attacks in August 1914, he never fully regained his confidence. French would be replaced by Douglas Haig in December 1915 and given command of British home forces.

Albanian infantrymen guarding Serbian prisoners.

Chemical Warfare

French soldiers using liquid fire to good advantage in the front-line trenches in France.



French troops making a gas-and-flame attack on German trenches in Flanders.

At a height of 150 meters above the firing line, a French photographer was able to get this rare photograph of French troops on the Somme front, launching an attack on the Germans.

"Gas!" Perhaps the most feared word on the Western Front.

In an effort to break the stalemate of trench warfare, poison gas served to injure, kill, and demoralize defenders. First used in 1914 by the French, a crude tear-gas grenade had little effect due to its small concentration of irritant. The Germans responded with an irritant gas in fragmentation artillery shells that same year. The British troops under this attack hardly noticed the effect. These initial uses were not intended to be fatal but rather to debilitate and confuse the opposing troops.

1915 saw the first use of killing gas when the Germans deployed chlorine gas against the British. In April, on the Ypres front, the Germans loosed 168 tons of chlorine in a greenish cloud over the French positions. The unlucky colonial troops from Martinique panicked and fled from the trenches. The German soldiers' fear of the gas coupled with the quick action of the 1st Canadian Division to fill the gap saved the day as the Canadians covered their mouths with handkerchiefs soaked in water or urine. The Germans used chlorine three more times on this front. The genie was quite dramatically out of the bottle. In September the British released chlorine gas at the Battle of Loos, but the wind died and shifted so that gas was left in no man's land or blew back into the British trenches, negating its effect on the German defenders. In order to improve on chlorine, which was detectable by its strong burning odor and green color, and which required very high concentrations to be lethal, the French developed phosgene gas. Colorless, and smelling like moldy hay, it was far more deadly than chlorine and its effects could take 24 hours to manifest, so it often went unnoticed until a victim succumbed. Frequently combined with chlorine, it made a potent and deadly mixture. By the end of 1915 all combatants were using it.

Mustard gas, the most well-known gas of the Great War, was a blister agent, intended to harass soldiers and deny access to terrain. An oily, dark-brown substance, it caused chemical burns on the skin, blinded men, and in high doses caused death through destruction of the lungs. It was the most effective of all the chemical weapons. First used in July of 1917 by Germany, mustard gas was quickly employed by every belligerent. It

was most often deployed in explosive shells, which would scatter the gas over a wide area. Being a liquid, it would not dissipate with the force of the explosion.

To hinder the gas, combatant countries were quick to develop protective measures for their soldiers. Germany developed the first true gas mask, which covered the face and incorporated a filter to clean the air. Initial British and French attempts included treated mouth coverings—little more than bandages and goggles. The Allies evolved from cloth masks soaked in chemicals until they too designed sophisticated masks that covered the wearer's face and eyes and had integral filters which were mostly effective against the gas. By the end of the war, gas accounted for slightly more than 88,000 fatalities among all nations, with a further 1.2 million nonfatal casualties. Its relatively minor impact belies the abject terror gas caused, and it has remained the most vivid and horrifying memory of the conflict.

British soldiers manning an artillery piece at the front.

General Luigi Cadorna, Italy's chief of staff. Cadorna was exceptionally brutal with his troops and indifferent to political authority. During the Battle of Caporetto, he ordered the summary execution of officers whose units retreated.

Austrian soldiers guarding the Russian defenders of Przemyśl. The third-largest fort in Europe, Przemyśl was captured by the Russians following a siege early in the war. Renewed Austrian offenses on the Galician front recaptured the fort on June 3, 1915.

1915: The Stalemate Continues on the Western Front

After the Western Front's trench lines had developed at the end of 1914, little occurred to change those lines throughout 1915. Allied attacks in Neuve-Chapelle, Artois, Champagne, and Loos had little strategic impact, and most commanders considered them failures. While 1915 failed to deliver any decisive movement along the Western Front for the Allies, it did lead to a gradual change in how the commanders approached the remainder of the war. Many of the field commanders who had participated in the attacks of 1915—in particular Foch, General Émile Fayolle, and the BEF's General Henry Rawlinson—recognized that they now were engaged in a war of attrition, or a war of *materiel*, a concept that had not yet taken root with those in overall command of the armies.

Italy entered the war in May 1915 on the side of the Allies, presenting a significant challenge to Austria's campaign plan for the rest of the war and ultimately causing a large proportion of Austria's troops to be shifted from the eastern and southern theaters of operations to the Italian front.

On the Eastern Front, Germany continued a string of victories in desperate battles against Russia. Joined by a new ally, Bulgaria, who entered the war in October, the Germans focused their offensive efforts against Serbia and Montenegro, overrunning them rapidly.

As the Allies began to prepare their offensives for 1916, they did so without the BEF's Sir John French. In the aftermath of the British attacks, General Sir Douglas Haig, commanding the BEF's First Army, used his political clout with the British king and cabinet to ensure that the blame for the failure at Loos would fall squarely on French. This made room for Haig's advancement to overall command of the British forces on the Continent.

After a year of fighting, neither side had made any significant gains on the Western Front. Over the year, with the losses they suffered, the BEF transformed from the professional army of yore to a raw fighting force that still required the seasoning of battle to become effective. The French, while having failed to push the Germans off their soil, remained as stalwart as ever, having lost none of their fighting will or determination. For the Germans, they had staved off the Allied attacks on the Western Front, and largely maintained the positions they held at the end of 1914.

On the Eastern Front, the Russian Army, while having suffered horrendous defeat at Gorlice-Tarnów, still remained a threat. The Kaiser had not allowed Falkenhayn to negotiate a separate peace with the Russians, and Russia's sheer mass stood in the way of any German hope of knocking that enemy out of the war militarily. If there was one significant change that 1915 brought about, it was the realization among the general staffs that the war would last much longer than anyone had anticipated at the beginning of the year.

The Dardanelles and Gallipoli Landings

The euphoria of enlistment in 1914 is captured in this poster. Few men knew what the Great War had in store for them.

Turkey lagged significantly in every area of modernization. While their allies experimented with the tank, Turkish forces relied on armored cars like this one.

By the end of 1914, the Allied leadership recognized that the Western Front had become a

stalemate. In addition, Turkey's entrance into the war threatened Russia in the Caucuses and British interests in the Middle East. While Turkey's forays into Egypt caused the British little harm, they did force the Allies to guard their strategic assets in the area, depriving other theaters of men and materiel. However, Turkey's attack into the Caucuses proved much more disconcerting to Russia, who now had to defend against threats from both the west and the south. Therefore, in an effort to provide Russia some relief, the Allies planned an offensive in the Dardanelles (a narrow strait in northwestern Turkey connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara). The plan, if successful, would provide Russia with the breathing space it needed, knock Turkey out of the war, and, in doing so, allow Russia's Black Sea fleet access to the Mediterranean. In addition, the Allies hoped that an attack on Turkey might embolden the Greeks and Bulgarians to join the war on their side.

The initial plan called for a naval attack into the Dardanelles which would not only knock out the Turkish fortifications on either side of the straits but would also engage the German battle cruiser *Goeben*. The *Goeben* had eluded British pursuit earlier in the war and now spent its time, when not resting at anchor in Istanbul, raiding Russian Black Sea ports. Success hinged on knocking out fortifications along the "Narrows," a section of the strait between the fortified town of Kilid Bahr on the Gallipoli peninsula and the seaport of Chanak Kale in Asia Minor. If achieved it would open up the way to the Sea of Marmara and Istanbul.

The initial attempt to force the straits started on February 19 with a naval bombardment on Kum Kale, a town that rested on the southernmost tip of the Asiatic side of the straits. A lack of planning combined with an underestimation of Turkish troops and their military competence led to heavy casualties for the party of Royal Marines who attempted to take the fort at Kum Kale.

A scene just before the evacuation of the ANZAC: Australian troops charging near a Turkish trench. When they got there the Turks had flown. The Dardanelles, 1915.

On March 18, the Allies began a more coordinated advance. The force included 16 battleships, their attendant cruisers and destroyers, and a bevy of trawlers acting as minesweepers. Except for the dreadnought-class *Queen Elizabeth* and the battle cruiser *Inflexible*, the force consisted of older-style ships, which General Headquarters deemed largely unusable for other action. While the advance progressed well initially, it soon ran into problems. First the *Bouvet* struck a mine, sinking with all hands. The battleships *Irresistible* and *Ocean* suffered similar fates. By the end of the day, three other ships —*Inflexible, Suffren*, and *Gaulois*—were out of action, while four others suffered heavy damage. Turkish mines and artillery had taken their toll on a third of the attacking fleet.

Four days later, Admiral John de Robeck, Admiral of the Fleet, and General Sir Ian

Hamilton, commander of the military force, met aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* and determined that a naval attack could not succeed without the help of land forces. They decided to use all five divisions of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) to force landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula in order to destroy the Turkish shore batteries that overlooked the Narrows. They identified six landing points: S, V, W, X, Y, and Z, located between the village of Sedd el Bahr and Ari Burnu on the peninsula, and one landing point at Kum Kale on the Asian side of the straits.

Turkish soldiers under German command at the Dardanelles.

A British aid station treating wounded soldiers on the Palestine front.

Turkish soldiers finding shelter from the sun at Gallipoli. Winston Churchill's scheme to relieve pressure on the Western Front by pressing Turkey proved abortive.

The plan called for an initial bombardment from the fleet in order to soften the Turkish defenses. After the bombardment finished the landing parties would row to shore in life rafts. The main contingent of the British 29th Division would land at V, W, and X beaches, while flanking elements would land at S and Y beaches. Once ashore, all four landing parties would consolidate into the main attacking force at Cape Helles, the southern tip of

the peninsula. The ANZAC (Australia New Zealand Army Corp) would land further up the coast on the Aegean side of the peninsula at Z Beach, while the French division would land and attack at Kum Kale.

The fleet began shelling in the early morning of April 25. At Z Beach (later known as ANZAC Cove), the ANZAC, a mile north of their original target, landed largely unopposed but vulnerable to fire from three sides. After they struggled to gain the high ground that surrounded their beach, the terrain (with its multiple crests, gullies, and dead ends) soon splintered the ANZAC forces into independent units. By early afternoon, the Turkish units from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's 19th Division arrived and counterattacked. Atatürk succeeded in retaking parts of the gains made by the ANZAC troops earlier in the day, including some of the strategic high ground.

To the south of ANZAC Cove, the landings at Y Beach faced a similar lack of opposition. By 7:00 a.m., all the troops got to the beach and stormed the surrounding cliffs. By 3:00 p.m. the forces at Y Beach reached their objective on the crests of the cliffs and proceeded to wait for the troops to advance from the south. By 4:00 p.m., rather than greet their comrades, they came under artillery fire followed by a Turkish counterattack. Having left their entrenching tools behind them on the beach, the British had little protection. Only the guns from the ship *Saffron* allowed them to hold their positions. Later that night, the Turks attacked again and continued to attack until daybreak, when they finally retired. The Turkish forces that counterattacked in the night lost 50 percent of their men, while the British lost 30 percent.

At X Beach the landings went off without incident or loss. The landing parties quickly made their way up the slopes and began to capture their objective, Hill 114. Once there, they could see the entire southern peninsula and even had the objectives of W and V beaches within sight. However, they could not take advantage of their situation as the Turks began a counterattack at 8:00 a.m. An hour later, the British reserves began to land at X Beach and were able to repel the Turkish attacks; however, they had neither the initiative nor the energy to push their advantage. Otherwise they could have flanked the Turkish positions that defended the landings at V and W beaches.

A British landing party preparing to land at Kum Kale as part of the Dardanelles expedition.

On the opposite side of the peninsula, at S Beach, British landings began two hours behind schedule yet still faced almost no opposition. Once they drove off what Turkish elements they could find, they secured their positions and remained there, out of action, for the entire day.

A Turkish battery standing ready to fire at Gallipoli.

It was a terrible place to live as the shells would fall through the night. British soldiers pose for the camera in a bombproof shelter in the Dardanelles, 1915.

While the landings at S, X, Y and Z beaches faced little initial opposition, the landings at V and W beaches were sharply contested. At V Beach, the Lancashire Fusiliers came under fire while still 100 yards from shore. Having little alternative, they forced their way forward and gained a foothold on the beach. Of the 950 men that landed that morning, more than 500 became casualties.

At W Beach, the landings took an even more grisly toll. There, after the initial landing forces had rowed to shore, the remainder would disembark from the steamer *River Clyde*, run aground and outfitted with a gangway of barges lashed together, leading to land. Under heavy Turkish machine-gun fire, most of the Dublin Fusiliers landing in rowboats never made it to shore. As the secondary wave of Munster and Hampshire Fusiliers prepared to disembark from the *River Clyde*, they not only witnessed the devastation of the Dublins, but they also had no clear way to the beach, as the slaughtered advance party could not create the gangway of barges. Having little choice, the Munsters began to take matters into their own hands, lashing the barges together themselves while under constant Turkish fire. As at V Beach, and with similar casualties, the attackers soon gained holds on the beaches and began to move toward their objectives in the hills overlooking their landings.

As the first day came to a close, the MEF had established footholds on the beaches and began to disembark the balance of their troops. The landings proved costly. The 30,000 men landed at ANZAC Cove and Cape Helles suffered 4,000 casualties, despite facing only a fraction of a single Turkish division (of 10,000 men) spread out over the entire landing area. Single Turkish platoons of about 50 troops each had defended the landings at W, V and S beaches, while a total of 12 men defended the landings at Y and X beaches. The German commander of the Turkish defense, General Otto Liman von Sanders, had committed only a portion of his force toward the initial defense of the peninsula. However, as the objectives of the landings became clear, he could and would commit many more troops to the peninsula's defense.

At ANZAC Cove, Atatürk continued his attacks until May 4, at which point, realizing that he could not drive the ANZAC troops from their beachhead, he ordered his men to entrench. Although his attacks did not drive the ANZACs off the peninsula, he succeeded in stopping their advance only one and a half miles inland. Had the ANZACs managed to penetrate another mile, they might have looked down the other side of the peninsula and flanked the Turkish forces that were preventing the British 29th division from further advances.

At Cape Helles the British forces, having secured their landings, began to plan their attack toward the village of Krithia. The first attempt to gain Krithia started on April 28, the second on May 6, and a final attempt on May 8. All fell short, even with the benefit of additional reinforcements. The 29th Division, along with the French division brought over from Kum Kale, formed a line that ran from Y Beach to just north of S Beach. There they remained throughout the remainder of the campaign. Similar to the ANZAC troops to their north, the British and French forces reached a stalemate with their Turkish counterparts.

Stalemated at ANZAC Cove and on Cape Helles, on August 7 the MEF attempted a landing at Suvla Bay, north of ANZAC Cove, in an attempt to flank the Turkish defense. However, it fared little better than its predecessors—Turkish forces quickly reacted to the landings and thwarted any advances beyond the initial beachhead.

The Gallipoli campaign came to a close in early January of 1916. General von Sanders by that time had 14 divisions on the Gallipoli Peninsula, the same number as the MEF. The Dardanelles Committee realized further attacks would lead only to more loss of life and no strategic gains. Their evacuation began on December 28, and by January 9 the Turkish defenders looked down onto empty beaches.

The German Fleet Sorties: The Battle of Jutland

In 1914 Britain controlled the seas. The Royal Navy had firmly established their maritime supremacy 50 years earlier at the Battle of Trafalgar. Counting on the Grand Fleet (the main fleet of the Royal Navy) to protect their far-reaching colonial interests and commerce as well as their homeland, the British maintained the largest and most advanced navy in the world. By 1916 the majority of the Grand Fleet sailed in the waters around Britain, particularly along the east coast, having succeeded in eliminating most of their challenges abroad.

The irrepressible Australians at ANZAC: an Aussie soldier brings in a wounded comrade during the Dardanelles campaign.

Although by contrast Germany had a much shorter maritime history, as the 19th century came to a close its maritime policy had begun to evolve. Recognizing that superior navies could easily blockade the German coastline as well as hinder Germany's colonial interests, the Reichstag authorized the construction of the High Seas Fleet. Still, even with a newly minted modern force, the Imperial Navy recognized their inferiority to the British Royal Navy, as well as the inevitability of a British blockade. As such, the High Seas Fleet's directive was to damage the blockade and to wear down the Grand Fleet through a series of small battles.

Prior to the Battle at Jutland, the High Seas Fleet contented itself with naval operations that largely adhered to this directive. At Heligoland in 1914 and Dogger Bank in 1915, they managed to sink blockading vessels and foil the Grand Fleet's counterattacks. However, this strategy, while prudent and effective, did not sit well with the more aggressive German admirals, including Reinhard Scheer, who took command of the High Seas Fleet in January 1916. Scheer wanted to engage the Grand Fleet but realized he needed to find a way to consolidate the weight of the High Seas Fleet against only an isolated portion of the Grand Fleet if he were to stand any chance of success.

Scheer devised a plan where he would use the battle cruisers of Vice Admiral Franz Hipper's scouting group to lure out Vice Admiral David Beatty's battle cruiser squadron. The plan called for Hipper to bombard the English coastline, causing Beatty to react and pursue Hipper first though a U-boat trap and subsequently into the whole of Scheer's battle fleet.

German U-boats began sailing for their positions on May 15. In the early morning of May 31, Hipper's scouting groups left the security of their protected harbor, known as the Jade, followed shortly by the whole of Scheer's fleet.

Unbeknownst to Scheer and the German fleet, the British had received notice not only of Hipper's departure, but also of the U-boats' departure two weeks earlier, thanks to the British Admiralty's code-breaking unit, "Room 40," which had deciphered the German communications. Room 40 had been deciphering German messages since 1914, when they received a code book from the German cruiser *Magdeburg* after she ran aground in Estonia. They had subsequently received two more code books from German vessels, which allowed the Room 40 operators to decrypt almost all German naval communications. For their part, the Germans never suspected that the British had broken their codes, and assumed the British naval responsiveness came as a result of espionage.

As Hipper's fleet sailed northeast, both Beatty and Admiral John Jellicoe (commander of the Grand Fleet) scrambled to deploy their fleets from their respective bases at the Firth of Forth and Scapa Flow. Jellicoe instructed Beatty to sail approximately 250 miles east of the British coast before turning north to meet up with the main battle fleet just outside the entrance to the Skaggerak, the strait bordered by Norway, Sweden, and the Jutland peninsula of Denmark.

Looking into the future, a man seated in his living room prepares to explain his role—or lack thereof—in securing Britain's victory during the war.

Hipper remained largely oblivious to Beatty or Jellicoe's movements. The U-boat screen failed to report the Grand Fleet's movements with any accuracy, for myriad reasons

—among them inclement weather and harassment from a British Royal Navy fully informed of the High Seas Fleet's presence and activity (as a result of Room 40's information).

As Beatty headed east, Hipper continued his northward run. By 2:28 on May 31, the cruisers *Galatea* and *Phaeton*, scouting ahead of Beatty's main fleet, made contact with two German destroyers while investigating a trawler between the two fleets. Upon contact, the two British cruisers opened fire on the smaller German destroyers, who quickly withdrew toward their oncoming cruisers. Hipper's cruisers soon closed in on the *Galatea* and *Phaeton*, forcing them to withdraw and report Hipper's location back to Beatty.

Now in contact with Hipper's squadron, Beatty turned his cruiser squadrons southeast in an attempt to cut Hipper's line of retreat. However, while Beatty's First and Second cruiser squadrons executed the turn southeast, Vice Admiral Sir Hugh Evan-Thomas's 5th Battle Squadron, sailing five miles north of Beatty, failed to see the order to turn southeast and continued on their north-easterly course for another five miles, causing four of the heaviest-armed battleships in the world to arrive late to the opening action.

Hipper, having made contact with Beatty, now continued to bait the trap by running his squadron southeast, as well, and bringing Beatty ever closer to Scheer's main force. At 3:48, with both forces running parallel and separated by 15,000 yards, Hipper opened fire. Hipper's force had the early advantage, as not all of Beatty's cruisers had aligned to the line of battle. Furthermore, Beatty inexplicably held his fire for some minutes as his squadron moved closer to the Germans, negating the advantage of his heavier guns. Weather and time of day favored the German position, making it difficult for Beatty's gunners to sight and find the range on Hipper's ships. After the first seven minutes of battle, German salvos had hit three out of Beatty's six cruisers, while the British had yet to register a hit.

As the running battle continued on its southward course, Beatty's flagship, the *Lion*, had her Q turret gutted and the *Indefatigable* was destroyed completely when her magazine exploded from a hit from the German *Von der Tann*. The *Queen Mary* suffered a similar fate as the *Indefatigable* when shells from the *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* struck her magazine, causing her to literally disintegrate. At this point, Evan-Thomas's battle squadron had caught up to the fray and added their fire to Beatty's, deteriorating Hipper's position. However, Hipper had achieved his goal, as Scheer's main battle squadron began to make contact with the scout ships of Beatty's force.

Upon hearing the news from the *Southhampton* of the presence of Scheer's main battle fleet, Beatty immediately swung his ships 180 degrees and began to make a run to the north, toward Jellicoe's fleet, hoping to lure Scheer's fleet in to a larger engagement.

Pages from the *Illustrated London News*, June 10, 1916, describing the Battle of Jutland.

Over the next hour, as Beatty's cruiser squadron turned and sailed north, Evan-Thomas's squadron took the brunt of firing from Scheer's battleships to the south and Hipper's cruisers to the east. However, the heavier battleships could withstand the incoming fire better than Beatty's lighter cruisers, and therefore managed to keeptheir rear-guard largely intact, with only the *Malaya* suffering any significant damage.

Shortly after 6:00, Rear Admiral Horace Hood's 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron arrived from the northwest and joined the action against Hipper. The addition of Hood's fast-moving cruisers forced Hipper to circle back and join Scheer's main fleet. Distracted by Hood's arrival, Scheer remained unaware of Jellicoe's presence.

At 4:15, as Scheer and Hipper continued their running battle with Beatty, Evan-Thomas, and Hood—a battle in which the Grand Fleet lost the *Invincible* to a salvo that ignited her magazine—Jellicoe swung his ships into a line of battle to the southeast, effectively crossing Scheer's T. At this point Jellicoe could bring on the full weight of the Grand Fleet. After only minutes of firing by only half of Jellicoe's ships, Scheer turned his fleet 180 degrees in nearly perfect unison, effectively reversing course for his entire fleet and extricating it from an almost certain death.

Thirty minutes after making his turn, Scheer turned his fleet back directly toward Jellicoe's line. He did this in part to protect the rear of his fleet from heavy bombardment as it sailed away. However, Scheer did not realize that Jellicoe had not moved swiftly in pursuit and rather had remained to the northwest of Scheer. Therefore, as Scheer sailed toward Jellicoe, Jellicoe once again crossed Scheer's T. This time, Jellicoe's fleet caused even greater damage to Scheer's cruisers, inflicting damage on five of them while taking only one hit in return. Under the heavy fire from Jellicoe's fleet, Scheer again turned his squadron away, but this time with greater difficulty and more confusion. In addition to the turn away, Scheer ordered a torpedo attack as well as an attack by his First Battle Cruiser squadron to delay Jellicoe's pursuit and allow the majority of the fleet to gain time and the

cover of darkness. Led by the *Derfflinger*, the German covering squadron absorbed the full force of 18 British battleships. While they suffered heavily, taking 37 hits—14 on the *Derfflinger* alone—they provided Scheer the time he needed to lay a smokescreen and break contact with the British Fleet.

At 8:35, as the sun set, the Battle of Jutland had largely concluded, at least for the majority of the heavier ships. Destroyers on both sides continued to harass and fire salvos at each other. In the early morning hours, the British lost one more of their battle cruisers, the *Black Prince*, a result of blundering into the German battle lines. Scheer, however, had eluded the British pursuit and limped his fleet back to the safety of the Jade.

When Scheer's fleet had left the Jade 48 hours earlier, it sailed with the objective of isolating and destroying a substantial percentage of the Grand Fleet. While the High Seas Fleet inflicted nearly twice as much damage as it received, it failed in that objective. Within a month of the Battle of Jutland, both sides repaired or replaced their losses, and in the case of the Grand Fleet, grew in strength. After the Battle of Jutland, the High Seas Fleet became a true "fleet in being" only. With the exception of two small sorties, they would not leave the security of the Jade for the rest of the war.

The Bloody Somme

The iconic image of the slaughter of trench warfare owes much to the Battle of the Somme. Waged across a broad front on the Somme river valley, it is most well known for the action in the British sector, where, on the opening day of the battle, July 1, 1916, the British suffered 60,000 casualties. It devolved into a brutal slugfest where gains were measured in mere yards.

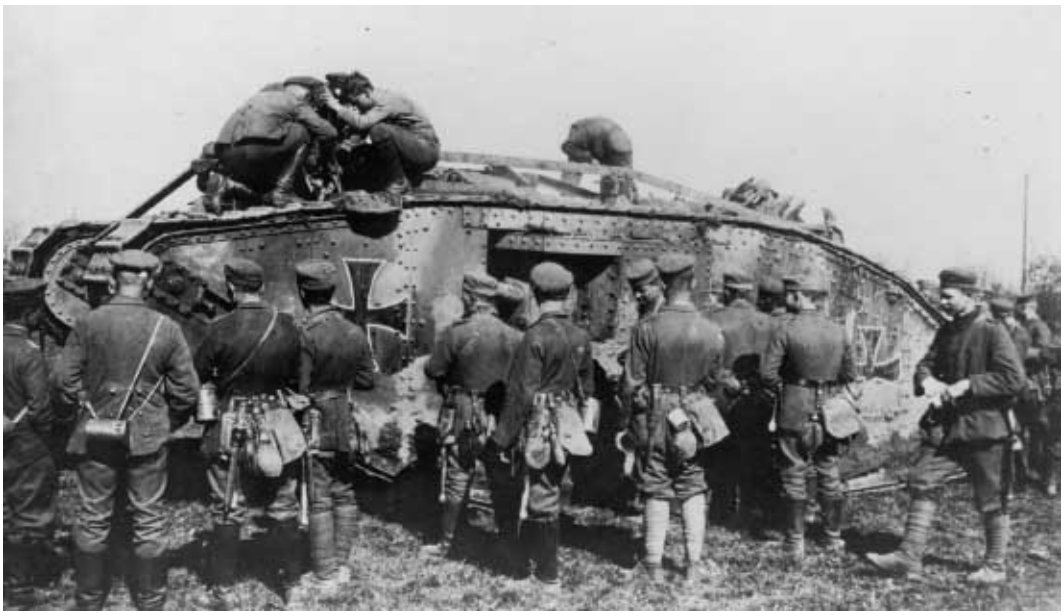
At the end of 1915 an Allied war conference, which included French, British, Russian, and Italian participants, agreed to launch offensives on all fronts to put pressure on the Central Powers. On February 14, generals Joseph Joffre and Douglas Haig (who had taken over command of the BEF from Sir John French) began to plan their offensive. Their plan called for nearly a million men to attack along the Somme beginning on July 1, leading to a breakthrough in the German lines and ultimate victory. However, a week later, the German attack at Verdun caused the generals, in particular Joffre, to rethink not only their plan but also their approach to 1916.

With the Germans mounting a major offensive at Verdun, Joffre had to commit a number of his fresh divisions to its defense. This caused Haig, and even Joffre himself, to doubt how much the French could participate in an offensive along the Somme. As the attacks at Verdun continued, Joffre increasingly called on Haig to mount a British offensive against the Germans at the Somme, aimed at relieving the pressure on the French front at Verdun. By the end of May, despite Haig's wish to give his new troops more time to prepare, Joffre and Haig agreed that the British would take over the majority of the offensive along the Somme and that Haig would attack as agreed on July 1.

Tanks in the Great War

An early British tank. These models were referred to as “landships.”

A French FT-17 tank going over the top as part of an American tank-regiment attack. The Americans used French tanks during the Meuse-Argonne offensive.



German soldiers looking on as a crew prepares a captured and repurposed British tank for action.

American troops going forward in tanks to the battle line in the Argonne Forest, September 1918.

A French Saint-Chamond tank. Its main armament was a 75-mm gun, with four Hotchkiss machine guns as secondary weapons.

Envisioned as a modern-day replacement for cavalry, the tank was intended to overcome the obstacles of modern war: trenches, barbed wire, machine guns, and artillery fire. The early years of the war saw the advent of armored cars—civilian motorcars with scant armor and machine guns, used in scouting roles. The British, reaching back to the designs of Leonardo da Vinci, began research in the Admiralty with the intent of creating a "landship." The British Mark I made its combat debut in 1915, shrouded in secrecy. It was referred to in communications as a "tank" in an attempt to list it as simply a water-storage vessel. The original design was based on the tracked chassis of the American Holt tractor. The low-slung nature of this arrangement led to the vehicle becoming stuck when crossing trenches, and the British subsequently went to a rhomboid shape with the tracks encircling the entire side of the tank.

As the British were perfecting the Mark I and its successors from the Mark II through Mark V, the French developed two tanks: the Schnieder and the Saint-Chamond, both still utilizing the Holt-type suspension. They first were used in an assault on the Chemin des Dames in 1917. The Germans slowly responded with their own tank, the A7V, a cumbersome behemoth with a crew of 18 men. At the same time the British had designed a light tank, the Mark A "Whippet," and the French developed the Renault FT-17. The FT-17 became the standard tank of the American forces. Small and nimble, with a two-man crew, it was a huge leap forward in technology as the first tank with a revolving turret. Previous designs by all forces had fixed guns (either field guns or machine guns), which required the entire tank to be aimed in order to fire.

When the U.S. Tank Corps adopted an insignia, it chose a triangle made of equal sections of yellow, red, and blue, to signify the tank's ability to provide the shock of the cavalry, the firepower of the artillery, and the offensive spirit of the infantry.

The architects of the offensive—Foch, Fayolle, and Rawlinson—knew that directly assaulting the German fortifications in the manner of 1914–1915 would not succeed. The Germans had built a network of trenches impervious to infantry attack alone. For Fayolle, this meant that the artillery had to soften the enemy fortifications, followed closely by coordinated infantry assault and occupation of the trenches. He also planned a slow, plodding attack, where infantry would occupy a section of the line, then artillery would move forward and commence bombardment on the next section of the line before the infantry would again move up to occupy or mop up the recently bombarded line.

For the attacks north of the Somme, Rawlinson prescribed a similar slow, methodic, attritional approach—in effect, "bite and hold." However, Haig, ever the cavalryman, still yearned for a decisive blow that would allow his cavalry access to open plains behind the trench lines after the initial breakthrough. Intelligence Haig received suggested that the Germans did not have significant forces along his front, giving weight to this idea. German strength at the Somme would prove him wrong.

At dawn on July 1, the Allied artillery barrage that had started a week earlier reached its crescendo. At 7:30 a.m. nearly 60,000 Allied soldiers, with another 100,000 behind them, began their attacks on the first German position. By midmorning, the French Sixth Army, attacking astride the Somme, reached most of their day's objectives. Fayolle's tactics, relying heavily on artillery to do most of the work, succeeded in clearing away most of the German front-line defenders, leaving the infantry to wipe out the balance of

the German defense. Only in isolated pockets on both flanks of the French advance, where the artillery had not reached, did the Germans offer any significant resistance.

This poster depicts the uniform and equipage of the post-1915 French soldier. The blue kepi, coat, and red pantaloons of the summer of 1914 are gone; the realities of 20th-century warfare are now better understood. The Adrian helmet protects the wearer from shrapnel while the horizon-blue coat provides a measure of camouflage in the trenches.

Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener of Khartoum. Victor of the Mahdist War, Kitchener was responsible for the reform which created the volunteer army in Britain. His efforts would eventually provide the soldiers who would fight on the Somme. Kitchener would fall victim to a U-boat mine, drowning off the Orkney Islands.

Immediately north of the French Sixth Army, the British 30th Division had a similar easy advance. They benefitted from the French barrage as well as their own coordinated artillery efforts. While they did not employ the methodical approach of their French counterparts, their commander moved them out of their trenches at zero hour so that by the time the artillery bombardment ceased, they fell upon what little German resistance remained before it had a chance to establish a defensive line. They reached their objective by 8:30 a.m. However, the rest of the British did not have nearly as easy a time of it.

With most of the original BEF (the "Old Contemptibles") wiped out of existence, the newer, less experienced soldiers executed their bombardments with neither the weight nor the accuracy of their French counterparts. The subpar artillery performance—added to the inexperienced infantry, a general staff that lacked clear information, and a formidable, professional adversary—spelled disaster for the British. On the majority of the British front, the artillery bombardment destroyed neither the barbed wire in front of the German trenches nor the dugouts in which the Germans sheltered. Therefore, as the infantry advanced into no man's land, German machine-gunners pulled themselves out of their trenches and began their work, to great effect. Those who did get past no man's land and into the first line of the German trenches faced determined counterattacks that their thinned-out and uncoordinated ranks could not overcome. The British general staff, unable to get a clear picture of the happenings on the front, continued to commit troops and reserves for attacks that could not succeed. The British simply could not replicate the methodical and cohesive attacks of the French, who, like the Germans, had an experienced and seasoned corps.

General Erich von Falkenhayn succeeded Helmuth von Moltke as chief of the general staff of the German army. Overly cautious, he attempted to deal with the failure of the Schlieffen Plan through limited offensives. After the failure at Verdun, he was replaced as chief of staff by Paul von Hindenburg.

As the first day came to a close, the British had suffered nearly 20,000 dead and more than 35,000 wounded. Many commands simply ceased to exist, such as the First Newfoundland Battalion, who suffered a 91% casualty rate, including all of their officers. The French, by contrast, counted fewer than 2,000 dead at the end of the first day.

While the British suffered immense casualties on July 1 and failed to achieve the majority of their tactical objectives, the offensive as a whole did have successes. The French attacks astride the Somme broke large sections of the German defense. The Allies, having planned to break the German lines north of the Somme, now had to shift their strategy to take advantage of the German collapse south of the Somme. For the remainder of the year, the bulk of the British and French advances would take place south of Albert, aiming toward Bapaume.

As July 2 dawned, the French artillery began their attacks again. Having captured the first line of German trenches, they now began their work on the second line. Just as in the previous day, heavy artillery barrages led the advance, allowing the French to attack and subsequently hold small chunks of ground. Once they secured the forward position, the artillery advanced, reset, and began bombarding the next target. While pockets of resistance remained, by the end of July 3 the French had broken through German lines on a nearly five-mile-long front.

As the French pushed forward, the British north of the Somme stalled, much to Joffre's frustration. It took them until July 3 to jump-start their offensive, which largely consisted of disjointed and isolated assaults yielding little other than massive British

casualties. For the next two weeks, Haig would continue to commit men and materiel against the German front, preferring to keep constant pressure on the German defenders as opposed to the attack-and-hold strategy of Foch.

By July 14, the British found some success as they pushed toward Bapaume, south of the Albert-Bapaume Road. At Bazentin Ridge, they began to employ attack methods similar to the French. The infantry followed their creeping barrage closely so that by the time the artillery fire moved past the German trenches, the Germans could not effectively prepare for the defense. As a result, the British finally managed to penetrate the second line of German defenses in this sector, although it did cost them an additional 9,000 casualties.

On July 23 the British attacked Pozières with three ANZAC divisions, many of whose members had fought at Gallipoli. While the attack was successful, subsequent attacks on neighboring strongholds, Mouquet Farm in particular, proved costly. By mid-September, when Canadian reinforcements relieved the ANZAC divisions, the ANZACs had suffered nearly 30,000 casualties, and while they held on to Pozières, they did not manage to push the Germans out of Mouquet Farm. For the remainder of August, Haig prevaricated on his final push. August saw the Allies make a number of small-scale attacks aimed at consolidating their lines.

By mid-September, the British finally consolidated their front line and readied themselves for their final offensive on the Somme. Unlike the previous month's attacks, the attacks on September 15 would introduce a new weapon: the tank.

The Battle of Flers-Courcelette saw 13 British divisions make a final push toward the Germans' third line of defenses. At 6:20 a.m. on September 15, after a preliminary bombardment, the British infantry, along with their tanks, attacked. The tanks played a minimal role in the outcome of the battle, although in a few places they did lend valuable support. Of the 50 tanks available to Haig, only 36 made it to the start of the battle, and 11 of those never left it. Of the remaining tanks that did engage, many bogged down in the mud or suffered damage from German artillery. High-explosive bullets used by German snipers, or even simple rifle or machine-gun fire, could incapacitate the crews. At the end of the assault, only six tanks arrived at their intended destination.

By the end of September, the Allies gained hold of Thiepval, the last German stronghold in the British salient along the Albert-Bapaume Road, and in places broke through parts of the German third line. However, as the weather turned, the offensives ground to a halt.

In the end, the Somme took its toll on all participants. While the Allies penetrated as much as seven miles into the German front, they suffered about 620,000 casualties. In defending the front, the Germans suffered 465,000 casualties and had to reduce their offensive at Verdun.

More importantly, the Somme battles demonstrated to Haig and the rest of the British general staff that the techniques espoused by the French—Foch and Fayolle in particular—could yield the necessary results in a war of attrition, which the British now acknowledged they were fighting. For the French, the Somme demonstrated that the British could be counted on to deliver results.

Even after his death in 1916, Lord Kitchener was used to rally the troops. This Canadian recruiting poster invokes the field marshal sentimentally.

A French soldier resting after battle. Propaganda photographs like this one were widely circulated to show the French people the enduring high morale of the French army. In fact, morale was at an all-time low by 1916.

Finally, for the Germans, the Somme cost them their chief of general staff, Erich von Falkenhayn. The German high command replaced him with the duo of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, flush from their victories in the east. Most importantly, the Somme's battle stretched the German defenses to their limits, evidenced not only by the declining morale of the common soldier but also by the new defensive line that Hindenburg and Ludendorff began to construct, 35 miles closer to the German border.

Verdun

As 1915 came to a close, the German army made few advances toward defeating the French and British armies. The failed German offensive at Ypres highlighted to the German chief of staff, Erich von Falkenhayn, that further offensive attempts aimed at a breakthrough on the Allied lines would likely fail and merely add to the growing German casualties. However, while Falkenhayn lacked confidence in achieving a breakthrough along the established lines, he did believe he could still destroy the French army by forcing it into a war of attrition and "bleeding it white." To do this, he focused his plans

around the ancient city of Verdun, a city of national pride and one he knew the French would not relinquish easily.

The terrain around Verdun made it a natural stronghold. Hills surrounded the city and sloped in such a way that defenders could envelop those advancing up the glacis (protective slope) of hills in a withering fire. To add to the defense, 60 forts studded the hills, the most powerful, Douaumont, providing the cornerstone of the city's defense. Each fort could enfilade fire onto the glacises of neighboring forts with twin 75-mm or 155-mm guns, housed in retractable turrets. Machine-gun emplacements, often in blockhouses, supplemented the artillery. Finally, a staked dry moat, barbed wire, and an outer line of trenches (the last a result of the earlier attacks of 1914) completed the defense. However, Joffre, abhorring defensive tactics, had stripped the forts of many of their heavier armaments—something that (fortunately for the French) Falkenhayn remained unaware of.

Falkenhayn planned to attack on both the left and right banks of the Meuse, hoping thus to prevent the defenses on either side of Verdun from supporting each other. In order to deal with the heavy defenses, Falkenhayn assembled the largest artillery assortment of the war: 1,220 pieces aimed along an eight-mile front. Each battery had a specific task, and in consort they could maintain fire on virtually every level of the French lines. In addition, the Germans built *stollen*, underground bunkers in which their storm-troops could hide near the front until their time to attack. Incredibly, Falkenhayn managed to keep the French from becoming alarmed at the buildup in arms in the forests surrounding Verdun, right up until the final days before the Germans commenced their attacks.

Falkenhayn originally planned the attack to commence on February 12, 1916, but inclement weather forced him to postpone the attack until nine days later. This gave the French some additional time to ready themselves for the attack they now realized the Germans planned. The waiting did nothing for the morale of the troops on either side; they remained on edge, not knowing exactly when the battle would begin. On the morning of February 21, the wait ended and the German guns began their barrage. Ten hours later, the German infantry advanced and, in the process, introduced the world to their newest weapon, the flame-thrower.

By February 22, while the Germans had advanced as much as three miles into the French defenses, the bombardment had a lesser impact than expected, and many pockets of stubborn French resistance remained. At Bois de Couers, on the left bank, the German attack ran into the stalwart Colonel Émile Driant, who, with his battalion of *chasseurs à pied*, managed to hold up the German advance for two days. Digging themselves out of the trenches that had caved in on them during the shelling, the French launched repeated counterattacks at the advancing Germans. Not until the end of February 22 did the remnants of the *chasseurs*, having lost their colonel, fall back to the rest of the French lines. Similar scenarios played out across the entire front and even though the Germans managed to secure Bois de Caures, Bois de Wavrille, Boise de l'Herbedois, and Bois des Fosses, along with the towns of Samgenoux and Brabant, by the end of the 23rd, the fierce French counterattacks caused the attackers to move forward with prudence and not take full advantage of the crumbling French defenses.

French soldiers retaking Fort Vaux during the Verdun campaign. Verdun became synonymous with the futility of total war.

Russian prisoners in Galicia. On the Eastern Front, 3.3 million Russians were captured by Germany or its allies.

On February 24, Fort Douaumont fell. It fell not as a consequence of the heavy barrages or a concerted infantry attack, but as a consequence of a small band of determined Brandenburgers who took advantage of the fact that Joffre had stripped the fort, prior to the attack, of almost all its infantry contingent. As a result, the machine guns housed in the blockhouses that protected the fort's moat remained silent as the first handful of Brandenburgers tentatively slipped into the moat and subsequently into the

heart of the fort itself. By the end of the day, the Germans captured the fort's defenders without firing a single shot.

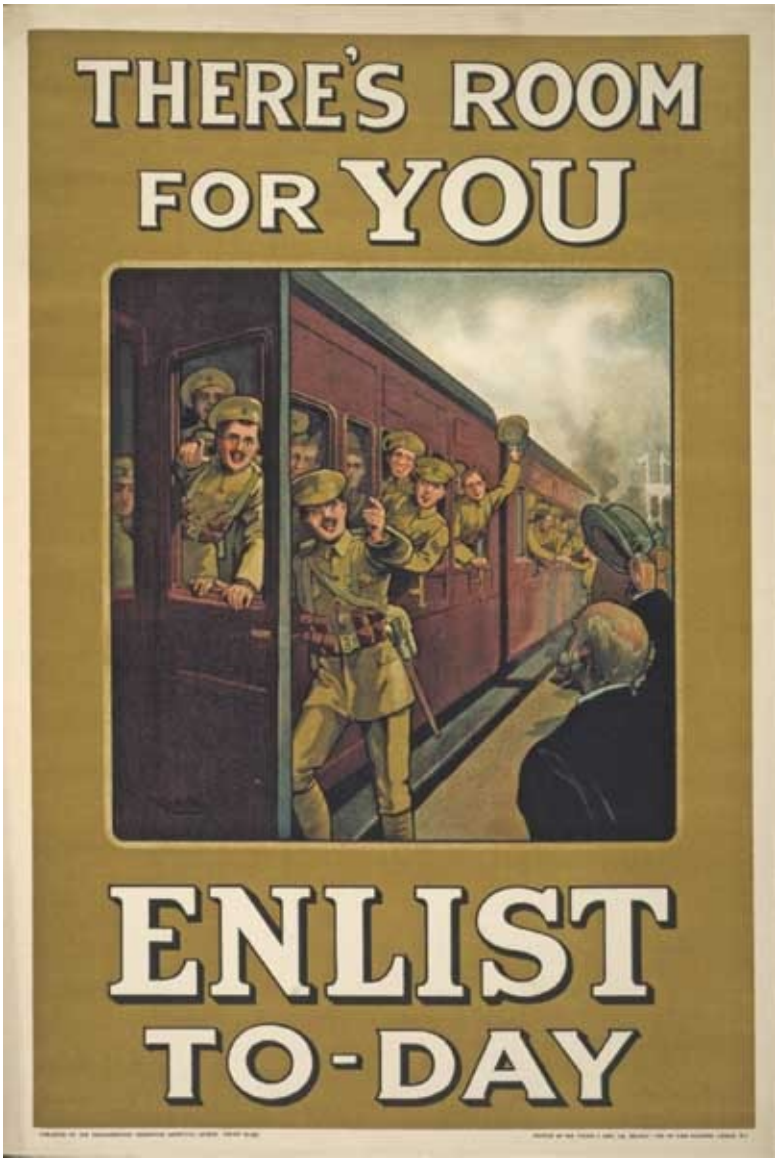
On the evening of the 24th, as news of the fall of Douaumont began to filter into French headquarters, the severity of the situation they faced at Verdun began to sink in. Joffre dispatched his chief of staff, Castelnau, to appraise the situation and take the necessary action. Castelnau, who had commanded the French Second Army at the Marne, decided that while the French faced a precarious situation, Verdun could hold. He called upon General Philippe Pétain to take over command of the forces at Verdun. On his arrival at the front, Pétain called the generals and delivered the simple message: "I have taken over command. Tell your troops. Hold fast. I have confidence in you." And hold they did.

Pétain moved quickly to shore up the defenses by coordinating the artillery that had heretofore fired piecemeal and largely without effect. He himself took command of the artillery, which now began to rain a constant deluge of shells onto the German troops as they made their advances. He also moved to maintain and improve the supply line between Bar-le-Duc and Verdun. For this, Pétain relied upon Major Richard, who had already managed to requisition 3,500 trucks to keep supplies moving. The French called this supply line the *Voie Sacrée* (the "Sacred Way") and it became the sole lifeline for the troops at Verdun. Richard managed to keep it open, maintained, and moving for the duration of the battle—a remarkable feat considering nearly two-thirds of the French army would use the supply line on their way to and from Verdun.

With Pétain and his redoubtable XX "Iron" Corps added to the defense, the German offensive began to sputter and stall. While they had moved to within four miles of Verdun and their bombardment increased, the Germans could advance no further. By the end of February, as German casualties mounted, Falkenhayn began to shift his focus to the west bank of the Meuse, in an effort to widen the front and get behind the main fortifications, an area that he thought the French had not fortified heavily.

On March 6, the Germans began their attack on Mort Homme and Côte 314. The initial attacks flowed easily toward their targets and brushed aside the defenders. However, French counterattacks, along with artillery hidden behind the slopes of the hills, took their toll on the Germans and the hills remained in French hands. Simultaneously the Germans east of the Meuse attacked toward Fort Vaux. The Germans found no more success here than they had west of the Meuse, and while the village of Vaux would change hands 13 times in the month of March alone, the fort remained in French hands. The Germans, however, did not relent.

A downed German biplane. Although the airplane was still in its infancy, the modern roles for air warfare were all being tested. This included air-to-air combat, aerial reconnaissance, bombing, and air-to-ground combat.



Happy soldiers embark on trains for the front, reminding those behind that they too can do their part.

In April German assaults continued, this time across the entire front. Infantry on both

sides suffered under the constant artillery barrages, with the French, whose line of trenches barely reached three feet deep, suffering the most. It took the Germans until the middle of May to capture Mort Homme and Côte 314. Fort Vaux, the other objective of the German advance, held until the middle of June. The German advance continued to inch its way forward toward Verdun, leaving in its wake a desolate, pock-marked landscape resembling the surface of the moon.

As the battle raged on the ground, pilots fought another battle in the skies. Just as Falkenhayn had amassed an unprecedented number of artillery to the front, he did the same with his aerial support: 168 planes, 14 balloons, and 4 zeppelins. Once they arrived, however, the French *Cigognes* ("Storks," as the combat planes became known) quickly wrested the advantage away from the Germans, despite the presence of the German ace Oswald Boelcke and his "Flying Circus." French dominance in the air dramatically improved their artillery fire as they could better pinpoint German positions. The presence of the *Cigognes* gave the troops on the ground a desperately needed boost of morale as well. In addition, the air war over Verdun saw the introduction of the Escadrille Lafayette, a squadron comprised predominantly of Americans flying under French colors. While certainly adding to French air superiority, their greatest contribution was the rise in American sympathy for France, as stories of their exploits reached the United States.

Back on the ground, Joffre and Castelnau, disturbed by the ever-increasing German gains toward Verdun as well as the amount of reserves pulled into its defense, replaced Pétain with rising star General Robert Nivelle, who acted more in accordance with Joffre's wishes. Joffre never favored Pétain's defensive "bend but don't break" approach to Verdun's defense and while Pétain's popularity as the savior of Verdun prevented Joffre from sacking him entirely, the ascendance of General Nivelle allowed Joffre to reassign Pétain to commander of Army Group Center.

Unlike Pétain, who rotated troops in and out of the front with frequency, Nivelle, in part as a result of receiving ever fewer reinforcements from the Western Front, left the troops in the front lines for much longer periods of time. As May wore on, the Germans continued their push and by the first week of June, the French had barely a battalion in reserve.

Before the Germans could make their decisive push, troubles developed on their eastern front. The entire Austro-German line lay vulnerable after the Russian general Aleksei Brusilov smashed the Austrian army at Galicia during its retreat from the failed offensive against Italy. This forced Falkenhayn to suspend the offensive against Verdun and shuttle two corps to the Eastern Front to solidify its defense.

The lost time proved valuable for the French at Verdun, as it gave them the respite they badly needed. While the Germans would make two more pushes toward Fort Souville on June 23 and again on July 11, the Allies now began their attack on the German positions at the Somme, which required Falkenhayn to shuttle more units to the defense of that sector. The Germans would no longer seek the offensive at Verdun. For the rest of the year, their activities consisted of fending off French efforts to gain back lost ground.

In all, the Battle of Verdun cost the French and the Germans more than half a million men each, the vast majority of these casualties from the 20 million artillery rounds each

side fired. While Falkenhayn may have made France "bleed white" in the Battle of Verdun, his own army had bled just as much.

The Brusilov Offensive

By the summer of 1916, the Eastern Front's lines had stabilized. Similar to the Western Front, most attacks did not succeed in their ultimate objective of breaking through the enemy's line. The line ran almost directly north-and-south from Riga down to the Carpathian Mountains. While Russia's forces greatly outnumbered the German and Austrian forces, Russian lack of leadership combined with poor logistics prevented them from gaining any advantage on their front, disastrously highlighted in the last Russian offensive at Lake Naroch.

At Lake Naroch, 75,000 Germans managed to defeat a Russian attack consisting of more than four times that number of men. Further, not only did the Russians hold a superiority of infantry, but they also held a significant superiority of artillery and munitions (the latter something Russian commanders constantly complained about having a shortage of). However, as the battle started in early March (a time of year most inhospitable to attacking forces), the artillery barrage had almost no impact on the German defenses. As the infantry moved to follow up the barrage, they ran into fully intact German defenses. The resulting 100,000 Russian casualties cost the Germans only 20,000 in return.

In April, General Mikhail Alexeyev called his staff to discuss a Russian assault in the Eastern Front aimed at relieving some of the pressure at Verdun. Even with a million-man superiority across their front, all but one of the Russian generals demurred. Only General Brusilov, who also had the smallest advantage over the defending forces, agreed to attack and requested no additional reinforcements as a condition of doing so.

Brusilov, similar to many of the commanders of the Great War, recognized that a successful attack required both ample preparation and the element of surprise. As of yet, none had succeeded in combining these two seemingly mutually exclusive elements, and on the Russian side they had rarely achieved either of these elements alone.

First, Brusilov planned to move his reserves up as close to the front lines as possible, concealing them in dugouts similar to the German *stollen* used at Verdun. This would allow him to have his reserves ready as soon as any breakthrough occurred along the front. Second, he planned his attack along a relatively large front (300 miles across), thereby concealing where he intended to concentrate the weight of his attack. Third, the artillery had to cooperate closely with the infantry. To achieve this, Brusilov placed much of his artillery in line and in the trenches with his infantry. Finally, and maybe most importantly, he had good intelligence reports, a result of his aerial reconnaissance. In all, the magnitude of Brusilov's preparations and the secrecy with which he carried them out were unprecedented on the Eastern Front, and likely only rivaled by Falkenhayn's preparations for the Verdun offensive.

On June 4, Brusilov's four armies, the Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Eleventh, commenced their artillery attack. Infantry troops, often within 50 yards of the Austrian

lines, attacked immediately the next day. The effectiveness of the artillery, coupled with the speed with which the infantry fell upon the Austrian defenses, threw the majority of the Austrian lines into retreat. Within a week of opening their attack, the Russian Eighth Army, on the right flank of the Russian front, captured the town of Lutsk. The Austrian Fourth Army, defending this sector, literally ceased to exist.

On the Russian left flank, the Russian Ninth Army had similar success. By mid-June, the Austrian Seventh Army on its front had largely disintegrated. In most places the whole of Brusilov's offensive advanced nearly 70 miles into the Austrian lines.

However, for all its initial success, Brusilov's offensive ran out of steam. Lack of initiative from General Alexei Evert, commanding the Russian armies north of Brusilov, meant the advancing Eighth Army's flank remained exposed to a German counterattack from the north. Furthermore, lack of subsequent attacks from Evert and General Alexei Kuropatkin to his north allowed Hindenburg and Ludendorff to send reinforcements south. In addition, Austrian units returning from the Italian campaign, combined with German reinforcements stripped from Verdun, further shored up the German line. Finally, logistical difficulties associated with the lengthening Russian supply lines hampered the effectiveness of subsequent attacks in July and August.

Austrian staff officers studying maps on the Eastern Front.

Britain drew extensively on its colonies for troops. Here a group of Sikhs form up in France for inspection.

French policemen, soldiers, and civilians standing outside the Ancien Séminaire Saint-Sulpice, which housed the Secours de Guerre, the French relief agency for war victims. They ask their countrymen to do their part.

The attack marked the high point of the war for the Russian army. While they lost more than 500,000 men, they inflicted well over a million casualties on the Austrians, effectively knocking them out of the war. After Brusilov's offensive, the Austrian army would largely fall under the command of the Germans and no longer fight as an independent unit. The Russian offensive also achieved its primary goal of taking pressure off the French at Verdun. Finally, Brusilov's victory brought Romania into the war on the side of the Allies. However, this may have hurt the Allied cause as much as it helped, as Romania required Russian reinforcements to assist with efforts against Bulgaria and Austria.

1916: A Year of Horrendous Losses

With the war at its midpoint, the large-scale battles of Verdun, the Somme, and Brusilov's Offensive defined 1916. Both sides realized that a decisive breakthrough remained out of reach given the limitations imposed on the attackers, the strengths of the defenders' fortifications, and the prevailing strategies of most of the generals. Only Brusilov had managed to overcome the obstacles facing the attackers, and the Germans, French, and British would subsequently incorporate his strategies. However, for all of Brusilov's success, he could not strike a decisive blow. It became clear to the generals that they were engaged in a war of attrition, as neither side could break the other on the battlefield alone.

For Germany, 1916 also spelled the end of Erich von Falkenhayn. The charismatic duo of Hindenburg and Ludendorff leveraged their victories on the Eastern Front, and Falkenhayn's failure at Verdun, to take overall command of the German army. The Kaiser relegated Falkenhayn to command of the German Ninth Army in Transylvania, where he would capture the Romanian capital of Bucharest in less than four months and give the Central Powers access to natural resources which would serve to prolong the war.

On the seas, the Battle of Jutland ensured that the German navy no longer presented a threat and would not leave their harbor in any force for the duration of the war. While Germany continued its U-boat attacks, the fleet's inactivity would have disastrous consequences for the German navy, and for Germany in general, before the war's close.

Finally, on the Western Front, the French held Verdun albeit at great cost. They lost more than 500,000 men, and the perceived indifference by the general staff to these losses would have a significant impact in the latter years of the war. As for the British, they bloodied the raw recruits of "Kitchener's Army" at the Somme. The seasoning of the BEF coupled with the French losses at Verdun meant the British would shoulder a much greater burden over the next two years.

Canadian troops going over the top during training near Saint-Pol, France, October 1916.

Chronology of Events

1914

(continued)

September 5–10	First Battle of the Marne
September 12–18	First Battle of Aisne
September 22–26	First Battle of Picardy
September 22	First British air raid on Germany
October 10	Antwerp, Belgium, surrenders to Germany
October 11–November 30	Battle of Flanders
October 15–23	First Battle of Warsaw
October 27	British battleship HMS *Audacious* is sunk by naval mines
October 19–November 12	First Battle of Ypres
November 1	Turkey enters the war against the Allies
November 2	Russia and Serbia declare war on Turkey
November 5	Britain and France declare war on Turkey
November 7	Turkey declares war on Belgium

1915

January 24	Naval battle of Dogger Bank off Britain's coast
February 4	German U-boat warfare begins off Britain's coast
March 18	Battle of Dardanelles Narrows
April 22–May 13	Second Battle of Ypres
April 25	British Expeditionary Force lands at Gallipoli

April 26	Italy joins the Allies in a secret pact
May 1	First U.S. merchant ship is torpedoed by Germany off Sicily
May 7	German U-boat sinks the British liner RMS *Lusitania*
May 16–June 30	First Battle of Artois
May 23	Italy declares war on Austria
August 6	British Expeditionary Force makes its second attempt to land at Gallipoli
August 20	Italy declares war on Turkey
September 25–October 8	Battle of Loos; Second Battle of Artois
October 6	Bulgaria declares war on Serbia; Austro-German troops invade Serbia
October 9	Austrian forces enter Belgrade, Serbia
October 16	Bulgaria invades Serbia; France declares war against Bulgaria
October 19	Russia and Italy declare war on Bulgaria
December 8–January 9, 1916	Allies evacuate Gallipoli

1916

February 21–December 18	Battle of Verdun
May 15	Beginning of Austrian Trentino Offensive
May 31–June 1	Battle of Jutland
July 1–November 18	Battle of the Somme
August 28	Italy declares war on Germany
September 23	Hindenburg Line of trenches begins on the Western Front

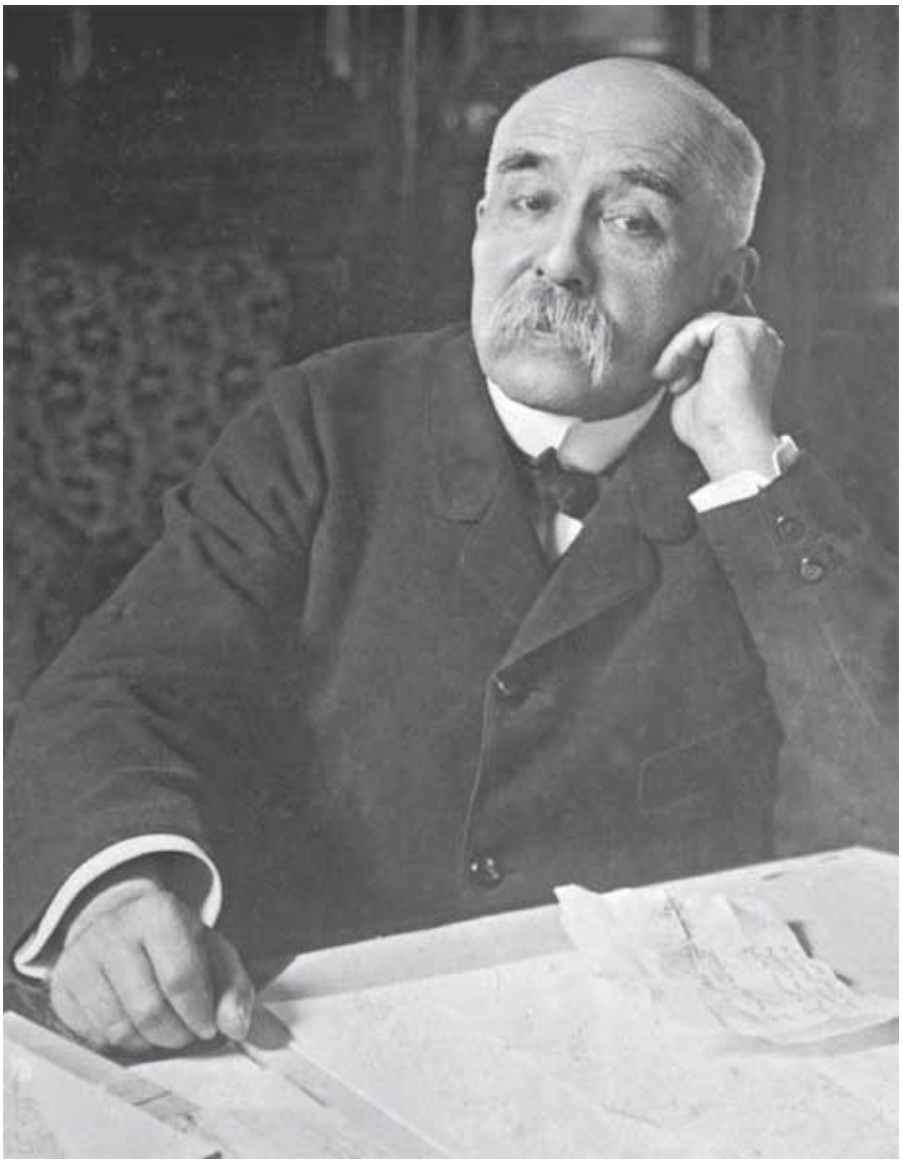
October 20	Italy declares war on Bulgaria
October 21	Emperor Franz Josef of Austria dies; grandnephew Karl Franz Josef becomes Emperor Karl I
November 6	Germany takes Bucharest, Romania
November 15	French recapture Vacherville, Poivre Hill, Louvemont, and Les Chambiettes

1917

February 1	Germany declares unrestricted submarine warfare
March 11	British forces seize Baghdad
March 12–15	First Russian Revolution
March 15	Tsar Nicholas II of Russia abdicates
March 16	Germany retreats behind the Hindenburg Line
March 26	First Battle of Gaza
April 6	The United States declares war on Germany

3 The Yanks Are Coming

The winter of 1916–1917 was one of the coldest in a generation, with severe low temperatures creating frost-bound armies in frozen mud and critical shortages of food and fuel. Russia and Germany felt the severity hardest; in Germany it was known as the *Turnip Winter* because of the food shortages. It would be a year of desperate stress and confusion, forcing France and Russia to the breaking point. The deteriorating supply situation caused Germany to gamble its strategic hand in a series of risky military and diplomatic moves. Germany hoped to break the stifling Allied blockade and force a decisive land victory on the Western Front. The situation of 1917 also compelled the British government to play a dangerous diplomatic game.



Georges Benjamin Clemenceau served as the prime minister of France from 1917 to 1920. *Le Tigre*—The Tiger—focused his leadership on the final defeat of Germany.

David Lloyd George, First Earl Lloyd-George, was prime minister of the United Kingdom and headed a wartime coalition government between 1916 and 1922. Lloyd George proved far more capable than his predecessor, Herbert Henry Asquith.

A French assault on German positions. Champagne, France, 1917.

Europe in Turmoil

In the first week of January 1917 the foundation was laid for two of the most dramatic events of the Great War. In Russia the military and domestic situation had gone badly. Talk of a revolution shot through the ranks of the Russian imperial army, with a coup openly debated in a meeting of the general staff and members of the Russian Duma, though without action or resolution. In Germany, weighing the sufferings of the home front, the German High Command, led by General Erich Ludendorff, in a bid to hobble the British flow of supplies, urged the Kaiser to resume a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. The submarine would loosen the grip of the blockade imposed by the British Royal Navy. Even the German soldier at the front hinged his hope on the submarine effort.

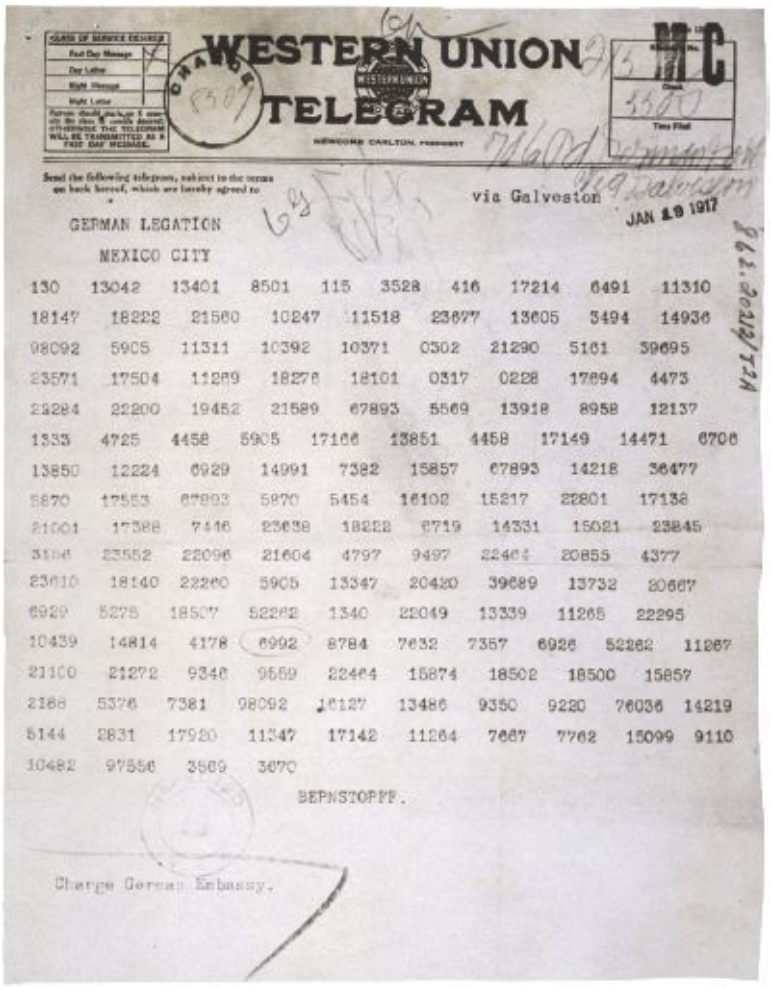
The Zimmermann Telegram

German state secretary for foreign affairs Arthur Zimmermann was directed to draft a secret communiqué to the German imperial envoy in Mexico. The one-page note outlined a bold and dangerous plan, instructing the German diplomatic mission in Mexico to propose a mobilization alliance between Germany, Mexico, and Japan. This proposed alliance would bring Mexico and Japan into the war in order to attack the United States in the event that the German submarine policy compelled America to enter the war on the Allied side. The Mexican government was offered assistance and the promise of regained territory of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico.

The blockade imposed by the Allies on Germany severely hampered electronic communication via telegraph between Germany and the outside world. At the onset of war, the British immediately severed Germany's transatlantic cable. This forced the Germans to route all international telegrams either through neutral countries or via cables controlled by the Allies. On January 17, 1917, the Zimmermann note was sent by two cable routes. The first route transmitted the coded message over Swedish cables to the German ambassador in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in order to forward it to the German embassy in Washington, D.C., which would then forward it to the German embassy in Mexico.

Crown Prince of Prussia and of the German Empire, Friedrich Wilhelm Victor Augustus Ernest. Despite being raised in military circles, the Crown Prince had no real war experience when he was named commander of the Fifth Army in August 1914.

General Alexander von Kluck. As commander of the German First Army, Kluck's lack of coordination with Bülow's Second Army and his failure to maintain an effective offensive line was a primary contribution to the failure of the Schlieffen Plan.



WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

via Galveston

JAN 19 1917

GERMAN LEGATION

MEXICO CITY

130 13042 13401 8501 115 3528 416 17214 6491 11310
18147 18222 21560 10247 11518 23677 13605 3494 14936
98092 5905 11311 10392 10371 0302 21290 5161 39695
23571 17504 11269 18276 18101 0317 0228 17694 4473
23284 22200 19452 21589 67893 5569 13918 8958 12137
1333 4725 4458 5905 17166 13851 4458 17149 14471 6706
13850 12224 6929 14991 7382 15857 67893 14218 36477
5870 17553 67893 5870 5454 16102 15217 22801 17138
21001 17388 7446 23638 18222 6719 14331 15021 23845
3184 23552 22096 21604 4797 9497 22464 20855 4377
23610 18140 22260 5905 13347 20420 39689 13732 20667
6929 5275 18507 52262 1340 22049 13339 11265 22295
10439 14814 4178 6992 8784 7632 7357 6926 52262 11267
21100 21272 9346 9559 22464 15874 18502 18500 15857
2188 5376 7381 98092 16127 13486 9350 9220 76036 14219
5144 2831 17920 11347 17142 11264 7667 7762 13099 9110
10482 97556 3569 3070

BEPNSTORFF.

Charge German Embassy.

The Zimmermann Telegram—one of the German miscalculations that brought the United States into the war.

The second route boldly used the American embassy in Berlin to deliver the message to the State Department in Washington, which in turn would pass it to the German embassy. That message passed over Dutch cables via London to the United States. President Woodrow Wilson's avowedly neutral administration had promised to deliver German diplomatic messages to the world by this method. This placed the Wilson administration in the embarrassing position of hand-delivering a threat against the United States to potential belligerents.

As the note was sent through these two routes, it was intercepted by a British intelligence service organization known as Room 40. (The name was derived from the room the team occupied in the old British Admiralty Buildings.) Unknown to anyone outside of this organization, Room 40 had tapped the cable routes and could "read" German telegraph traffic. The message was in a code, or cipher, which used number groups in substitution for words. The Room 40 team recognized the sequence as German code 0075, which the British team had already been "breaking," or translating. Admiral William Reginald Hall, director of British Naval Intelligence, kept the knowledge of this intercepted note secret within Room 40 until the full note was translated and its intention understood.

On February 3, 1917, the German government announced the resumption of a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare on commercial shipping heading to Europe. In protest, the United States promptly severed diplomatic ties with Germany. On February 5, Admiral Hall notified the British Foreign Office of the Zimmerman telegram's contents. The note

was recognized as having enormous value to the British strategic goal of turning American public opinion against Germany. But how to leak the note's existence without disclosing the role of Room 40—and the fact that British intelligence was actively reading both German and American diplomatic traffic—posed a great problem for the British government.

In the month of February alone, German submarine activity sunk 106 British flagged merchant vessels, up from 49 the previous month. The situation had become desperate. The submarine campaign would force the British to reveal the telegram's damaging contents to the government of the United States, and hopefully it would reach the American people in time to change the course of the war.

Admiral Hall developed a plan of intrigue that would present the American authorities with the contents of the telegram and preserve the secret of the work conducted by Room 40. Hall obtained a copy of the coded message from the Mexico City telegraph office. This would provide the cover story on how the information was obtained. The code used to transmit the note from the German embassy in Washington to Mexico City was an older German code number that had already been broken. On February 22 the contents of the Zimmermann telegram were disclosed to Walter Page, American ambassador to Great Britain. Page was outraged by the note and accepted how it was obtained via the Mexican telegraph office. He was asked that the British government not be named as the source.

Two days later, on February 24, Ambassador Page telegraphed the contents of the Zimmermann note to President Wilson. On February 27 the note was given to the Associated Press and it hit the American newspapers. The effect was electric, but it would take over a month for the United States to be moved to a formal declaration of war and more than four months for American troops to begin to arrive in France. For Germany, it would be a race to a position of advantage before the American army arrived.

The Western Front in 1917

On the Western Front, General Sir Douglas Haig, commander of the British Expeditionary Force in France, greeted January 1, 1917, with a promotion to field marshal and a note of congratulations from King George V of Great Britain. The note read: "I hope you will look upon this as a New Year's gift from myself and the country." The faith of the king expressed toward Haig may seem odd viewed against the heavy losses of the previous year. Field Marshal Haig has often been maligned in history due to the high casualty rate suffered by the BEF during the Battle of the Somme, but recent scholarship has begun to place him in a broader context of the pressures of coalition warfare and the performance of the other senior commanders of the Allies and the Central Powers, which also suffered heavy losses through large frontal assaults.

The king knew that the Somme was not a campaign that Haig wanted to fight at that time, but that the BEF was called upon to alleviate the enormous pressure placed on the French army at Verdun. Haig believed that the British battalions needed much more training and disapproved of the overall plan forced by diplomatic pressures from the French. On the Western Front, the French enjoyed the senior position within the coalition

and the BEF's strategic goals often fell to that of support to overall French planning.

Fresh troops from a Yorkshire regiment moving up to an advanced position in France at dusk.

American troops operating a French "37" in a firing position on a parapet in a second-line trench. The gun had a maximum range of a mile and a half, was more accurate than a rifle, and was capable of firing 28 rounds per minute.

Against the harsh winter of 1917, Haig wanted to maintain an offensive spirit and retrain the BEF in new methods. Following the events on the Somme and at Verdun, both sides began to reevaluate the tactics employed. According to British army captain F.C. Hitchcock, who served with the 2nd Battalion, the Leinster Regiment, changes in the

training program for BEF forces in France were already evolving 30 days after the opening of the Somme offensive, incorporating lessons learned from July 1. From January to April of 1917 both the Germans and the BEF would publish new doctrine that would reshape defense and attack in their armies. After the Somme, the BEF immediately began to redraft how to advance across no man's land. The long-duration artillery bombardment followed by massed infantry wave attacks of the previous summer gave way to a short-duration bombardment that crept forward, followed closely by advancing infantry compacted on a shorter front, with limited objectives.

This miniaturized the battle, and pushed down tactical control and decision-making to the junior leaders in the action. Maps, wrist watches, and revolvers were for the first time widely distributed down to the noncommissioned officer level, and raiding parties locally planned and rehearsed their roles. Thus, the "set-piece" attack would be born out of both tactical and strategic need, which allowed for offensive action without the risk of army-wide disaster. Trying out these tactics in January of 1917, the BEF engaged upon a local winter campaign up the Beaucort Valley to straighten out a section of the Somme front. At the same time the Loos sector witnessed raids from both sides as an active Bavarian *Sturmtruppen* (storm troop) unit, referred to as the "Traveling Circus," raided up and down the line, capturing British troops in small groups. The British effort in this area was focused on a section known as The Triangle, and involved advanced preparation by the assaulting units over a full-scale mock-up of the targeted trench area taken from aerial photography, which noted obstacles, trench junctions, and strong points. This raid was planned by junior officers and NCOs and carried out after seven days of specialized training. The British raiding party held the line for 45 minutes and inflicted 20 casualties and captured eight Germans. It was considered a great success.

On the 17th of January, an 860-man raiding party from the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), assigned to the BEF in front of Vimy, carried off a raid against the German line at Calonne with textbook precision. This raid broke down each aspect of the German defensive network of barbed-wire belts, interlocking machine-gun and trench-mortar sites, and supporting dugouts by developing specific plans with specialists assigned for dealing with each type of threat. The flanks of this raid would be screened by mobile machine-gun teams and side curtains of artillery fire. All of these local actions were rehearsed over mock-up German trenches recreated from aerial photographs and information gathered from patrols.

One source that the Canadians took as their inspiration for this type of large-scale raid derived from counter-operations carried off by the French during the end of the Verdun battle. Over the winter of 1916–1917, the French began a series of staff lectures relating lessons learned from their experience at Verdun. These lectures highlighted the French counterattacks that retook the Verdun positions of Douaumont and Vaux. The French used a heavy creeping barrage of large-caliber artillery followed closely by assaulting infantry. These attacks were so successful, especially at Fort Douaumont, that they propelled their architect, General Robert Nivelle, to replace General Joseph Joffre as commander in chief of the French Army. The localized tactics used to retake these positions were noted by Canadian Army staff officers in attendance of the lectures and became the bases for CEF raiding techniques, which they raised to high effect in 1917, becoming the leading practitioners of the large-scale raid on the Western Front. The concept was to reduce the

German position by small bites in between the larger operations, keeping constant pressure on the German line. By February the new doctrine would be published across the British Army and remain in effect throughout 1917.

A New German Doctrine

Forced by the realities of war production and reduced manpower, the Germans also modified their overall doctrine on land, sea, and the home front. During the period of front-line stabilization in the West (1915–1916), German doctrine held to a static defense of a massive front and a secondary trench-line system to be held or retaken at all costs. The new doctrine incorporated lessons learned withstanding the attacks on the Somme and their own failed strategy at Verdun. For the moment, Germany had to abandon ideas of advance in the West and take a strategic pause and wait for the submarine offensive to take effect. As the early advances of 1914 were planned with timetable precision, the new doctrine of defense would be implemented with great efficiency. Between December of 1916 and April of 1917 the German High Command issued three publications revising the doctrine for the army, and opened a school in January to teach the new methods to junior leaders.

Grundsätze für die Führung in der Abwehrschlacht (Principles for the Conduct of the Defensive Battle), published on December 1, 1916, introduced a comprehensive system of defensive tactics for 1917 which emphasized an echelon defense of three basic zones or battle areas. The defense was flexible, meaning that it could absorb an attack, increase in strength, and not break. The concept started with at least three massive belts of heavy-strand barbed wire of the type made to withstand the cutting of an artillery bombardment. Along this line a chain of lightly manned listening/sentry posts would sound the alarm during an attack and provide a limited delaying action in the process of falling back. Then the defense would become stronger as the attacker would encounter a stiffening response bolstered by machine-gun emplacements, trench mortars, and increasingly larger artillery pieces directed by forward observers.

Kaiser Wilhelm II in field uniform. The Kaiser became exasperated with military affairs as the Great War went on. His national role shifted to ever-lessening power, as he increasingly handled award ceremonies and merely honorific duties. The military high command continued with its strategy even when it was clear that the Schlieffen plan had failed. By 1916 the German Empire would effectively become a military dictatorship under the control of Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff.

A German aviator dropping a bomb somewhere on the Western Front.

The second zone would include hardened fixed positions or strong-point complexes of bunkers and pillboxes encasing machine-gun teams that provided interlocking fire over the areas of approach. These positions were supported by *Eingreif*, or counterattack, battalions. The third or rear battle zone contained larger reserve formations, machine-gun and artillery units that would concentrate directly to the area of possible breakthrough. These heavy reserves would be committed at the point where most attacks began to weaken and then push the attacking force out of the zone. The depth, up to 9,000 yards in some places, was key to the overall concept of this type of defense and was based on the observed amount of penetration of previous lines that an Allied attack normally gained.

The defensive manual was supported by two additional important publications for January of 1917. *Allgemeines über Stellenbau* (Principles of Field Position Construction) and *Erfahrungen der I Armee in der Sommeschlacht* (Experience of the German First Army in the Somme Battles) introduced the method to construct a new type of defensive position which relied on massive concrete-and-steel strong points from which to anchor these operations and a German perspective of the Somme battle to explain the reason for the change to the defense-in-depth concept. The manuals stressed that the new constructed lines were to be sited on the reverse slope for maximum defense. During the winter of 1917, the Germans constructed these new massive positions and prepared to fall back to them in a move that would take the Allied armies by surprise.

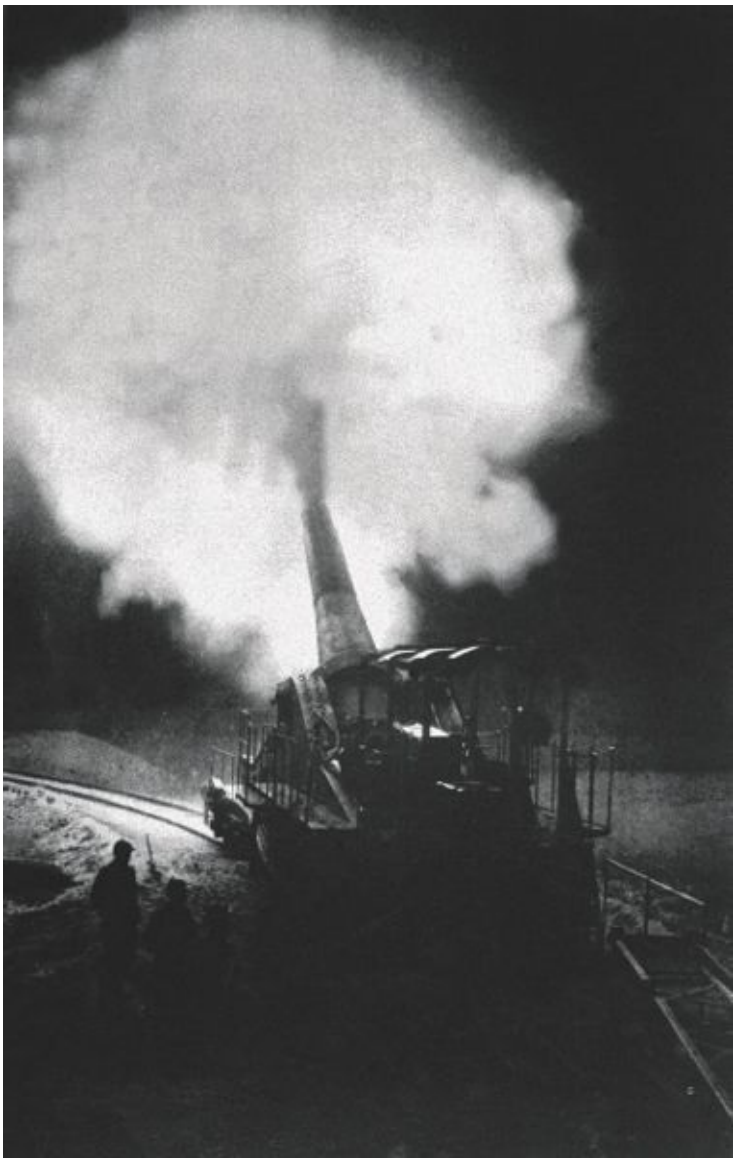
The defensive concepts replaced men with materials of fortification, which needed to be supplied and built. In the last month of 1916, the German High Command initiated the

Patriotic Auxiliary Service Law, which totally mobilized the male citizens of Germany between the ages of 17 and 60 for war-production work. The program concentrated production on key strategic materials such as coal, steel, and concrete, and attempted to orchestrate increased manufacture of tactical supplies of aircraft, small arms, and artillery munitions. Due to labor factors, political factions, and lack of control over private industrial pricing, wage control, and job allocation, production actually fell during the implementation of the plan. The German people were also suffering from lack of food. By 1917, caloric intake had fallen to an average of 1,000 calories per day. But, despite these obstacles, the new positions were constructed in time for a repositioning in the spring.

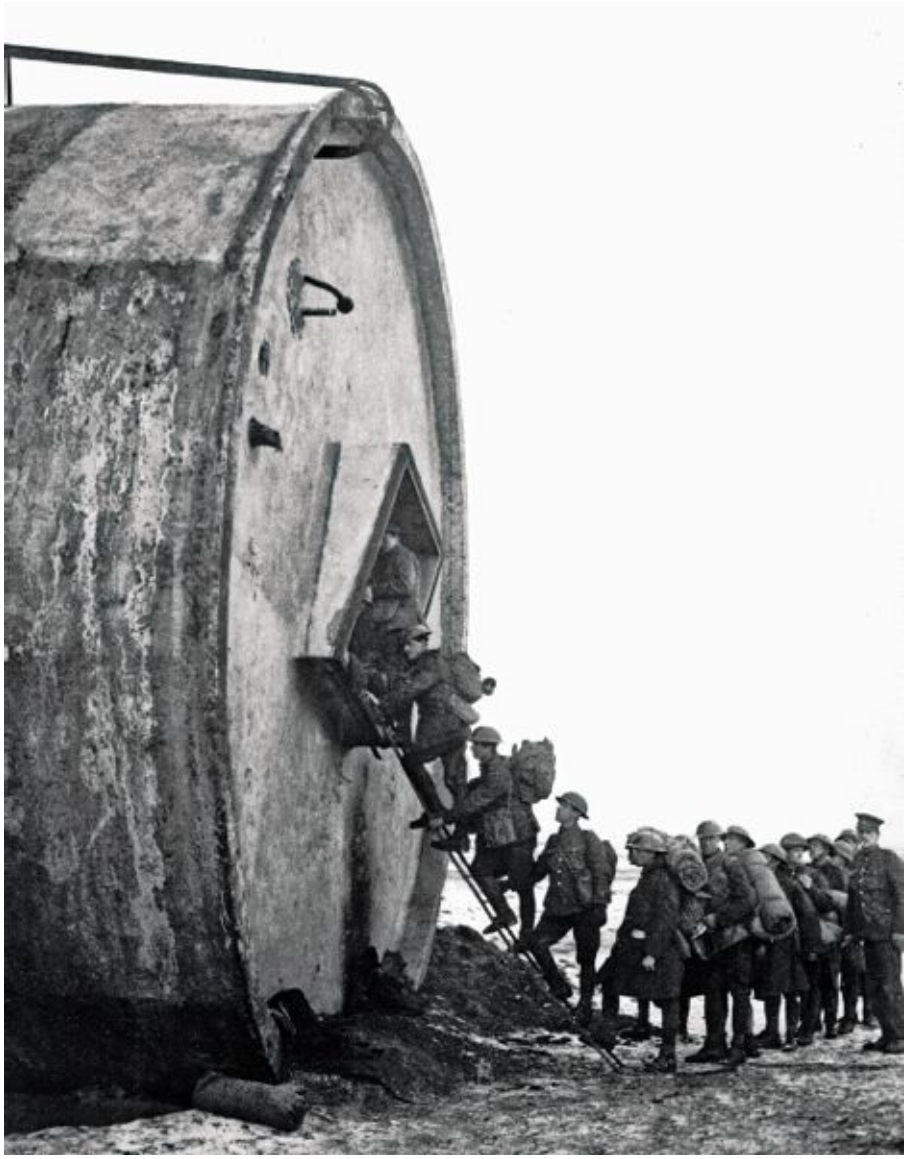
General Nivelle's Plan

Under French political pressure to produce results, General Robert G. Nivelle conceived of a large French offensive based on his experiences in the later stages of Verdun. His main target would be German positions along the Chemin des Dames area between Soissons and Reims. Key to his plan was his belief in a short-duration but concentrated bombardment of a large number of heavy-caliber artillery along narrow zones to great depth, up to five miles, that would creep forward to be followed closely by fast-moving infantry. This bombardment was intended to provide an advancing curtain to shield the first wave of troops. As a trained artillerist, General Nivelle had predicated everything on the belief that "a rupture of the front is possible in 24–48 hours on condition that it is made on a single stroke and by a sudden attack." He would urge his troops that in the coming offensive all would hinge upon the "brutality, violence, and rapidity" of the attack in a localized area.

Once again the French called upon the BEF to provide a diversionary attack to draw off the Germans between Bapaume and Arras a week before the main effort farther to the south. The main attack would require a massing of French troops along the line of advance and in order to create this French reserve the BEF would be forced to cover an additional 25 miles of front line, which General Haig did not approve. While the Allies were trying to come to terms with their military differences in late February at the Calais Conference (which had political overtones), the situation on the Western Front that was the basis of their plans radically changed.



The largest French gun (320 mm) at the moment of firing during a night bombardment. The belch of smoke from the explosion of the charge is a flash of light at night and makes a most unusual sight.



British soldiers entering a novel billet with their packs near Riencourt, France.

The Hindenburg Line

In March, during the preparation phase for this Allied attack scheduled for early April, the Germans produced a surprise of their own. Between March 16 and 20, Operation Alberich, named for the evil dwarf character from Wagner's *Nibelung* opera, was put into action by order from General Ludendorff. The German army withdrew to their new prepared positions, which became known to the Allies as the Hindenburg Line, but in the Arras sector was known to the Germans by its Wagnerian codename, the *Siegfriedstellung*. The Alberich plan not only was a brilliant strategic repositioning which shortened and hardened the German defensive line, but it was also implemented as a scorched-earth policy which destroyed or booby-trapped the landscape and water supplies as the Germans evacuated. Even though the Allies had made great strides in aerial reconnaissance, the Siegfried position was constructed and occupied in secret—a profound failure of Allied intelligence. This move was as devastating to Allied war planning as if the Germans had just produced a smashing offensive victory. Any planned Allied advance in this area would force greater exposure to the troops and require the construction of new positions from which to conduct advances. It also forced an unplanned and costly consumption of

material and labor and required reconnaissance and intelligence gathering of the new positions to assess strong points and assign targets. For up to 30 miles in some sections there was nothing but abandoned shell-holed “no man’s land” without roads, bridges, rail lines, or buildings—a landscape poisoned, booby-trapped, and stripped bare of anything of material use. Whole villages were destroyed and the populations relocated, forced to work in the rear areas.

In total, the German army constructed five major defensive lines which ran from the northern coast down to the Meuse-Argonne sector in the south: the Wotan Stellung (position) stretched from the Belgian coast to Cambrai; the Siegfried Stellung stretched from Cambrai to St. Quentin; the Alberich Stellung stretched from St. Quentin to Laon; the Brunhilde Stellung stretched from Laon across the Champagne front; the Kriemhilde Stellung stretched from the Argonne Forest to Metz.

In the face of these new obstacles, General Nivelle pressed on with his overall plan to keep operational momentum rather than reassess the new positions. As the Allies reeled at these new developments, a series of events in Russia would change the war—and the world for the next century.

Left to right: German chief of the General Staff, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg; Kaiser Wilhelm II; and Hindenburg’s chief of staff, Quartermaster General Erich Ludendorff. The trio are studying maps of the front. Hindenburg and Ludendorff proved formidable foes to the Allied armies.

German soldiers relax behind the front—including a soon-to-be-infamous Corporal Adolf Hitler, at left.

Blindfolded and in a kneeling position, these patriotic Jugo-Slavs in Serbia near the Austrian lines were arranged in a semi-circle and executed by Austrian soldiers.

Trenches, Tranches, Schutzengraben

The digging of trenches and other forms of siege craft have been a part of warfare since ancient times. The age of artillery and firearms would eventually render stone castles and above-ground masonry forts obsolete. During the 19th century the common soldier found that by simply digging into the earth in trenches or crude pits he could escape the metal projectiles fired at him, and even return fire from them and hold the battlefield. By 1900 most European armies issued individual entrenching tools in the form of small shovels and picks, and had been instructed in their use through manuals and training to create “dug in” fighting positions. In the opening days of the Great War the widespread use of machine guns and rapid-firing artillery made trenches indispensable for holding ground on the battlefield—and for surviving. With each side using similar weapons and concepts, opposing armies were denied rapid maneuver on the battlefield and the sought-after quick decisive victories.

A review of manuals by the major powers engaged on the Western Front reveals that each side could explain their overall military policy through the use of trenches. The French stated that you can advance through trenches, while the German manuals detailed how to defend in depth with trenches. The British manuals reassured those digging them that the trench is only a phase of the war and that mobility would soon be restored. For the United States Army, trying to develop a doctrine of its own, the manuals try to come to grips with why the trench had stalled open warfare.

To dig an average trench emplacement of a firing bay for 15 men it would take 30 soldiers digging for six hours. Materials to create a trench during the war included everything from sandbags to felled trees—milled timbers, tin sheeting, chain-link fencing, cinder block, and concrete. The results could range from the crude shallow slit trench to extensive works. It would take technology like rapidly moving tanks, radio communications, and ground-attack aircraft to break through them and force troops back out into the open.

This German poster shows a stormtrooper in a trench, holding a grenade. The text reads, “And you? Subscribe to the 7th War Loan.”

Major Asian Powers During the Great War

Japan

Japan declared war on Germany on August 23, 1914, in part to avenge its humiliation at Port Arthur and the Kiaochow Peninsula and also to gain a foothold on the Chinese mainland, which was critical for the growing Japanese economy's need for raw materials and trade outlets. Japan's main contribution to the Allies was the capture of the German base of Tsingtao on the Chinese coast, together with the capture of several German islands in the Pacific, north of the equator. Japan's occupation of these strategically placed islands in the Western Pacific was not welcome by the United States, Australia, or New Zealand. British dependence on Japan in this area, however, precluded an open dispute.

This Japanese propaganda leaflet reminds the Russians of their defeat in the Russo-Japanese War. "What makes Japanese soldiers so strong?" asks Russia. "We are filled with Yamato Damashii (the spirit of old Japan)," is the reply. "Please give me some Yamato Damashii," says Russia. Germany tried to negotiate a separate peace with Japan during the Great War, but was unsuccessful. Part of the German proposals in the Zimmermann telegram included cooperation between Germany, Japan, and Mexico.

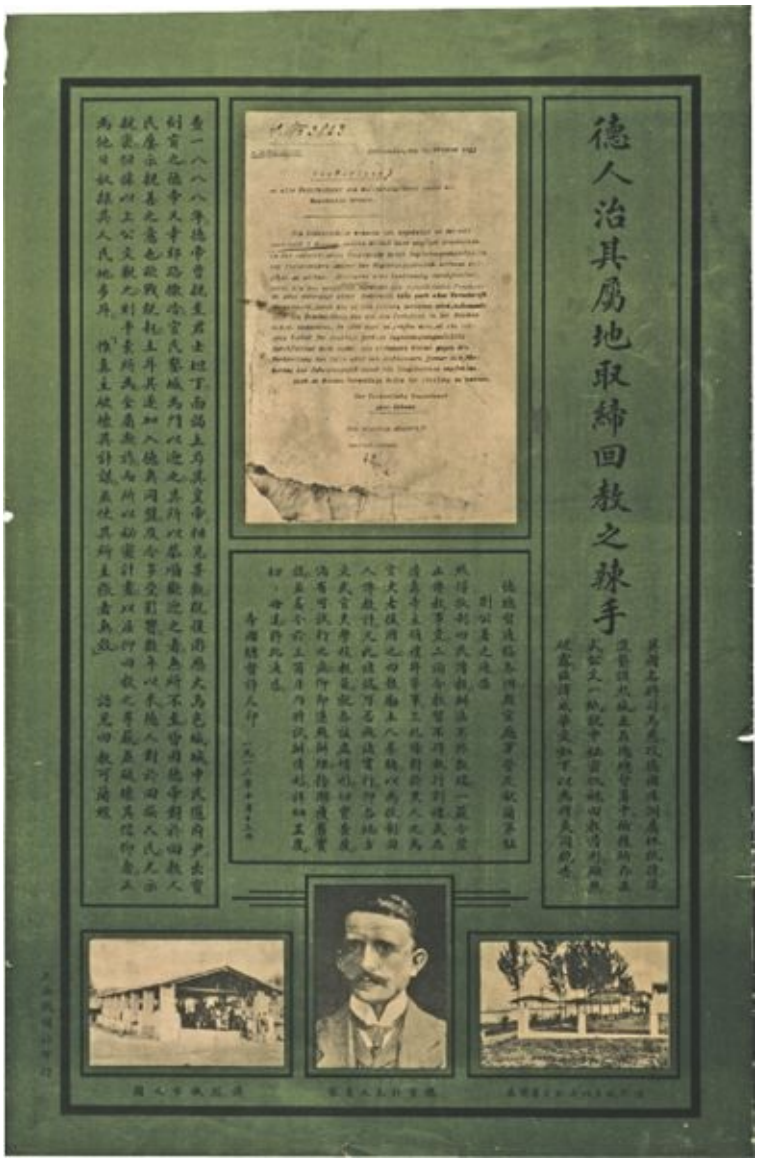
"Emblems of Liberty and Humanity": two Red Cross nurses—one, a Madonna figure, cradling in her arms a wounded soldier on a litter—between the flags of Japan and the United States.

China

At the outset of World War I, China declared neutrality because it was too politically fragmented to take a decisive stand. Before the war, China had suffered humiliation by foreign powers and had been subject to a number of "unequal treaties" forced upon it by the major European nations. The most recent of these humiliations had been at the hands of Japan, which ousted the Russians from Manchuria and took over Chinese territory in 1904 and 1905. Immediately at the start of the Great War, Japan occupied all German territory in China, and forced China to acquiesce in its seizure of Chinese territories. When the United States entered the war in 1917, China broke relations with the Central Powers, declared war against Germany, and sent a 175,000-person labor force to France to support the war effort. The Chinese government hoped by siding with the Allies that a subsequent peace settlement would free China from European concessions and the burdens of treaties forced upon it. Instead, the United States and Japan reaffirmed Japan's position and interests in China.

Duan Qirui, China’s most powerful warlord, sought the means to a political entrée into the European powers, and he declared war on the side of the Allies. He saw the alliance as a way to cement his hold over an expanded Chinese empire.

This British propaganda leaflet was designed to show the power of the British Army to the Chinese. It shows a British tank and includes lengthy text in Chinese explaining what it is, the history of its invention, and its role in “the European war.”



A British leaflet, intended for a Chinese Muslim audience, shows a portrait of Imperial Governor Heinrich Schnee, a copy of a letter by him, in German, directing the suppression of Islam in Africa, and two photographs of Fort Mosi (Moshi, Tanzania), where the letter was found by the British. The Chinese text of the poster explains Germany's anti-Islamic activities and encourages Chinese Muslims to rise up against the Germans.

The Russian Revolution

Historians have noted that in August of 1914 three of Europe's largest empires went to war in the East and in less than four years none would be left intact, with Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany thrown into revolt, broken up, or reduced. Many historians point to the spark of the 1917 revolutions in Russia as the murder of the strange monk Rasputin, who held Tsar Nicholas II and his family and royal inner circle in a hypnotic grasp of religious mysticism. In September 1915, the tsar took direct control of military affairs in a move that exposed his leadership to intense criticism. In the end the tsar's leadership (or lack of it) and his perceived infiltration by Rasputin and other ineffectual courtiers were blamed by the people and agitators as the causes of Russia's reverses and lack of strategic industrial production and distribution. Rasputin's murder by a member of the royal house served as a signal to the Russian people that the Romanov dynasty was highly vulnerable and corrupted.

By 1916, Russian production of strategic materials such as food and munitions could not compete in the face of the organized might of industrialized Germany. Russian operations began to suffer from a lack of military basics such as small arms, ammunition, and transport. Specialized trench weapons were lacking, lost material was not replaced, and aside from the famed Eighth Army under the innovative General Aleksei A. Brusilov, the Russian army was slow to modernize its equipment, tactics, and staff methods. Appeals were made to other Allied nations for rifles and munitions, with limited success. The neutral United States allowed firearms, ammunition, and locomotive-manufacturing companies to enter into contracts with the Russian government. Even with its handicaps and large numbers of casualties, the Russian army was still capable of large offensive operations engaging both German and Austrian armies over a front that spanned from the Baltic to the Black Sea, but, during the winter of 1916–1917, it was losing its strength and will.

With an economy struggling under rampant inflation, and all available transport supporting the Russian troops, grain and food distribution in the cities fell behind normal consumption to a dangerous level. On March 8, 1917, the workers of Petrograd went on general strike protesting the lack of food. Police fired upon the crowd, trying to disperse them, and 300 workers fell dead. The strikers began to loot shops and erect barricades. Two days later the local troops refused to put down the rebellion, and mutinied. By March 12 the building of the hated Ministry of Justice was in flames and various regiments in the city were in open rebellion. These were not the later Bolsheviks or radicals who would create the Soviet Union, but hungry citizens and soldiers who wanted the corrupt ministers and government officials replaced and the war won.

Tsar Nicholas II sitting in the uniform of a Caucasian Regiment in his train near the junction of Pskov was finally told the whole truth of the revolution spreading in Petrograd, Moscow, and Tsarskoye. The revolutionaries did not allow his train near Petrograd. On March 14, a delegation from the Duma presented the tsar with a statement of abdication, which he signed at 3 p.m. The statement was published on March 15. The 304-year reign of the Romanov dynasty came to an end and Russia plunged into social and military chaos. The United States recognized the new provisional government and the Allies made every effort to keep Russia in the war. This dashed German hopes of a quick exit on the Russian front, and they sought other means to get Russia out of the war.

On April 10, the Germans facilitated the crossing of Vladimir Lenin and a small group of Russian radicals living abroad in Switzerland to return to Russia and overthrow the pro-Allied government. Fighting against the Germans and Austrians continued and the Russian army even won a victory on July 8, 1917, at Dolina, during the Galicia offensive, but once again the victory was short-lived and the Germans broke the Russian lines on July 19 on the Galician front. It was too much for the Russian army, which began to refuse to obey orders on July 22. After a rapid series of failed attempts to create a moderate republic the Bolshevik radicals overthrew the Alexander Kerensky–led government and seized power on November 7. The Bolsheviks ended hostilities with the Germans on December 8 and, after lengthy negotiations, finally signed full terms ending the war with Germany on the Eastern Front on March 3, 1918. Fearing a possible return to the monarchy the Bolsheviks placed the family of Tsar Nicholas under close confinement and, at midnight on July 16, 1918, brutally murdered the entire family.

The days of revolution in Russia—barricades on the Liteinyi Prospect, Petrograd.

Grigori Rasputin, the mystic advisor to the Russian imperial family.

Discontented Russian troops gather outside the State Duma during the Russian Revolution.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin led the October Revolution of 1917. As leader of the Bolsheviks, he would head the Soviet state during its initial years while fighting to establish control of Russia.

Tsar Nicholas II, in a final photograph taken by his Bolshevik captors. The man who helped trigger the war lost everything: his crown, his life, and the lives of his family.

German U-Boats

A German submarine in rough seas. U-boats became one of the Allies' greatest fears by mid-war.

Military submarines were first pioneered during the American Revolution with the *Turtle*, which attempted to sink Britain's HMS *Eagle* in 1776. Various attempts were made, with limited success, over the years following, until the American Civil War, when both the Union and the Confederacy created submersible craft. It was, however, the Confederate vessel *H.L. Hunley* that forever changed naval warfare, sinking the USS *Housatonic* in 1864 with a spar torpedo.

These early craft were man-powered and the torpedoes had to be attached and detonated from the attacking sub. Over the next half century naval designers created motorized submarines and perfected a torpedo powered by pressurized air. By 1900 John Holland had developed a dual-motor system that allowed submarines to run diesel engines on the surface and electric motors when submerged. These boats were adopted by the United States and Japan, among others. The Germans built their first submarine in 1903 and they adopted them along with the Russians. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904–1905 saw limited use of submarines, but did have the first war patrol of seven Russian craft. This was not lost on the Germans.

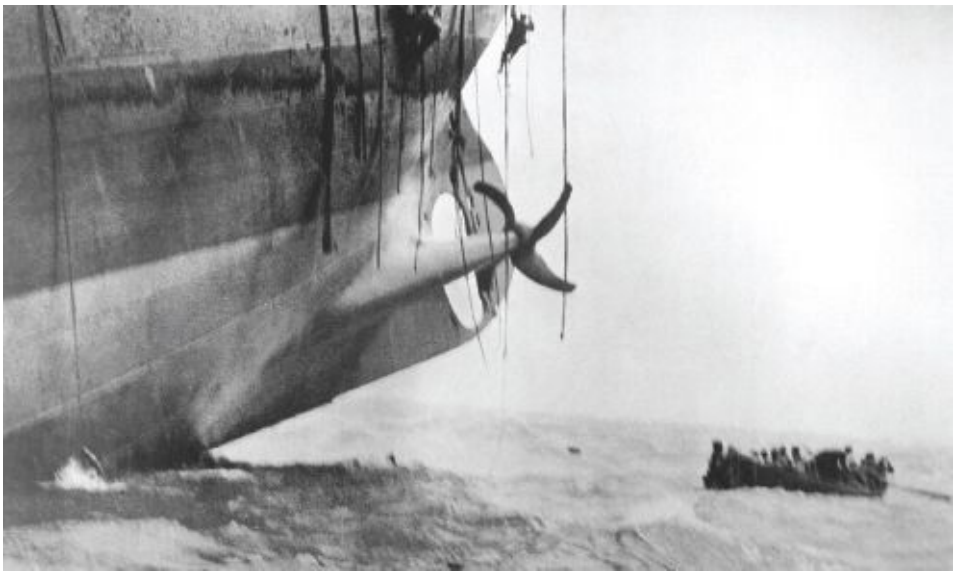
August 1914 saw the first flotilla of ten U-boats (*Unterseebooten*) sail from Heligoland into the North Sea, where they sank three British warships. The German navy began the war with 29 U-boats. They were used in the Atlantic, the North Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Gallipoli campaign. These "undersea boats" were armed with a new self-propelled torpedo, which had dual effect of a direct explosion along with an explosion in the water. The latter created a large steam bubble which lifted the attacked ship, weakening the keel; when the steam subsided, the ship would drop in the center, breaking the keel of the ship and splitting it in half. The U-boats usually operated on the surface, where they travelled faster and preyed mostly on merchant shipping. At first they would stop a freighter, allow the crew to escape in lifeboats, and then sink the vessel and its cargo with deck guns (to conserve torpedoes). When the British devised Q-ships—small trawlers or merchantmen with hidden guns—to lure U-boats close and sink them, it ironically led to the loss of more lives, as the U-boats began to attack submerged with no

warning to the crews.

U-boats were initially used to enforce a blockade of the British Isles, sinking merchant ships and warships when possible. In 1916 the RMS *Lusitania* was sunk by the *U-20*, prompting the United States to threaten to sever diplomatic ties with Germany. The German submarine fleet maintained its blockade until the indecisive naval action at Jutland, after which it resumed its campaign on merchant ships. In 1917 Germany announced a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare and in March sank three American ships, bringing the United States into the war. Initially successful, this strategy ultimately led to the convoy system (where merchant ships traveled under protection of the navy), which dramatically reduced the loss of tonnage to U-boats. Even with convoys in place, by war's end the U-boats destroyed more than 11 million tons of shipping.

Several types of U-boats were designed and built during the war, from attack boats to cruiser and merchant boats and coastal and ocean minelayers. Of the 360 built during the Great War, 178 were lost.

A view of the engine room of an oil-burning German submarine.

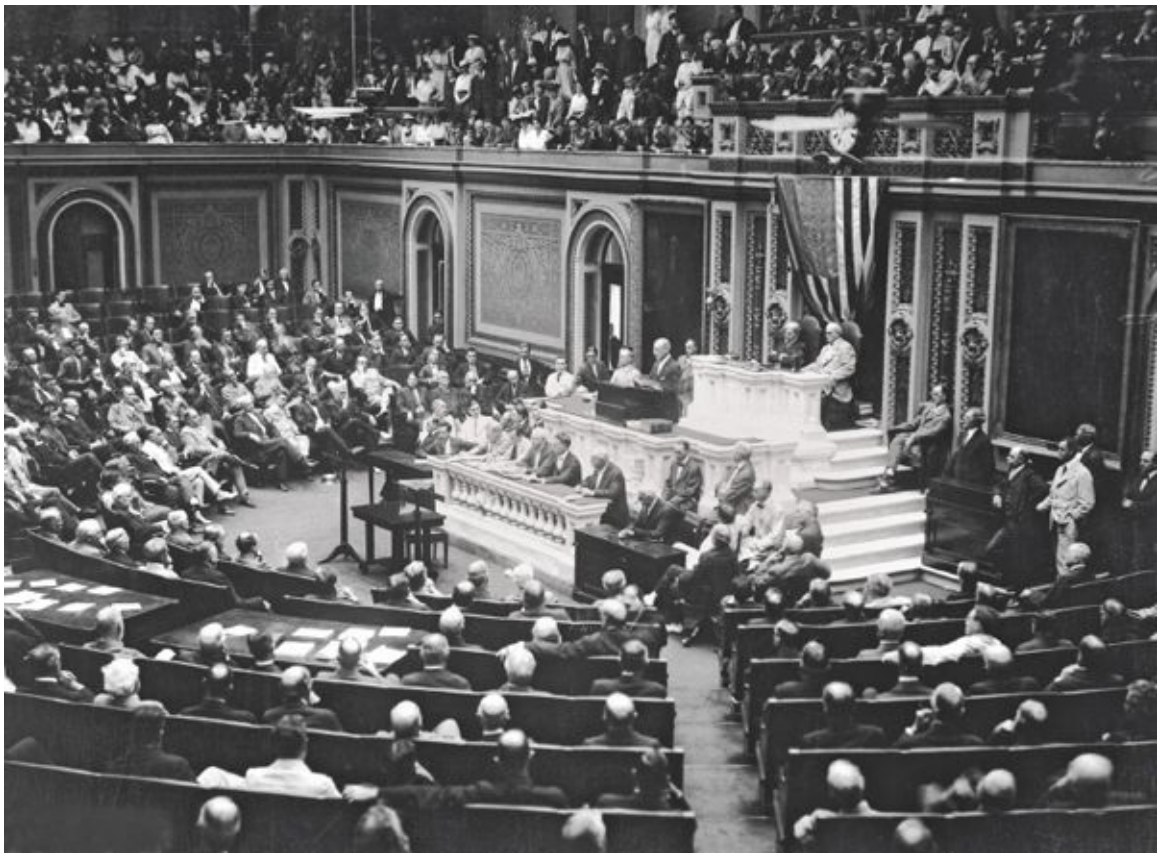


Last-minute escape from a vessel torpedoed by a German U-boat. The vessel has already sunk her bow into the waves, and her stern is slowly lifting out of the water. Men can be seen sliding down the ropes as the last boat is

pulling away.

Rescued passengers from the French liner *Sontay*, which was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine on April 10, 1918, while en route from Marseilles to Salonika. These survivors are climbing up the sides of a French gunboat which came to the rescue.

America Declares War



U.S. president Woodrow Wilson before Congress, announcing the break in official relations with Germany, February 3, 1917.

When President Woodrow Wilson recalled the U.S. diplomatic mission to Germany over its submarine policy on February 10, 1917, the American public and government began to drift from a position of neutrality and patience with Germany toward war. Pacifist groups in the United States began to modify their public positions on defense. The national mood was changing.

President Wilson, a progressive and reformer, had long been a public advocate of peace and restraint. Diplomatically and domestically, the United States was in a difficult and complex situation dealing with a cross-border incursion from Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa in Texas, American business contracts with belligerent nations for war munitions, and a large population of recent immigrants who were seen as untested and suspect in their loyalties. Wilson won reelection to a second term in 1916 on a campaign of neutrality for the United States, which seemed to satisfy all concerned. He had threatened to end diplomatic relations with the Germans in April 1916 if they did not cease their submarine activities against merchant vessels heading into the war zone. The Germans relented, hoping to continue to trade with the United States for strategic materials. Germany even built two large submarines for freight-only runs to American ports to take on cargos of critical materials.

In December 1916, Wilson's peace proposals and diplomatic efforts to broker an end to the fighting in Europe failed to gain attention. With German submarines once again unleashed upon merchant ships, the president went to Congress on February 26, 1917, to seek authorization to arm merchant vessels, but the action failed. Two days later the contents of the Zimmermann telegram became public. Against a backdrop of perceived German treachery with Mexico and Japan and additional submarine attacks, Wilson abandoned his stance of armed neutrality and pressed Congress to declare war. On April 2,

during a historic night address to a packed cheering joint session of Congress, the president went in depth on the submarine issue, decrying it as an outlaw assault on humanity. Two days later the Senate voted 82 to 6 to declare war and the House followed suit on April 6 by a vote of 373 to 50. America was now in the Great War—but just how it would become involved would be a matter of debate that cost valuable time.

Allied Offensive: The Arras-Aisne Operations

As the French Chamber of Deputies cheered American ambassador William Sharpe at the news of America's entry into the war, the Allied high command debated the coming spring offensive. Factions within the alliance wanted to wait for the arrival of the U.S. Army. Even General Nivelle's subordinate army commanders advised a delay, but Nivelle was adamant and persuasive that the advance must go on as planned. Unknown to the Allies, the German high command was well aware of the coming offensive. On March 3, 1917, south of Ripont, during a minor German advance, the Germans had captured a copy of Nivelle's plan for the general offensive. It laid out not only the place but also Nivelle's methods of attack. His crucial weapon, surprise, was lost.

As the larks sang across no man's land on the morning of April 9 a terrific artillery and gas bombardment opened up at 5:30 and the BEF, consisting of the First, Third, and Fifth British armies, along with the Canadian and ANZAC corps, attacked German positions in the Arras sector. German signal flares went up from the forward positions, warning of the attack and alerting the artillery batteries of the German Sixth Army. At daybreak, north of Arras, amidst a downburst of shrapnel mixed with sleet, rain, and snow, the Canadian corps of four divisions followed close on the barrage and moved toward their assigned objective, known as the Vimy Ridge. The Canadians suffered casualties, but they took the ridge and a large number of German prisoners. The training and meticulous preparation of the previous large raids paid off as they advanced on the German positions on schedule.

East of Arras, in the center of the attack, General Edmund Allenby's Third Army advanced a spectacular five miles on the first day of the assault and British cavalry units once again tried to exploit a breakthrough. Two days later, on April 11, General Sir Hubert Gough's British Fifth Army along with the Australian 4th Division attacked positions south of Arras in front of the town of Bullecourt, against a fortified junction of the German Siegfried and Wotan Stellungs. This junction created a position that would draw the Australian assaulting force into a large V-shaped line that would threaten their flanks. Twelve British Mark II tanks were assigned to support the Aussie infantry, but by 4:30 in the morning only three of the iron beasts managed to make the jump-off point. By 7:00 all three of the machines had been knocked out by accurate German artillery fire, with only one of the tanks making it to the first German line. Although the Australians were able to take and hold the first two German lines, they were mauled by stubborn resistance and counterattacks by the German 27th Division of Württemberg troops and thrown back before noon. Faulty reports by air observers, which resulted in the withholding of needed British counter-battery fire, aided the German resistance. German losses were light, amounting to 138 soldiers killed during the defense, compared to approximately 4,000 Australian casualties. By the middle of May, and after more than 150,000 British

casualties, the Arras offensive stalled.

The operations around Arras were supported by the Royal Flying Corps, which flew countless missions in bad weather and came into its own as an offensive fighting force. The British had established air superiority over the battlefield, directly aiding the infantry assault. British planes, often coming in under 100 feet, covered the infantry with close air support against German machine-gun nests and directed artillery against strong points. Forty-eight British Mark II tanks also participated in the attack, with mixed results. The British doctrine had evolved into an air-land battle only limited by communication technology and the mechanical abilities of the machines, foreshadowing tactical concepts that would be perfected in World War II.

At Arras each side claimed a victory, but in the end the Germans suffered an equal amount of casualties. General Alexander von Falkenhausen, the commander of the German Sixth Army, was blamed as not fully understanding the defensive in-depth strategy, and still massed his troops too close to the front-line trenches. On April 23, 1917, he was replaced by General Otto von Below, who brought along Colonel Fritz von Lossberg, the architect of the new German doctrine, to shore up the defensive position.

General Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby, later (in 1919) made a field marshal and first viscount Allenby, was nicknamed the “Bloody Bull” during the Great War. He famously led the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in the conquest of Palestine and Syria in 1917 and 1918.

Discharge of a huge French cannon caught by the camera just as the projectile left for the German lines. The gunners have stuffed their fingers in their ears to protect them against the noise of the explosion.

A new era in Palestine: the arrival of Sir Herbert Samuel, His Britannic Majesty's high commissioner. From left to

right: Colonel T.E. Lawrence, Emir Abdullah, Air Marshal John Salmond, Sir Herbert Samuel, and Sir Wyndham Deedes. By this time Lawrence had become an icon across the Arabian Peninsula.

Nivelle's Attack

As part of Nivelle's plan the British effort around Arras was only a large diversionary operation envisioned to draw German reserves away from his main objective along the Chemin des Dames ridge, east of Soissons above the Aisne River. For four months, preparations had been made to launch the ultimate assault across a 40-mile front. General Nivelle arranged his force as follows: the Fifth (on the right) and Sixth (on the left) armies composed the main assault, supported by the Tenth and First armies, acting in reserve, placed under General Joseph Alfred Micheler. This massive force consisted of more than 1,200,000 men supported by 5,341 artillery pieces and 132 new Schneider CA model tanks. The logistics of the build-up were impressive, consisting of more than 300 miles of new rail line that delivered 872 trains of artillery ammunition and 170,000,000 rounds for small arms. The Allies planned for only 10,000 casualties; medical preparations would prove to be inadequate for the coming reality, and would impact the morale of the French army.

With a final message to his troops of "The hour has struck! Confidence! Courage! *Vive la France!*" General Nivelle's vaunted offensive was thrown at the Chemin des Dames ridge at 6:00 a.m., Monday, April 16. The cold and wet spring dawn that hovered in the low-30 degrees made conditions for the colonial troops (from Senegal and other North African French colonies), not yet fully acclimatized to the cold advancing on the flanks of General Charles Mangin's Sixth Army, exceptionally difficult. To achieve the speed and surprise demanded by General Nivelle, they were ordered to follow closely upon the moving barrage at a rate of more than 325 feet every three minutes, over hilly and wooded terrain. The preliminary bombardment that had started as far back as April 5 lifted, and within 10 minutes German artillery answered back, catching large amounts of French infantry in their shallow jump-off trenches. The French artillery began their creeping barrage and a mass of French infantry in 30 assault divisions lurched forward. As they struggled to advance and keep up with their own protective artillery fire, which quickly outpaced them, the attack began to unravel.

A French battalion commander summed up what happened by stating that the attack "started at 6 and ended at 7." Large sections of barbed wire had not been cut by the bombardment and the Germans, knowing the plan, had distributed large numbers of the new nimble MG 08/15 mobile machine gun. The machine-gun crews emerged from deep shafts within the ridge and cut down the advancing French infantry below in the valley. Within the first hour the French suffered more than 40,000 casualties. At Berry-au-Bac, in the center of the French Fifth Army, the much anticipated tank attack which was to support the XXXII Corps with 82 machines ran into trouble. Of the 82 tanks, 31 were taken out by German artillery fire and 13 broke down outright. The weather and stiff German air opposition also hampered French aircraft from supporting the attack and spotting for the artillery. The men began to sense a profound failure.

Despite the heavy losses and poor conditions, Nivelle kept ordering his divisions to

attack. The 24- to 48-hour breakthrough window passed and yet the promised rupture of the German line did not occur (even though the defenders also suffered casualties of 163,000 men). On the night of April 19 Nivelle committed the Tenth Army Reserve in the center of the effort—not to exploit a breakthrough but to try to gain one. This event triggered another political crisis within Nivelle's command. Through grinding attacks the French finally took the first German line on the ridge on April 20 and were astonished to view the depth and strength of the German defensive positions. The new rail lines that carried in the materials of war now carried out high numbers of casualties, which began to alarm the government and the citizens of Paris.

Ignoring pleas from his generals and politicians to stop the attacks, Nivelle pressed on. Through early May regiment after regiment assaulted positions around the ridge with bayonet and grenade. They made some gains, but the French army was about to break. All along the line the men began to openly criticize the methods of attack, stating that nothing had been learned by the high command since 1915. On May 15 General Nivelle was removed from command and replaced by General Philippe Pétain. But the damage was done and morale in the French army collapsed—they had suffered 180,000 casualties for less than four miles of advance. The men went into revolt and open mutiny. In all, 54 French divisions refused to attack or to obey orders that would place them in danger. One regiment, when ordered to the front, arrived drunk and without weapons. The two Russian battalions assigned to the French Fifth Army voted not to obey any order and had to be shelled by French artillery back into submission. Although the French offensive plans were an open secret which cost a great amount of life, the French army and government went to great efforts to keep knowledge of the mutiny from the Germans and from the rest of the Alliance. For a brief time the center of the French line was held by only a thin line of loyal troops.

General Pétain immediately began to stabilize the situation. He halted the attacks, and put into place reforms including well-maintained rest camps and furloughs home every four months for the troops. He visited every division in the army and also made examples of the ringleaders of the mutinies by executing 55 soldiers. It was a turning point for the French army, and now the plan was to hold and wait for the arrival of the Americans.

After Nivelle's failed offensive, General Haig and the BEF, which had been subjugated to French planning, were free to explore their own objectives, mainly with an eye to cut off German submarine bases operating out of the Belgian coast around Ostend. With Russia in full revolution, French unsteadiness, and reversals along the Italian front, the BEF stood alone in the summer of 1917 as the only reliable fighting force in operation on the Western Front.

The Messines Ridge

While Nivelle was grinding the French army against the German defenses to the south, Haig attempted to keep pressure along his assigned front. In the north, British general Sir Herbert Plumer's Second Army was locked in a stalemate with German Army Group Wytschaete along a section of high ground known as the Messines Ridge, south of the Belgian city of Ypres. Determining the Messines position to be strategic to the whole of

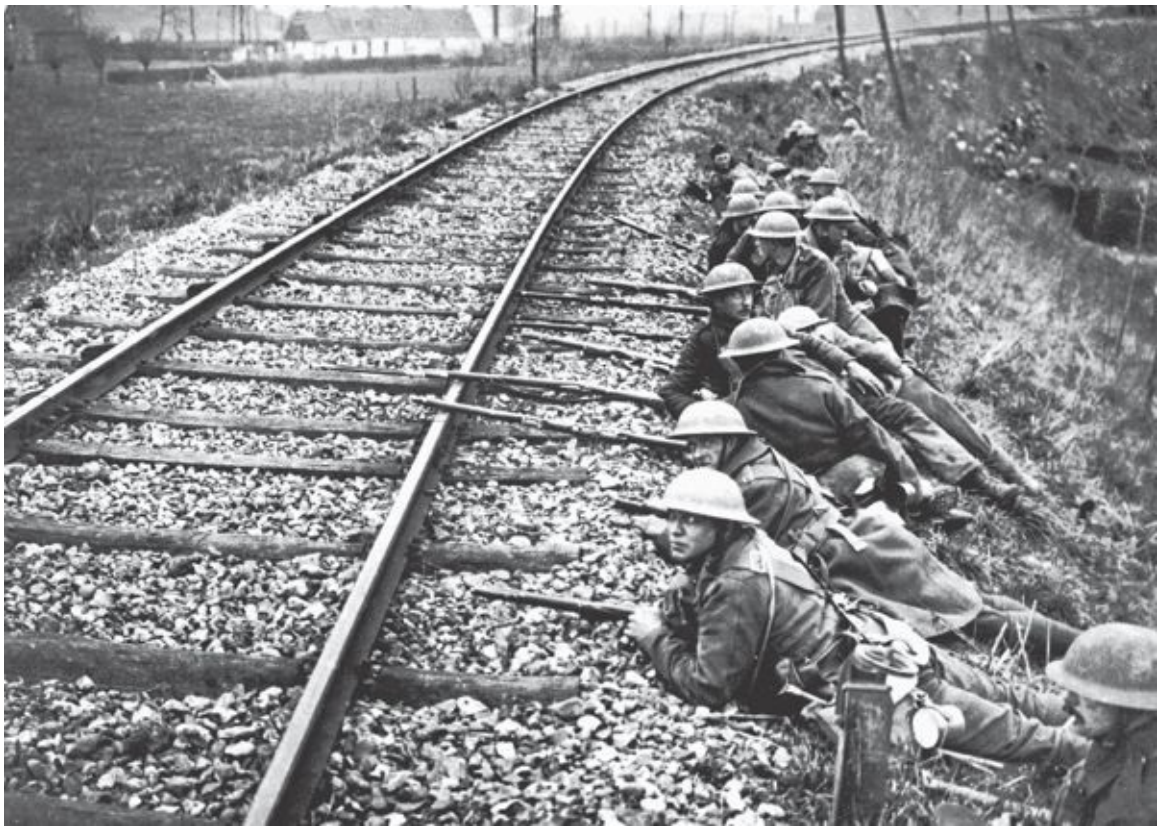
the Ypres salient, Haig devised a plan of surprise to assault it.

Working night and day under extreme conditions, Plumer's engineers dug a large network of 24 underground mine shafts directly beneath the German-held ridge, and packed it with more than 1 million pounds of amatol explosive that would be command-detonated. After a punishing 2,266-gun bombardment which began on May 21, Plumer's engineers set off 19 of the mines at 3:10 in the morning on June 7. The earth lifted underneath the German positions, sending bunkers, trench line, and machine-gun nests into the sky. Then a quick covering barrage of artillery, trench mortars, and machine guns kept the Germans from rushing back into the craters, which were immediately taken by nine British divisions numbering in excess of 80,000 men. The bite-and-hold strategy employed at Vimy was once again played out with great success at Messines.

The BEF was gaining confidence that, with careful planning and the right concentration of artillery fire on a shorter frontage, they could leapfrog their way through the German positions. With this in mind Haig's staff began to plan the operations for the rest of 1917 that would combine rapid application of limited-objective bite-and-hold tactics to achieve the sought-after breakthrough. For the ridge it cost the BEF 17,000 casualties. For the first time during a major offensive on the Western Front the number of defender casualties (25,000 German soldiers) was larger than that suffered by the attacking force.

Third Ypres

Field Marshal Haig began planning what would be known as the Third Battle of Ypres—or, more notoriously, by the name of the Belgian village that would be its target, Passchendaele. Strategically, Haig was still confident that a true breakthrough could be achieved. His goal was to split the German line and make a drive on the enemy submarine bases in the Channel ports supported by an amphibious landing called Operation Hush, on the coastal town of Nieuport. David Lloyd George, the British prime minister, was not convinced of Haig's strategy. But after backing General Nivelle's disastrous plan in spite of Haig's objections, the prime minister no longer held enough political capital to oppose it. On June 11, two days before the arrival of the advance staff of the United States Army in France, Haig was called before Prime Minister George's Committee on War Policy to defend his position against waiting for an American buildup and Allied reorganization. After several days of intense debate Haig persuaded the committee on his strategy of constant engagement of the German line by British forces.



British troops in the Ypres salient, ready to hold the railway line. Merville, France, 1918.

Haig built his strategy upon bad information: he believed intelligence reports that the German military situation to his front had deteriorated more than it had. With this in mind Haig selected the oft reckless but aggressive General Sir Hubert Gough to lead this assault. This time, General Plumer's Second Army, who knew the ground and had a successful track record of careful planning and taking their objectives, was assigned a secondary support role to the south. Along with Second Army were the six divisions of the French First Army under General François Anthoine, which was holding the line between the BEF and the Belgian army to the north of Ypres.

The battle plan would send General Gough's British Fifth Army of 18 divisions against the German section of the Hindenburg Line named by the Germans as the Flanders Position. Gough's troops would attack a nine-layer-deep fortified position defended by 10 German divisions supported by more than 1,556 field and heavy artillery pieces along a seven-mile front. According to German defensive doctrine, they occupied the high ground on a reverse slope that overlooked a large, level plain, which had been shelled so completely as to offer an almost featureless landscape. The shelling had also destroyed the ancient Flemish drainage systems that controlled the water table for agriculture. A heavy rain could turn the area into an instant sea of thick mud.

The weather leading up to the attack set for July 31, 1917, was perfectly dry, bolstering the soldiers' confidence for the coming offensive. The BEF emplaced 2,299 field pieces to deliver a 15-day bombardment, hurling more than four million shells along a short front. The artillery arrangement placed a gun every five yards and constituted a tenfold increase to the artillery used a year previously on the Somme. One hundred thirty-six tanks were assembled, and the dry ground and open plain was thought to provide an excellent stage to launch a mass armor attack and achieve breakthrough. During July, combined Allied air operations placed 500 British and 200 French aircraft over the Ypres

Salient.

Lafayette, Nous Voilà!—Lafayette, We Are Here!

It was this mix of evolving doctrine, technological advances, and political-military crisis that American general John J. Pershing and his staff (constituting the advance party of what would become known as the American Expeditionary Force or AEF) would find when they landed in Boulogne, France, on June 13, 1917. With the specter of the army mutiny shadowing the French government, Pershing's arrival in Paris was carefully orchestrated to allow for the most people to be out on the streets after the shops had just closed. The scene was one of pandemonium and national relief.

While Pershing was cheered, great debate raged concerning the type of contribution the United States would provide, now that it had declared war. The debate was not unfounded, as the United States possessed a very small standing and reserve army when it entered the world conflict in April of 1917. The U.S. military consisted of only 127,588 officers and men serving in the regular army, backed by another 80,446 National Guard troops with a full strength of just 208,000 men. Many of the regulars were serving in units in the Philippine Islands or were deployed with portions of the National Guard along the Mexico–U.S. border. Compared to the size of the armies fighting in Europe in 1917, this was a tiny force hardly worthy of notice by European standards. Anticipating the need for more men, Congress had passed a draft bill which became law on May 18, 1917. Now Pershing cabled Washington that a million-man army would need to be raised and sent to France within a year—and that target size would eventually need to be expanded to three million.

America had men to draft, but lacked the specialized weapons and equipment at that point considered basic necessities on the Western Front—except for the infantry rifle, a few machine guns of mixed type, and a selection of field artillery. Even though American industry was manufacturing munitions for the Allies, machine guns, tanks, hand grenades, trench mortars, gas masks and chemical weapons, helmets, and adequate heavy trench boots were all nonexistent in the U.S. Army in April of 1917. A handful of planes and trucks had been used on the Mexican border, but the Army did not possess a comprehensive motorized logistical force or air arm.

A critical two months had been lost as the Wilson administration vacillated as to the type and size of the American commitment. Would the United States send only money and war materiel, or just men, or would it attempt to establish a complete American army? To keep the policy of a distinct American army viable, Pershing would be thrust into the world of diplomacy and coalition-building. The British proposed to train and equip 500,000 American men and absorb them into BEF units on the Western Front. The French proposed to equip and integrate American regiments into French divisions along their entire line. None of these schemes were acceptable to Pershing or the government of the United States. Army leadership had not been idle since 1914, and had studied the problem of modern organization and developed a plan of infantry divisions which Congress approved in 1916. Due to a variety of logistical, administrative, and tactical concerns the size of the American infantry divisions sent to France actually numbered twice the

manpower strength of standard European divisions of both sides, averaging around 28,000 men. (BEF division strength was 15,000 men; French and German divisions averaged 12,000 men each.)

The United States Navy

After large amounts of low-interest loans were made to the Allies, the first military contribution would come not from the Army but from the United States Navy. As soon as war was declared, the 191 vessels of the Navy, 14 of which were of the modern Dreadnought class, actively joined the war effort. The U.S. Coast Guard was placed under the direction of the Navy. Many U.S.–flagged merchant vessels were armed with guns and manned with detachments to crew them. Even large motor yachts were pressed into service as picket boats along the coast to look for submarines.

The first operational U.S. combat unit to deploy to France arrived on June 5, 1917, in the form of the First Aeronautic Detachment. Its men went into training with French aircraft at the Military Aviation School at Tours. They flew their first anti-submarine combat patrol on November 22, 1917. The focus of the U.S. Navy's operations would be to protect the convoys of troops and supplies and to enforce the blockade around Europe through patrols and mining operations. The Department of the Navy sent the 4th and 5th Marine brigades. The 4th Marine Brigade consisting of the 5th and 6th Marine regiments and the 6th Marine Machine Gun Battalion (which was attached to the 2nd Infantry Division). The Navy also manned several large-caliber railroad guns in France.

A soldier from the New York National Guard saying goodbye to his sweetheart, 1917.

General John J. Pershing commanded the American Expeditionary Force—a drop in the manpower bucket compared to the European contribution, but it was hoped America's logistical would help to tip the scales.

The United States Army

While rush orders were being developed for everything from uniforms to ammunition, the U.S. Army moved quickly to send a division to Europe as a show of force. It was activated on May 27, 1917, as Headquarters, First Expeditionary Division, under the command of Brigadier General William L. Sibert. This force consisted of men of the 6th Field Artillery, and the 16th, 26th, and 28th Infantry regiments. They sailed from Hoboken, New Jersey, on June 13 and arrived in France on June 26 to cheering crowds at the port of Saint-Nazaire.

To boost French morale elements of the 16th Infantry paraded down the streets of Paris on July 4. Pershing made a short speech to the cheering crowds at the tomb of the French hero of the American Revolution, the Marquis de Lafayette, but it was another speaker from his staff, Captain Charles E. Stanton, who remembered our Revolutionary War debt to the French people by ending his speech with a phrase that summarized the spirit of the day: "Lafayette, we are here!"

The AEF had arrived, but it would be some time before the Allies could rely on the Americans as a fighting force. It would take nearly a year of logistical organization and

training to get them ready for action as an independent army in their own zone.

Two days after the parade in Paris, the fledgling American organization was re-designated the 1st Division of the United States Army, American Expeditionary Force. The infantry elements of the division were then sent to Gondrecourt to be outfitted and trained in French methods of trench warfare, while the artillery regiments were forwarded on to an artillery training center at Valdahon, in eastern France.

Before the end of the year, elements of the 1st Infantry Division were attached to the French 18th Division (on September 21, 1917), and eventually went into the line with them. On 6:05 a.m., October 23, Battery C of the 6th Artillery fired the first American shot of the war. After nearly six months the Yanks were finally facing the Germans in the trenches around Bathelemont, north of Luneville. Here they would learn to man listening posts and go on combat patrols. They also suffered the first U.S. Army casualties in combat and were the subject of German raids to take prisoners for intelligence purposes. The Germans wanted to prove to their men that the American soldier was ordinary and could be defeated.

Battery C, 6th Field Artillery, fired the first shot for America on the Lorraine front. Note the shell casing flying through the air, and a new shell sliding into the breech in the same fraction of a second. Beaumont, France, September 12, 1918.

Night attack with phosphorous bombs in maneuvers, First Corps School, Gondrecourt, France, 1918.

Passchendaele

As U.S troops were mobilizing in America and arriving in France, Germany's fifth chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, resigned on July 14. A political centrist who had served as chancellor since 1909, he had opposed the policy of unrestricted submarine warfare (which alienated him from the military) and was opposed in the German Reichstag (parliament) by left-leaning socialists. The German political foundation was starting to crack. Two days later, on July 16, the BEF began the artillery bombardment on the Germans' Flanders Position. So massive was the bombardment that distant rumbling could be heard 120 miles away in London. On July 19 the Reichstag voted in favor of a resolution outlining a peace of understanding without annexations—but to no avail; the war would proceed.

This deteriorating political situation had a direct effect on the German defensive position in Flanders. Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, commander of the Northern Group of Armies, was placed in a difficult position. The German troops were aware of the massive buildup for a coming Allied offensive on their positions around Ypres, and advocated for a strategic withdrawal of the area in order to defuse the British plan and avoid a repeat of the disaster on the Messines Ridge. At this point, Rupprecht and the German army could not be seen on the home front as giving up Belgian territory in the face of a perceived threat.

The Germans had detected the buildup and training for the amphibious landing on the

north coast. They hoped to knock the BEF off their game by launching a diversionary attack against the staging ground for Operation Hush at Nieuport on July 10. This they called Operation Strandfest ("Beach Party"). It used a large assault formation of German marines trained in storm-troop tactics, a heavy-caliber artillery bombardment, flamethrower detachments, and the first use of mustard gas (*Gelbkreuz*, or "yellow cross") to force the British back across the Yser River. Beach Party was a surprise German success and it devastated the local British defenders, depriving Haig of the springboard for the planned amphibious landings. Operation Hush was cancelled. However, like General Neville a few months before, Haig was committed to his plan even though it had been compromised.

The massive artillery bombardment pounding the German defenders east of Ypres had an effect. Four German divisions had to be rotated out of the area, having been smashed by the crashing shells. On July 31 at 3:50 a.m. the BEF once more "hopped the bags" under the crescendo of the massive supporting bombardment of the Royal Artillery Corps. Even the tanks made good progress across the dry ground, and only two of the improved Mark IV tanks broke down. After weeks of clear weather an ominous low cloud cover crept in, denying headquarters of accurate reports and the ground support of the Royal Flying Corps.

Baron Captain Manfred von Richtofen became the scourge of the skies over France. Leading his "Flying Circus," he became the top ace of the war, officially credited with 80 air-combat victories.

In the center of the attack, between the road to Saint-Julien and the Staden Railway line, Gough's force advanced rapidly through the outpost positions of the German line, up to three miles. It then ran into the hidden strong points of pillboxes of the German defensive line and was hit with a counterattack at 2:00 in the afternoon. As the German

shells fell, it also began to rain. Eyewitness accounts document that within an hour the shell-torn Flemish fields turned to mud and shell holes filled up to drown the wounded.

By August 4, BEF artillery units reported struggling to move their guns up in mud that was 10 feet deep. The attack bogged down. Gough pressed on, but after a third attempt Haig transferred responsibility for the offensive to General Plumer and the Second Army. Plumer knew the ground well and he ordered a pause to consolidate and prepare three short bite-and-hold attacks of 1,500 yards each, according to his methods. It would now be up to the Australian and Canadian corps to keep going.

On September 4 Lloyd George called Haig to London to give an account of the situation and defend his position of continuing on. Again the arguments raged between attacking or waiting for the American buildup. Haig once again won out. At the price of approximately 200,000 men the BEF forced the line five miles forward. On November 6, the Canadian 1st and 2nd divisions finally took the shattered remains of the town of Passchendaele. By December 7 the last of the positions were consolidated. Like Verdun for the French, Passchendaele quickly became a watershed for the British army. Although it did not result in a revolt or mutiny, Passchendaele along with the Somme would profoundly affect Britain for years to come.

The Technical Surprise at Cambrai

On October 13, 1917, while the Passchendaele offensive slogged on, Haig approved yet another attack in a different location of the line in the hopes that technology would deliver success. Its target would be the German positions in front of the French town of Cambrai. General Sir Julian Byng (who had replaced General Allenby in command of the British Third Army) approached Haig with a plan that combined two new concepts in the use of tanks and artillery.

Brigadier General Hugh Elles and Lieutenant Colonel John Fuller of the Tank Corps advocated that the mixed performance of the tank over the past year was due to the three factors of poor terrain, lack of surprise, and limited numbers. The Elles-Fuller plan was to pick good hard ground, move up a large number of tanks, and concentrate them on a narrow front in a surprise attack, backed closely by infantry, to breach the German defenses. During one of the operations at Passchendaele, nine tanks, each closely supported by a platoon of infantry covered by a smoke barrage, successfully attacked a heavy German pillbox on August 19 outside of St. Julien. The formula was found at last: tanks in the lead, supported by infantry, rather than the other way around.

The second innovation that Byng would combine with the tank-raid idea was a leap forward in artillery technology that offered to change how it was employed. The idea became known as *predictive fire*. The concept was developed within months of one another by the batteries of General H.H. Tudor (of the 9th Scottish Division in the BEF) and Colonel Georg Bruchmüller (of the German Eighth Army on the Eastern Front). Before this, to utilize artillery in indirect fire, ranging shots had to be fired, observed, and adjusted. This gave away the element of surprise, and the long bombardments upon an area alerted the enemy that an attack was usually imminent. Predictive fire allowed the

guns to be emplaced and open up directly on targets specified on maps without the telltale ranging shots, by using mathematical algorithms based on the known performance of the type of artillery piece and ammunition used. More than 1,000 gun crews would be trained in the new methods and emplaced before Cambrai, along with 474 tanks. The tank force was further broken down by type and objective, using previous models as armored support and supply vehicles.

Haig expanded this plan from a raid into a full offensive operation, adding two divisions of cavalry to exploit the intended breakthrough and 14 new squadrons of aircraft for support. Before Cambrai, the Germans had constructed their three-position defense and placed a barbed-wire belt more than 100 yards deep to the front of it. In order to clear the wire away for the infantry and cavalry, 32 of the Mark IV tanks were fitted with large anchor-like tails which would be lowered to snag and drag the wire out of the way of the troops.

At 6:20 in the morning of November 20, British artillery shells suddenly began falling right on the German positions and more than 300 of the 28-ton tanks moved out at a pace of about three miles per hour. The tanks were supported closely by seven divisions of infantry, and the assault force rolled over the wire and punched through all three defensive lines in a few hours. For the first time the Hindenburg Line had been pierced and, for a brief moment, mobility was restored. Even the cavalry was unleashed. Casualties were light—a mere 4,000 men. Compared to the other offensives it was a great achievement, and church bells pealed out in victory all over Britain. But the Germans were able to collect themselves and they counterattacked the next day. In 10 days the Germans hurled 20 divisions and not only retook all the gains bought by the British tanks, but captured new ground—and some tanks, as well. Politically Lloyd George struck back at Haig for these failures by denying him additional men, whom he believed would only be squandered in more of Haig’s attacks.

Margaretha Geertruida "Margreet" Zelle, better known as Mata Hari, became one of the most famous personages of the war. Executed by the French as a spy in 1917, Mata Hari was probably no more than a hapless courtesan looking to make a quick profit off the warring leaders.

In the final days of the Cambrai operation, American medical and engineering units attached to the BEF participated in their first engagement.

The Second Battle of Verdun

To aid the BEF offensive operations in the north around Ypres, the French once again launched another offensive to retake more ground at Verdun. On August 17 they opened up a heavy bombardment of German positions. The German sector commander had not followed instructions. He had failed to create the necessary defensive lines that had been encountered at other locations on the Western Front, and the German infantry suffered for it. The French soldiers once again went on the offensive, but this time employing bite-and-hold tactics to limit casualties. All through the fall, attacks and counterattacks raged on around Verdun. They would not stop until the final days of the war.

"The Yanks Are Coming!"

"America from a military standpoint means nothing," stated Admiral Eduard von Capelle,

the German secretary of state for the Navy, in a January address to the German Reichstag. And in viewing the situation in early 1918—with only six infantry divisions partially constituted in France—he may have been correct in his assumption. As hundreds of thousands of men underwent rudimentary military training in 44 divisional organizations in the United States, the basic question of getting them to France in time to make an impact was of great concern. There simply wasn't enough equipment to outfit them, nor ships to do the job. Capelle even boasted that the Americans would never even make it across the Atlantic, in a reference to intended German submarine operations.

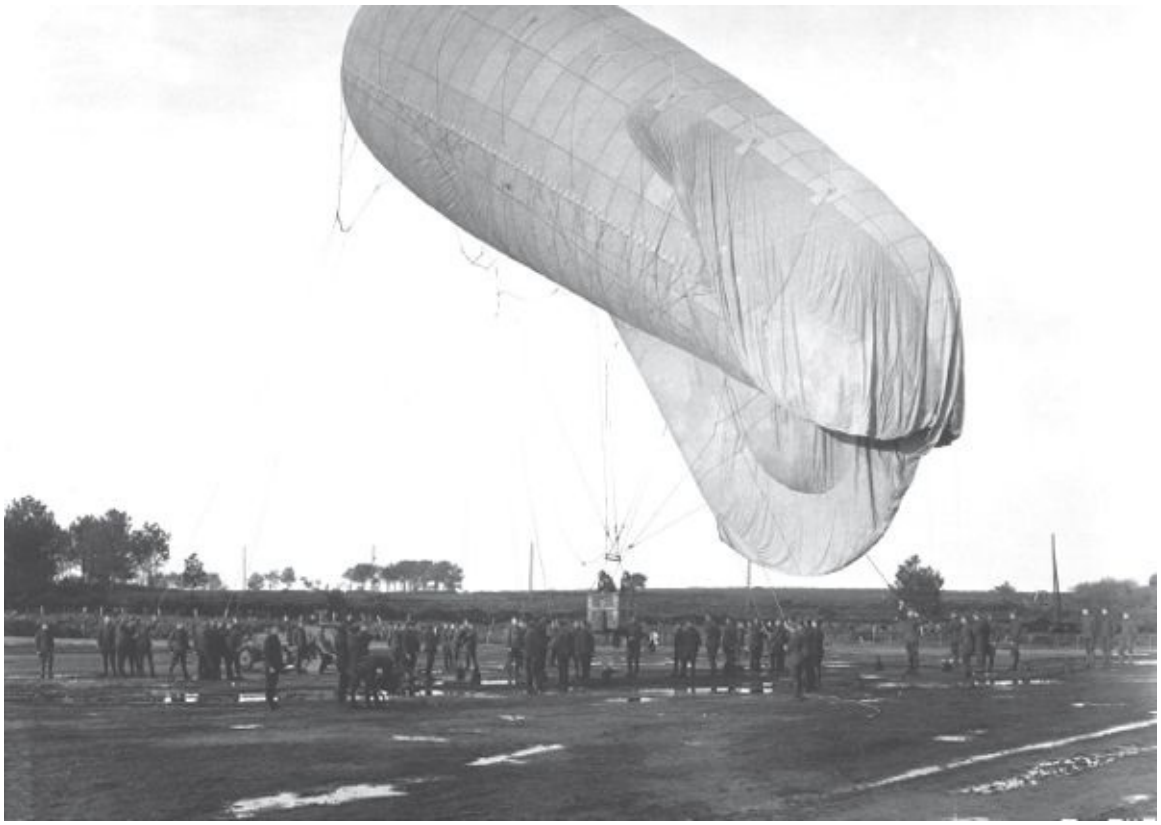
To use the amount of ships available and to save time, Pershing and the Allies developed a plan that would emphasize getting the men over with their basic equipment first, and relying on French and British industry to provide artillery, transport, tanks, aircraft, and the other required munitions of trench warfare to be manned by the AEF. Another issue that had to be overcome was where to land the anticipated influx of men and materiel? Northern French ports were already overloaded with cross-channel traffic. The ports on the French west and southern coasts were less congested and would be built up along with rail networks to support training, supply, and deployment of AEF units. This made a distinct American zone that the Allies agreed would eventually be turned over to a proposed American Army organization. The original zone selected for the AEF placed them south of Verdun on the Meuse River, starting on a bend in the approximately 50-mile-long trench line at Saint-Mihiel, running northeast to Pont-à-Mousson astride the Moselle River. This zone would expand as the AEF grew and became part of the Allied advance.

Entry into the Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem, of General Edmund Allenby and his troops, December 11, 1917.

An old French couple greets soldiers of the U.S. 308th and 166th Infantry regiments upon their arrival, during an American advance.

Shell Shock in the Great War

Troops were forced into poor conditions in the trenches, for weeks on end, and withstood constant artillery bombardment. This contributed to widespread psychological issues that caused reactions of uncontrollable fear, loss of speech, loss of physical control, and immobility. Treatment of soldiers who exhibited these signs varied. Some were derided as cowards. Some received electroshock therapy, or long periods in rest camps. Many never recovered, and lived out their lives as shattered men as a result of their traumatization from the horrors of the war.



Camp-de-Meucon, France: a balloon ascending on an artillery-spotting mission. Balloons were used extensively for observation during the war and became a favorite target for aircraft.

Gun crew from Regimental Headquarters Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd U.S. Division, during an advance against German positions at Château-Thierry, France.

Performer Elsie Janis, the “Sweetheart of the AEF,” visiting the American II Corps. She is escorted by Colonel G.S. Simonds, corps chief of staff, and General Sir Henry Horne, commander of the British First Army. Bruges, France, July 1918.

A close-up view of an American major in the basket of an observation balloon, flying over territory near the front lines, June 1918.

An anti-aircraft machine gun of the 101st Field Artillery, firing on a German plane at Plateau Chemin-des-Dames, France, March 5, 1918.

American Expeditionary Force Training and Supply

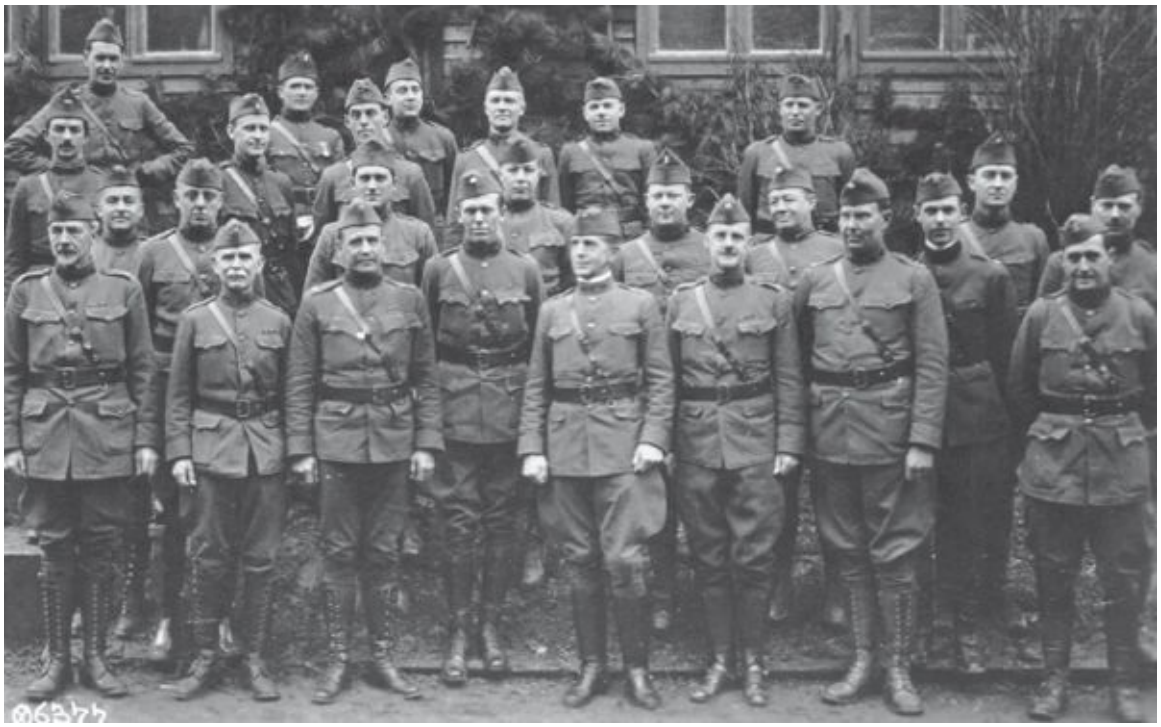
Once in France the American troops had to undergo a great deal of training, which included everything from basic sanitation to small and large combined arms operations and staff work. Specialized schools were established all over France to teach everything from throwing a grenade to baking large amounts of bread to planning, supplying, and executing artillery barrages. New organizations were developed from scratch with French- and British-supplied equipment, including an Army Air Service and the Tank Corps. Another organization that would be developed along that of an independent command was the Service of Supply, an enormous logistical organization that handled everything from beans to artillery shells. For every three soldiers in the AEF, one soldier served in a support organization which in turn was augmented by 23,772 civilians.

Sergeant Alvin York, 328th Infantry Regiment, 82nd Division—with the aid of 17 men, he captured 132 German prisoners. York was arguably the most famous American soldier of the Great War.

On average, the 43 American divisions sent to France would spend eight months in training before being placed in the line. Officers were routinely absent from their immediate units, receiving weeks of specialized schooling.

In training and doctrine, the AEF was a conflicted organization. Pershing mistrusted European methods and had come to view the prolonged and costly situation on the Western Front as a result of addiction to trench warfare and its specialized weapons. He believed in the primacy of the infantryman and his rifle to win the battle in the open. So while his men were trained in French methods, his offensive plans would throw them into the open, advancing in line against hardened German emplacements in attacks reminiscent

of the campaigns in 1914–1916. It was reckless, and the result was predictable.



Major General Robert L. Bullard (fifth from left) and his entire staff of the 1st Division, France, January 1918. Standing immediately to Bullard's right is his chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall.

1918: A Year of Promise for the Allies

After negotiating a separate peace with the extremist revolutionary government in Russia on March 3, the German high command raced to transfer 50 divisions from the Eastern Front to the west, bringing the German army's strength up to more than 3.5 million men arranged in 194 divisions. General Ludendorff readied the German army to convert from defensive to offensive operations, in a bid to force the Allies to negotiate a peace before the weight of the American effort would tip the balance. He planned to attack on the Somme, split the British army from the French, and push it into the sea. Meanwhile the Allied governments entered negotiations once again on how best to prosecute the war. The Lloyd George government wanted to hold the line on the Western Front but attack the Central Powers elsewhere, and suggested the reduction of Turkish forces. The Allies, now with America to add to the mix, still did not have a plan for common action or centralized control. Events would quickly demand a remedy.

Friedensturm: The Peace Offensive

Like the elastic defense-in-depth doctrine employed in 1917, which completely frustrated the Allies, the Germans would unleash a new offensive-in-depth doctrine in the spring of 1918. This used the same formations in reverse on the attack. Previously, the British had concentrated on converging fire and assault forces to hammer through on a limited section of the defensive line. The new German assault tactics concentrated on selectively choosing what and where to engage during an attack by bypassing strong points and focusing on

getting into the rear area and destroying artillery, communication, and reinforcement centers as quickly as possible. This was a refinement of Russian general Aleksei Brusilov's concepts of finger-like formations of infantry infiltration and fast artillery bombardment, demonstrated in 1916. The new tactics were first tried against the Russians at Riga on September 3, 1917, and at the Italian battle of Caporetto on October 21. They sent forward small, fast-moving assault groups after a short bombardment, followed by artillery-fire plans of high-explosive rounds mixed with chemical shells of various types of gas and smoke. Their targets were selected communication, reserve, and supply points in the rear.

On March 21, 1918, the German Seventeenth, Second, and Eighteenth armies used the new concepts and drove 40 miles into the British lines, destroying General Gough's Fifth British Army. The Germans captured more than 80,000 men, as well as 975 artillery pieces and key bridges over the Somme River. The bulge in the line ran all the way from Arras in the north, with its apex centering on Cantigny, then bent back to Barisis in the south. Two days later, on March 23 at 7:20 a.m., Paris came under artillery attack for the first time during the war, from three massive long-range guns that would hold the City of Lights in terror until August. This bombardment claimed the lives of 256 people and wounded another 620. By March 25 Haig informed the French that unless he received help he would have to consider withdrawing to the Channel ports, and the coalition forces would be split.

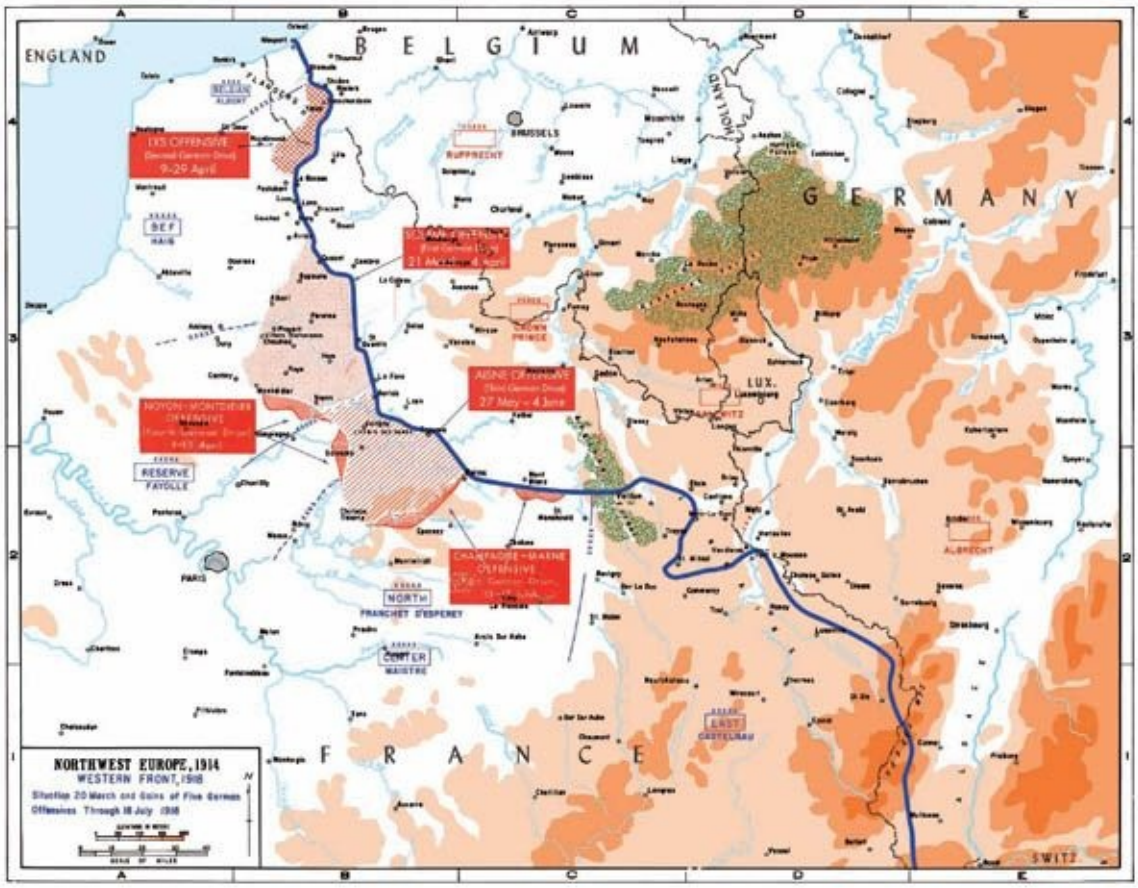
With the goal being the destruction of the BEF, Ludendorff turned his eye to the northern positions around Flanders. He ordered the Fourth Army to attack Plumer's British Second Army at Wytschaete and Messines (south of Ypres), and the German Sixth Army to attack the British First Army under General Henry Horne (which held the line between Armentieres and Givenchy). In what has become known as the Lys Offensive or the second German drive, which struck on April 9, Plumer and Horne fell back but offered stiff resistance. In the middle of these hurricane assaults, Haig issued a direct statement to the troops saying that the British were fighting with their "backs to the wall" and must draw upon the "justice of their cause" to defend to the last man. The British resistance stiffened and the German gains were contained to 13-mile-deep penetration along the east-west Hazebrouck-to-Armentieres railway near Strazeel. By April 29, the drive stopped, but more was to come.

While these events unfolded Haig called for a meeting of the Allies to discuss the situation, and as a result on April 14 General Ferdinand Foch was named Allied commander in chief in order to create a staff organization to direct all Allied actions against the Central Powers. Foch came to the job with a three-point plan that he would soon put into action. He began to organize a strong Allied defense and offensive operations. To strengthen the British position, General Henry Rawlinson replaced Gough as commander of the Fifth Army, which was finally bolstered by 75,000 men in three divisions sent over from England.

On April 23, the British navy launched a raid on the Belgian port of Zeebrugge, which had a main channel that was a major outlet for German submarines. Although it did not all go off as planned, the Royal Navy was able sink two "block" ships filled with concrete at the narrowest point in the channel and detonate two submarines filled with explosives

against the viaduct, in an attempt to wreck the port.

The ruins of St. Martin's Church, in Ypres, Belgium. After four years of warfare, Ypres was barely recognizable.



The German Drive to the South

Under strict secrecy, Ludendorff amassed an assault force of 41 divisions and 1,036 heavy

guns in the forest south of Laon (in northern France). The night before the attack, two German soldiers who had been captured in the area of the old Chemin des Dames battlefield told of an impending major offensive in the area—but it was too late for the Allies to prepare. At 1:00 a.m. on May 27 the German artillery unleashed a bombardment that reached back 12 miles into the French reserve and artillery line, smothering the area in exploding steel. Under complete darkness at 3:40 in the morning, 17 assault divisions moved south and the French Sixth Army under General Denis Auguste Duchêne dissolved.

Events for the tiny AEF began to move rapidly. On March 28 General Pershing and General Tasker Bliss met with Foch and offered the immediate use of all manpower the AEF had in France for the emergency. That very day the U.S. 1st Infantry Division, under the support of the French army, successfully assaulted the town of Cantigny, the first objective to be taken by an AEF infantry division. On the morning of May 29 the Germans captured Soissons and the French government began to make preparations to evacuate itself from Paris to Bordeaux. The German forces drove on to the River Marne, 37 miles from Paris, reaching Château-Thierry on June 1. Here the 7th Machine Gun Battalion of the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division manned the bridges with French Hotchkiss machine guns. They stopped the attackers on June 2.

Further west the French Sixth Army, bolstered by the U.S. 2nd Division, determined to stop the German drive to Paris. The 2nd Infantry Division was unique in that it contained a brigade of U.S. Marines. They attacked the German positions north of Lucy-le-Bocage in a forest known as the Belleau Wood. The Marines' ferocious attacks launched into the woods between June 6 and June 25 blunted the German drive on Paris.

The Germans had advanced a 34-mile penetration into French lines along a 55-mile front in nine days, but had completely outrun their supply lines. In 76 whirlwind days the German army erased all of the Allies' hard-fought gains won since 1916.

Like a boxer, Ludendorff struck the French left on June 9, between Montdidier and Noyon on the Oise River. After two days the German advance was stopped by a Franco-American defense. Foch issued a document on June 16 instructing all Allied commanders to create defense-in-depth positions to counter the German tactics being used on the drives. He also issued plans for three counteroffensives on Lys, the Somme, and the Marne.

The Spanish Flu

The end of June and early July did not produce any major offensive actions, as both sides consolidated supplies and men—but Nature would take up the war on its own. In the early spring French soldiers complained about a flu that would last about three days. By March, cases of the flu had spread to the United States. It spread worldwide at an alarming rate. In Germany, the malnourished population suffered acutely from the flu and reduced its capacity to continue the war. At the time it was reported that 21.5 million people died from the flu worldwide.

The Champagne-Marne Offensive

Having resupplied, orders were issued to push the German Seventh and First armies south against the Marne, enveloping the fortified city of Reims. Due to good intelligence, the French knew the location, date, and hour of attack. The U.S. 3rd Infantry Division was added to the French Center Army group and moved up to the Marne River. To counter the attack the French launched a preemptive bombardment and caught many of the German assault units before they could advance.

On the left of the Allied line, the German 10th Infantry Division, rated as a first-class assault unit, crossed the Marne between Château-Thierry and a small bridge and farm near the town of Mezy. This section of the river was held in force by the 30th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division. Numbering 3,700 men, this one regiment contained more than the whole French division to which it was assigned. The Germans locked horns with the men of the 30th Infantry but were thrown back. During the attack the French units on the 3rd's right and left flanks fell back to keep the infantry out of the German bombardment and to allow French artillery to stop the advance, but this plan was not clearly communicated and it left the Yanks on their own in their first battle. Fighting in small groups in an area of three square miles, they inflicted 400 German casualties and held fast, earning the distinction of being called the Rock of the Marne. Little did they know at the time, their actions proved to be a turning point in the war.

With the Germans checked on the Marne, Foch ordered a counterattack for July 18, 1918. Eight U.S. infantry divisions took part in the offensive supporting the Tenth, Sixth, Ninth, and Fifth French armies. To lead it off, the French Tenth Army under General Charles Mangin unleashed a surprise attack supported by the 1st, 2nd, and parts of the 4th U.S. infantry divisions. The Allies pushed hard against a skillful German withdraw that was covered by ample machine guns and screening artillery bombardments. In 10 days the Germans had fallen back 12 miles to the Ourcq River and by August 6 the line had been pushed another 10 miles to the River Vesle, retaking Soissons and reducing the threat to Paris. Unknown to the Allies at the time, Foch's counterattack took the initiative of the situation and forced Ludendorff on July 20 to cancel his planned attack on Haig's forces. The BEF was spared. On July 24 Foch met with Haig and Pershing and laid out plans for a series of bold offensives, now that many of the German units had spent their strength and come out of their hardened defenses with their supply lines overextended.

Foch proposed a shift to the BEF zone of operations. During the German drive the important north-south rail junction at Montdidier had been taken. This had to be freed for logistical purposes. Ludendorff did not expect an attack between Arras and Amiens, thinking any British effort would be around Ypres. After careful and secret preparations, at 4:20 a.m. on August 8 Haig reprised the artillery-tank-aircraft strategy of Cambrai and unleashed a crashing rolling barrage followed by 400 tanks—including some of the new-model Whippet tanks that had entered the line in March. The Whippets, which could move at approximately six miles per hour, were intended to fill the role the cavalry could not accomplish at Cambrai—and one Whippet named *Musical Box* did just that, shooting up the German rear area for 11 hours. After the first day, 1,700 Allied aircraft dominated the battlefield. The attack created a complete rout, and bagged 15,000 prisoners and 400

artillery pieces, driving in nine miles on the first day. It was noted that German defensive operations were confused. The offensive, which lasted until September 2, caused Ludendorff to order two successive withdrawals, stopping his line before Saint-Quentin. The Germans had lost another 100,000 men, and their morale ebbed away.

French troopers under General Henri Gouraud, with their machine guns amongst the ruins of a cathedral near the Marne, driving back the Germans, 1918.

The Italian Campaign

This Italian soldier points and cries out that everyone must do his duty. As the war dragged on, posters increasingly appealed to citizens' duty toward their homeland.

The series of campaigns in northern Italy (waged principally among the armies of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy) proved one of the most problematic theaters of the war.

Fought over some of the worst terrain in Europe, this theater drained troops from both Austria's and Germany's main efforts on both the Eastern and Western fronts. Weather added to the misery; on December 13, 1916, known as White Friday, 10,000 soldiers were killed by avalanches in the Dolomites.

In May 1915 Italy joined the war against the Central Powers, with expansionist goals in the provinces of Trentino and South Tyrol, the Austrian Littoral, and northern Dalmatia. Italy planned to open the war with a lightning offensive intended to swiftly capture several Austrian cities. This never materialized, and both sides settled in for a long, wretched series of brutal battles.

Battles Along the Isonzo River

In June 1915 Italy's opening offense targeted the town of Gorizia, on the Isonzo River, then moved on to secure the highlands along the Austrian Littoral, which would facilitate further offenses towards Trieste, Fiume, Krainburg, and Laibach. However, the poorly equipped and ill-trained Italian army was unable to logistically support movement rapidly to take the Austrians by surprise. The newly appointed Italian commander, Luigi Cadorna,

compounded his army's problems through his draconian leadership, making him universally despised by his troops.

Italian forces outnumbered the Austrians three to one. Still, at the beginning of the campaign strongly fortified Austrian defensive positions along the Julian Alps and the northwestern highlands proved formidable. In almost every case Austrian forces held the high ground, thwarting Italian efforts. Repeated Italian offensives resulted in no significant gains along the Isonzo. A total of 12 battles would be fought on this front before war's end. The Sixth Battle of the Isonzo resulted in the greatest success for the Italians, as they finally captured the town of Gorizia, buoying their flagging morale. Excluding this small victory, the battles for the Isonzo managed to accomplish little more than wearing down the already exhausted armies.

The Trentino or Asiago Offensive

In reaction to Italy's offensives, the Austrians planned a counteroffensive directed at control of the plateau of Altopiano di Asiago. If successful, Austrian forces would break through to the Po River plain, thus cutting off Italian armies in the north. Though warned of the attack, the local Italian commander chose to conduct local offensives instead of preparing a defense. The Austrian offensive began on March 11, 1916, with 15 divisions. The unprepared Italian positions quickly collapsed. The Italians narrowly avoided defeat by transferring reinforcements from other fronts.

The frequency of offensives for which the Italian soldiers participated between May 1915 and August 1917, one every three months, was higher than any of the armies on the Western Front.

The Battle of Caporetto and Italian Retreat to the Piave River

Seeking to build on their insignificant gains along the Isonzo, the Italians planned a two-pronged attack against the Austrian lines north and east of Gorizia. The Austrians easily checked the advance east, but Italian forces under Luigi Capello managed to break the Austrian lines and capture the Bainsizza Plateau. The Italians found themselves on the verge of victory, but logistical failings forced a withdrawal.

By the summer of 1917 the Austrians, pushed to the breaking point, received desperately needed reinforcements from the German army, rushed in from the Eastern Front. The German arrival was coupled with the introduction of storm-troop infiltration tactics, regaining the offensive for the Austrians.

With Austria resurgent, the unhappily situated Italians suffered mutinies and plummeting morale, crippling their army from within. On October 24, 1917, the Austrians and Germans launched the Battle of Caporetto with a huge artillery barrage followed by infantry using storm troopers, bypassing enemy strong points and attacking on the Italian rear. At the end of the first day, the Italian Army had retreated 12 miles to the Tagliamento

River.

American soldiers from the 332nd Infantry Regiment on the Piave front during a shower of hand grenades into the Austrian trenches, September 1918.

1918: The Battle of the Piave River

Advancing quickly, the Austrians rapidly outran their supply lines, forcing them to stop and regroup. The Italians were pushed back to defensive lines near Venice, on the Piave River. Having suffered 600,000 casualties to this point in the war, the Italian government in an act of desperation was forced to call to arms all males who were 18 years old. In November 1917, British, French, and eventually U.S. troops were sent to Italy to reinforce troop strength and bolster morale. The following spring, Germany pulled out its troops for use in offensives on the Western Front. This forced Austria to opt for a cumbersome two-pronged offensive against the Italians, which would prove impossible to execute.

The Battle of the Piave River began with a diversionary attack near the Tonale Pass, which the Italians easily repulsed after two days. Austrian deserters betrayed the objectives of the upcoming offensive, which allowed the Italians to move two armies directly into the path of the Austrian advance, dooming its objectives.

The Battle of Vittorio Veneto

The Allies continued to pressure Italy to launch a counteroffensive following the Battle of the Piave. The Italian army had suffered huge losses in the battle, and considered an offensive dangerous. General Armando Diaz waited for more reinforcements to arrive from the Western Front. By October 1918, he was finally ready to act. The plan called for an attack along two axes. The main attack, conducted by Italian troops reinforced by British and French divisions and one American regiment, would fall along the Piave River.

Their objective was to capture the city of Vittorio Veneto, which sat astride Austrian lines of communication between their forces operating in the mountains to the north and those forces on the Adriatic plain to the south of the city. If the operation was a success, it would drive a wedge between the two Austrian armies, turning the flank of both forces, separating one from the other and causing havoc on both forces' logistics. The secondary attack fell to the Italian Fourth Army; they were to penetrate the Austrian front at Monte Grappa to the west, in order to stabilize the Italian left flank. Though Austrian soldiers fought fiercely, the superior numbers of the Italians, British, and French overwhelmed them, crushing the Austrian defensive line.

November 3 brought the surrender of 300,000 Austrian soldiers. The Battle of Vittorio Veneto effectively finished the Austro-Hungarian army as a fighting force, and triggered the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The armistice with Austria was signed near Padua on November 3, and took effect on November 4, at three o'clock in the afternoon. Austria and Hungary signed separate armistices following the overthrow of the Habsburg monarchy and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

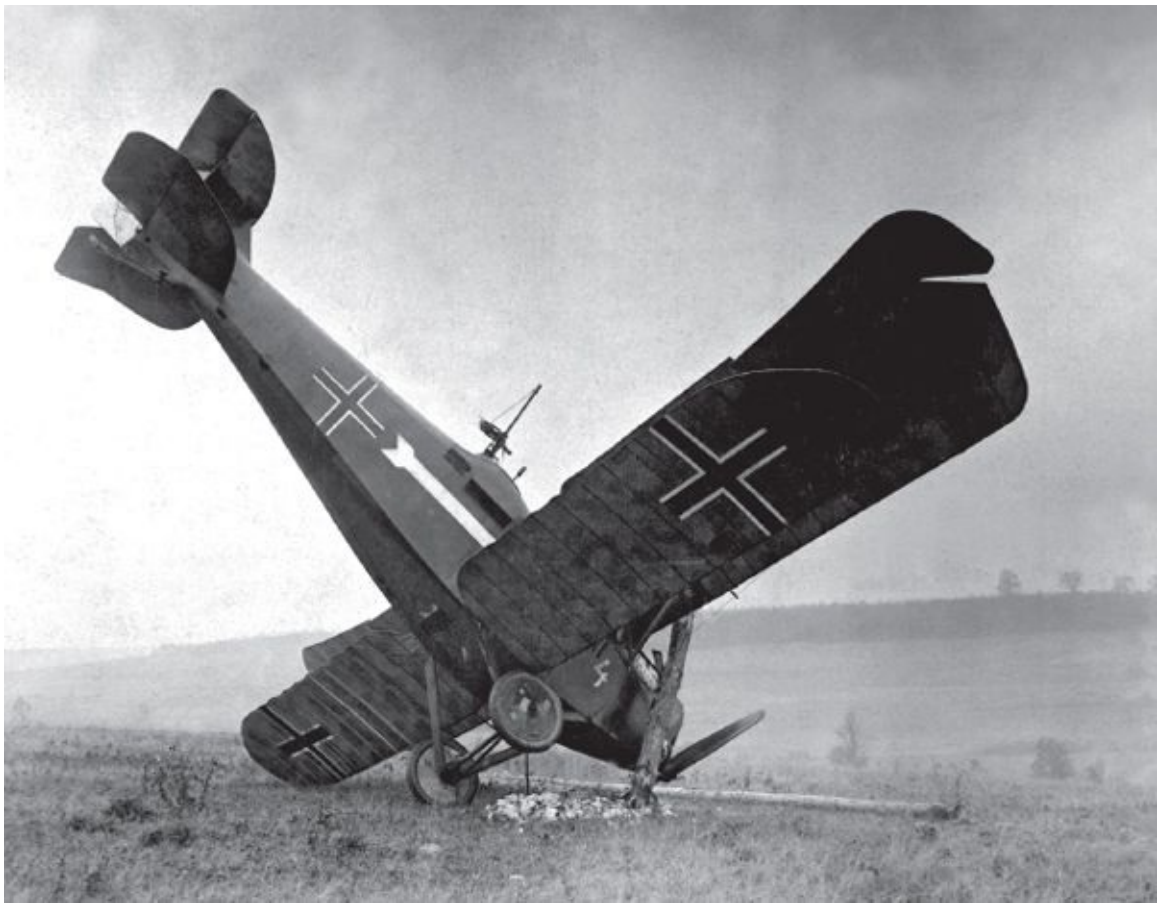
The American First Army Activated

While the Germans were suffering reversals at the hands of the BEF, Marshal Foch authorized General Pershing to activate the U.S. First Army on August 10. The Foch-Pershing agreement to create an independent army came with conditions that would truly test the new organization. The agreed-upon plan would have the American First Army reduce the Saint-Mihiel sector bulge; stabilize the line; create an American Second Army utilizing newly arrived divisions; disengage the First Army from battle; move its 600,000 men, 3,000 artillery pieces, and supplies approximately 50 miles over three main roads into the Meuse-Argonne sector; and be ready for renewed action in a matter of 14 days. It was a very tough timetable even for a mature organization and when Pershing left Foch's headquarters French staff officers expressed doubts they would pull it off.

Pershing turned to a young colonel on his staff by the name of George C. Marshall and entrusted him with the monumental task of creating the operational order for the largest logistical move in Army history. Marshall created the plan in an hour while poring over a map of the area. On September 12, 1918, the U.S. First Army launched an offensive of its own, opening with a heavy bombardment at 1:00 a.m. After four hours of artillery bombardment, men of nine American divisions and three of the French colonial corps cleared the Saint-Mihiel Salient in 36 hours, capturing 15,000 men and 250 guns.

The attacking infantry was supported by Colonel William "Billy" Mitchell's ad-hoc air force of 600 planes flown by pilots from five different Allied countries. They executed a complex air-support plan that devastated the Germans. Roaring to life for the first time in combat the AEF tank corps employed French FT-17 tanks under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Patton, who was wounded in the attack. Pershing's First Army was a success and advanced more than 12 miles along a nearly 50-mile front. Immediately Marshall's plan was put into action and heavy artillery units began to reposition for the

long march north. The move was rough-and-tumble in poor weather and road conditions with traffic jams and broken-down transport, but it did go off and on time. On September 20 the American Second Army was activated under General Robert L. Bullard; it took over the new Saint-Mihiel sector line. Pershing and the AEF now had responsibility of an approximately 80-mile-long section of the front, with the rough terrain around Verdun and the Argonne Forrest held by General Max von Gallwitz's German army in a 12-mile-deep defensive position ahead of him.



A German plane brought down in the Argonne by American machine gunners, between Montfaucon and Cierges, France, October 4, 1918.

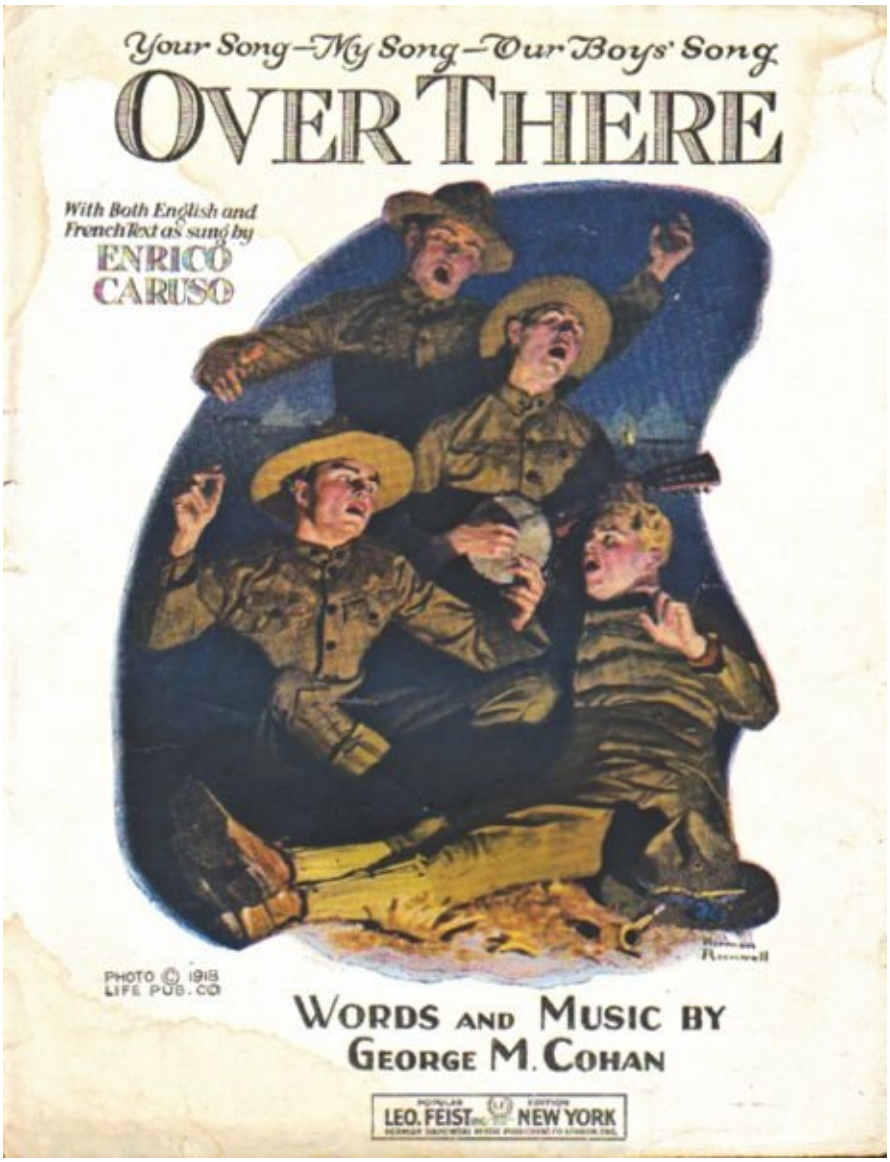
The roof of the Crown Prince's observatory, showing damage made by German shells. American soldiers are using

observation instruments left behind by the Germans in their retreat from the Marne. October 1918.

A squad of American soldiers listening to one of their comrades playing the organ in the half-wrecked old church in Exermont, in the Argonne, France, October 11, 1918.

Private D.L. Greer, Miss H.C. Perry, Private V. Ratman, and Miss P.F. Parkman make doughnuts for the boys of the U.S. VII Corps, Dun-sur-Meuse, France, November, 1918.

American advance northwest of Verdun: the ruined church on the crest of the height of Montfaucon. This was the condition of the site after Americans finally drove out the Germans.


Your Song—My Song—Our Boys' Song
OVER THERE
With Both English and French Text as sung by
ENRICO CARUSO
PHOTO © 1918 LIFE PUB. CO
WORDS AND MUSIC BY
GEORGE M. COHAN
LEO. FEIST INC.
NEW YORK


THIS IS THE SONG THAT INSPIRED ALL AMERICA
WAKE UP, AMERICA!
LYRIC BY
GEORGE GRAFF, JR.
LEO. FEIST INC.
NEW YORK
MUSIC BY
JACK GLOGAU

Tin Pan Alley in New York cranked out plenty of tunes to keep the soldiers marching. Illustrated here are sheet-music covers of but a few examples of popular Great War songs.

German machine-gun nest and dead gunner, Villers Devy Dun Sassey, France, November 1918.

The Allied Drive—And the End of the War

With numerical superiority and the AEF in place in front of the Argonne Forest, Foch was ready to launch the whole of the Allied line at once. Their main objective was to deny the enemy the use of the railroad centers at Aulnoye and Mézières outside of Sedan. On

September 26 the Franco-American offensive against the Meuse-Argonne sector crashed into the forest. From the 27th to September 29 the Allies launched an offensive operation a day, from the Argonne to the Ypres salient. All along the line the Germans began to retreat. By October 3 the German high command began talking seriously about entering into peace negotiations while pulling their armies back to keep them intact. The Germans gave ground stubbornly, leaving pockets of machine-gun crews and artillery to slow down the advancing Allied forces, exacting high numbers of casualties. The actions moved from open warfare to trenches and strong points and back again. There was little chance for maneuver and the U.S. infantry divisions suffered high casualties battering the German defenders. On October 12 Germany's chancellor, Prince Max, of the German grand duchy of Baden, contacted the government of the United States: the German high command wanted to negotiate terms. This set off a series of military and diplomatic events that would bring the war to an end.

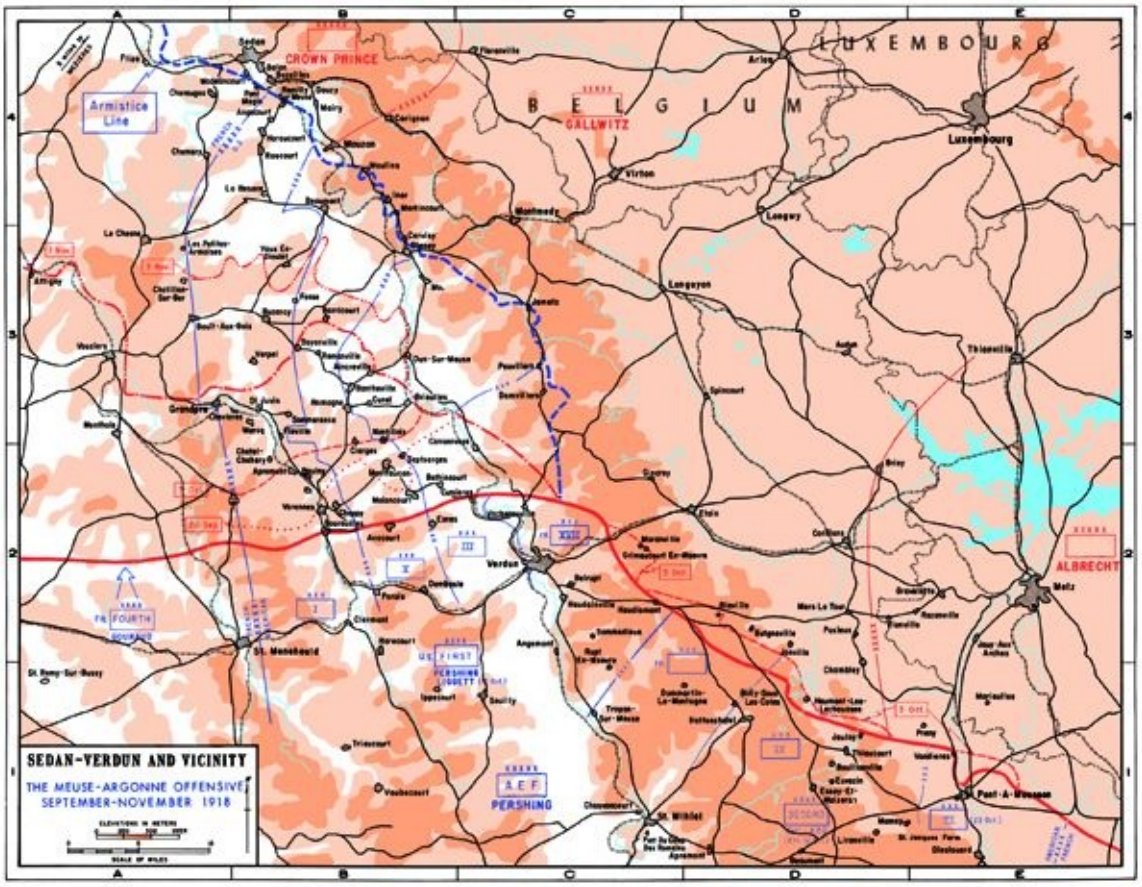
German prisoners in a French prison camp. As the end drew near, more and more Germans laid down t heir arms.

On October 18 the AEF broke through the defense system in the Argonne and the British drive in the north took Le Cateau heading toward the railhead at Aulnoye. It was too much for General Ludendorff, who resigned on October 27. The next day the German navy mutinied. On November 1 the American First Army (now commanded by General Hunter Liggett) rammed its way to Boult-aux-Bois and in five days the U.S. 42nd Infantry Division was before the city of Sedan. Events moved at a rapid but deadly pace. On November 4 the Allies finally determined the language of the armistice agreement that would be presented to the Germans, and on November 6 around midnight Marshal Foch received a wireless message that the German delegates wanted to cross the lines. On November 9 a German republic was proclaimed and the Kaiser abdicated his throne. The next day the American Second Army broke through in their sector. An end was in sight.

Street corner in Poelcapelle, Belgium. December 19, 1918.

Aerial view of the ruins of Vaux, France, 1918.

President Woodrow Wilson, seated at a desk with his wife, Edith Bolling Galt, standing at his side. After the United States entered the war, Wilson became progressively enchanted with the idea of an international organization designed to keep the peace.



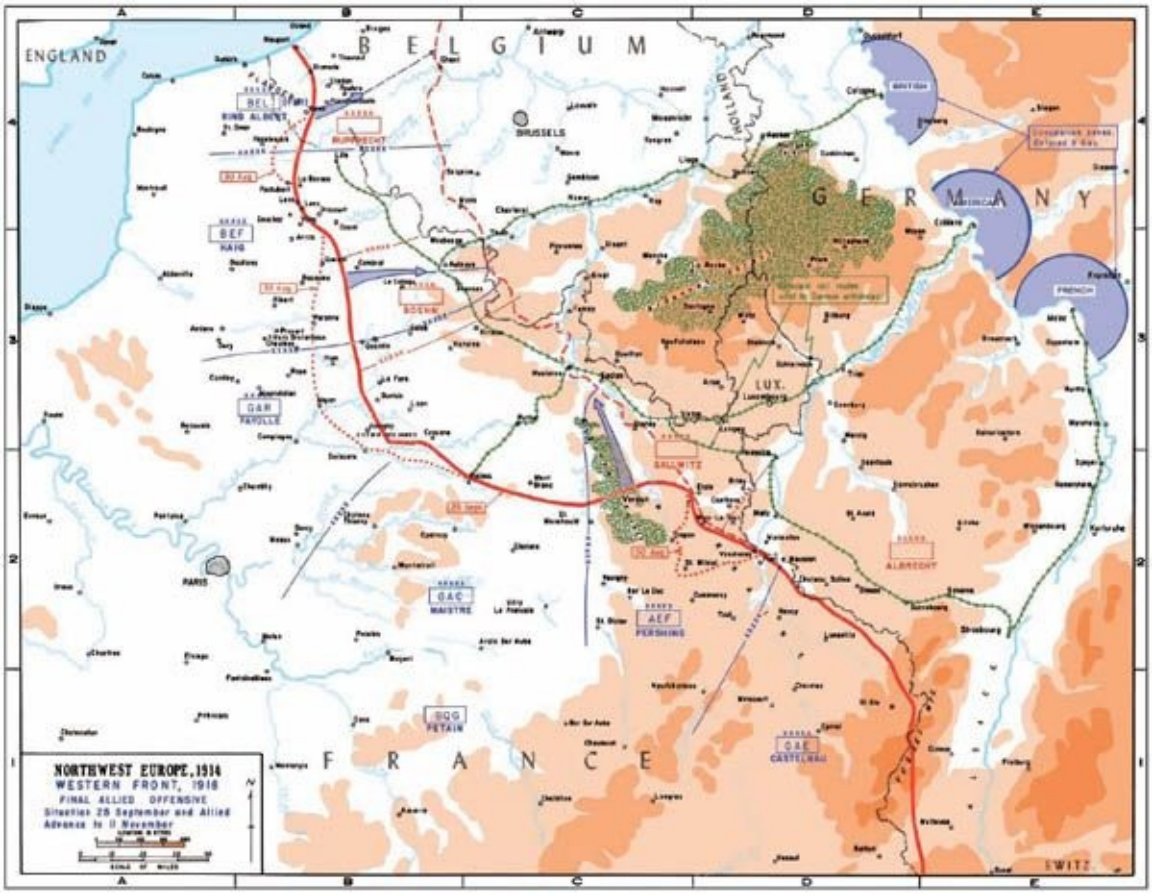
First Lieutenant James R. Europe, director of the 369th Infantry Regimental Band, performing for patients at Hospital Number 9, Paris, France, September 4, 1918. American bands like this one were credited with introducing jazz music to Europe.

The Price

In just over 18 months the United States went from an industrialized nation with a small army to a world power. In 13 operations over the 200 days that the American Expeditionary Force was in combat, it advanced 484 miles against a stubborn enemy along a 398-mile front, and captured 63,000 prisoners. As with the other warring nations, success came with a terrible cost. Out of the 2,084,000 American soldiers who reached Europe, 50,280 were killed and 205,690 were wounded. In terms of national funds, the war cost the United States $1 million a day.

A detachment of the African-American U.S. 369th Infantry Regiment, the "Harlem Hellfighters," in the trenches in France. American commanders did not want to integrate African-American troops with white troops, so the 369th was assigned under French command. They performed admirably in combat.

The 369th Infantry Regiment returns home: the "Harlem Hellfighters" on board the SS *Stockholm*, February 1919.


ENGLAND
BELGIUM
GERMANY
FRANCE
HOLLAND
LUX.
BRUSSELS
PARIS
BEL
KING ALBERT
BEF
HAIG
GAR
FAYOLLE
GAC
MAISTRE
AEF
PERSHING
GAC
CASTELNAU
GAC
ALBRECHT
GAC
GALLWITZ
GQG
PETAIN
NORTHWEST EUROPE, 1914
WESTERN FRONT, 1918
FINAL ALLIED OFFENSIVE
Situation 26 September and Allied
Advance to 11 November
SWITZ.

Chronology of Events

1917

April 6	The United States declares war on Germany
April 9–May 16	First Battle of Arras
April 16–20	Second Battle of Aisne
April 17–19	Second Battle of Gaza
May 26	First American Army Expeditionary Force arrives in France
May 27–June 7	French soldiers mutiny in several towns
June 7–14	Battle of Messines Ridge
June 13	German bombers attack London
June 28	14,000 U.S. Army regulars and U.S. Marines land at St. Nazaire
July 1	Russian offensive in Galicia
July 2	Greece declares war on the Central Powers
July 12	Germany first uses mustard gas against the British at Ypres
July 31–November 18	Third Battle of Ypres
October 24	Battle of Caporetto
October 31	Third Battle of Gaza
November 6–8	Bolshevik Revolution begins; Red Guards occupy the Kremlin
November 7	Third Battle of Gaza
November 11	First Battle of the Piave
November 20	British Third Army mounts the first tank attack on the Hindenburg Line at Cambrai

November 28	Estonia declares its independence
December 2	Ceasefire begins between Russia and Germany
December 6	Romania signs an armistice with the Central Powers; Finland declares independence
December 7	The United States declares war on Austria
December 9	Romania signs an armistice with Germany; Britain takes Jerusalem
December 22	Leon Trotsky begins peace negotiations on behalf of Russia at Brest-Litovsk

1918

January 12	Latvia declares its independence
January 26	Ukraine declares its independence
January 28–May 15	Finnish civil war
January 31	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) is formed
February 10	Trotsky refuses to negotiate with the Germans
February 14	The Red Army is formed in the USSR
February 16	Lithuania declares its independence
February 18	Germany renews hostilities against Russia
March 3	Preliminary Russian-German Peace of Brest-Litovsk
March 5	Peace agreement between Romania and the Central Powers
March 21–April 5	Second Battle of the Somme
March 22	Second Battle of Arras
March 27	Germans capture Montdidier, 32 miles from Paris

April 1	The Royal Air Force (RAF) is established
April 14	Marshal Ferdinand Foch is appointed Supreme Allied Commander
April 9–29	Battle of the Lys (Somme)
May 7	Peace of Bucharest, between Romania and Central Powers
May 27–June 6	Third Battle of the Aisne
June 1	First cases of Spanish flu are identified
June 2	Battle of Chateau-Thierry
June 6	Battle of Bellau Wood
June 9–14	Battle of the Metz
June 15–24	Second Battle of Piave
July 15–18	Fourth Battle of Champagne
July 15–August 4	Second Battle of the Marne
July 16	Tsar Nicholas of Russia and his family are assassinated in Ekaterinburg
July 21	France retakes Château-Thierry
August 2	France reoccupies Soissons
August 8–11	Battle of Amiens
August 21–29	Second Battle of Albert (Somme)
August 28	German forces retreat above the Aisne
August 29	German forces begin to evacuate from Flanders
September 6	Germany evacuates Lys Salient (Flanders)
September 12–16	Battle of St. Mihiel (Meuse)
September 12	

at Cambrai	Beginning of the battle of the Hindenburg Line
September 19–25	Battle of Megiddo (Palestine)
September 26–November 11	Final Battle of Flanders
September 29	British Expeditionary Force and French forces attack the Hindenburg Line
September 30	Bulgarian-Allied armistice
October 1	British take Damascus
October 3	Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria abdicates in favor of his son, Boris III
October 8–9	Second Battle of Cambrai
October 9	The Allies break the Hindenburg Line
October 14–19	Battle of Courtrai (Flanders)
October 17	American Expeditionary Force breaks through the Kriemhilde Lines (Meuse); British Expeditionary Force Fifth Army occupies Lille
October 17–25	Battle of the Selle
October 20	Germany recalls all U-boats
October 24–November 4	Battle of Vittorio Veneto (Italian front)
October 27	Austria and Germany seek an armistice
October 28	Czechoslovakia declares its independence
October 29	Yugoslavia declares its independence
October 30	Turkey surrenders to the Allies
November	Turkey deports half a million Armenians to Mesopotamia (more than 400,000 will die)
November 1	Serbian forces liberate Belgrade and Serbia

November 3	The Austrian armistice is signed; German naval mutinies at Kiel; Albania is occupied by Italian forces
November 4	Battle of the Sombre
November 8	German revolutionaries seize 11 major cities
November 9	Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany abdicates

The Armistice

The Armistice and the Day the War Ended

This armistice celebration in London included both Yanks and Tommies.

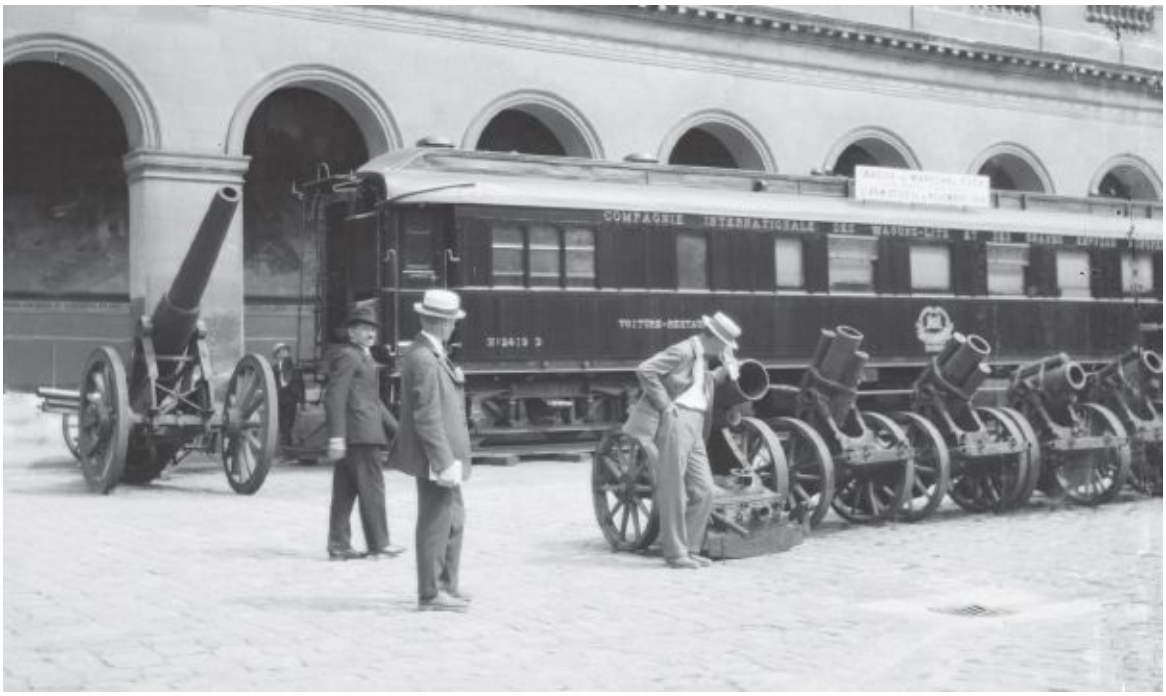
The fighting ended on the Western Front at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. "Armistice Day" it was called thereafter. The agreement to end fighting was signed at 5:00 a.m. on November 11, 1918, on Marshal Ferdinand Foch's train in the Forest of Compiègne in France. The armistice represented victory for the Allies and defeat for Germany but not technically a surrender. It took effect six hours later. Sadly and needlessly, in the six hours between the signing and the time the agreement took effect, fighting continued, resulting in almost 11,000 causalities and more than 2,700 deaths.

The terms of the armistice included the following:

- The end of military hostilities within six hours of signature.
- The removal of all German troops from France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Alsace-Lorraine within 14 days.
- Reparations to be paid to the people of countries occupied by German troops during the war.
- Surrender of 5,000 field and heavy guns; 25,000 machine guns; 3,000 mine

launchers; 1,700 airplanes; 5,000 locomotives; 150,000 wagons; 5,000 trucks; and the railways of Alsace-Lorraine.

- The evacuation of all German troops from territory on the west side of the Rhine River.
- The German evacuation of the Rhine, and creation of 30-kilometer-radius bridgeheads on the right side of the Rhine at the cities of Cologne, Koblenz, and Mainz—these to be occupied by Allied and U.S. troops.
- The retreat of all German troops from the Eastern Front, back to German territory (as it was defined on August 1, 1914).
- Renunciation of the treaties of Brest-Litovsk (signed March 3, 1918, with Russia) and Bucharest (signed May 7, 1918, with Romania).
- Disarmament and internment of the German fleet, and surrender of German submarines.
- Return of prisoners.
- Surrender of material and restitution of seized property and payment of damages.



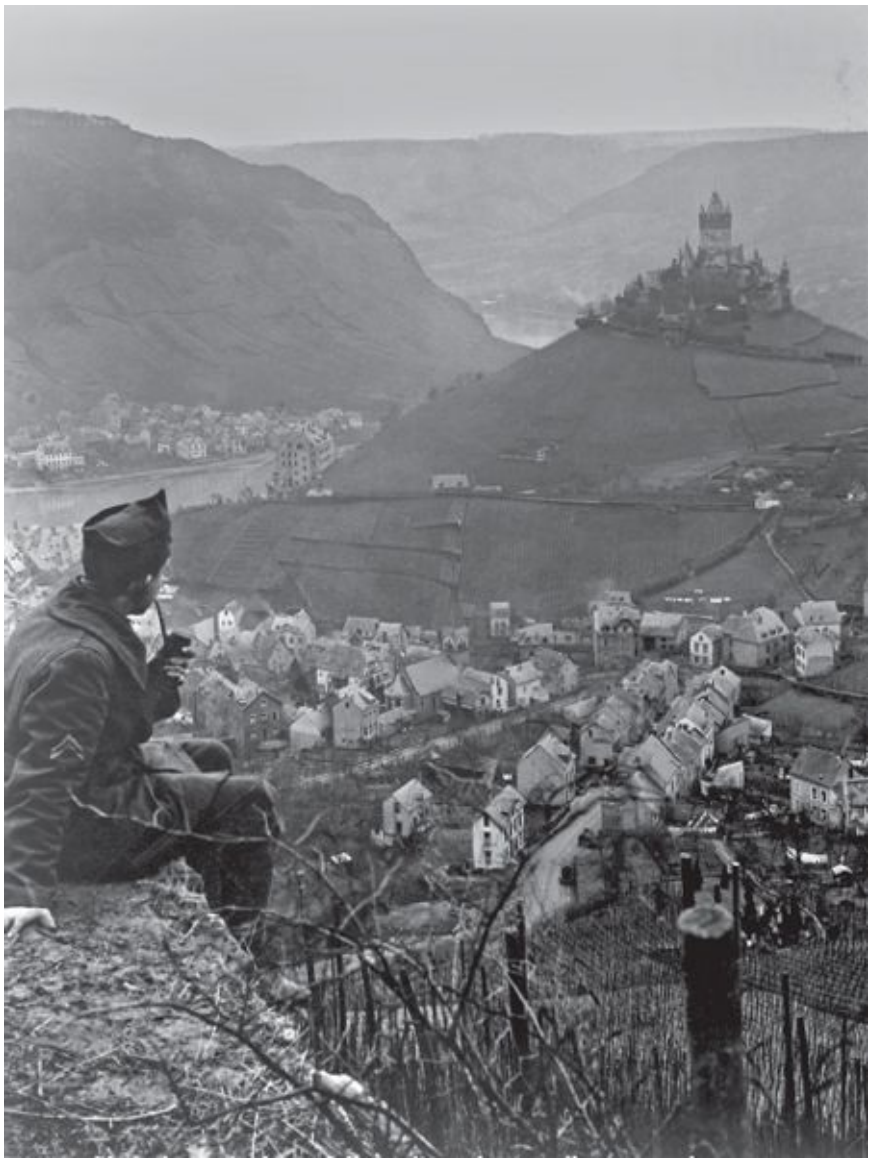
Marshal Ferdinand Foch's railroad carriage, where the armistice was signed—shown on display in the Cour des Invalides, Paris, in the early 1920s.

The announcement of the armistice on November 11, 1918, was the occasion of a monster celebration in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Thousands of people massed on all sides of a replica Statue of Liberty on Broad Street and cheered unceasingly.

The Human Toll

When the armistice was signed, the victorious Allied Powers did not realize the cost of their victory, and the defeated nations did not yet understand the extent of their defeat. The cost in human blood was dreadful. Nearly 10,000,000 soldiers were killed in the great conflict on both sides. Amongst the Great Powers alone, the Russians and Germans counted almost 2,000,000 dead, Britain and its empire more than 1,000,000, and the United States over 116,000. France sacrificed more than 1,400,000 men to the Great War—one out of every five French men between the ages of 20 and 45 died. In addition to the military deaths, there were countless civilian casualties; hundreds of thousands of victims of the Armenian genocide; and millions who died from the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1919 (commonly called then “La Grippe”), which spread globally.

One of the guns of Battery D, 105th Field Artillery, 27th Division, New York National Guard, showing an American flag hoisted after the last shot had been fired when the armistice took effect. Etraye, France.



The old castle perched on a hilltop above the Moselle River and the town of Cochem, Germany—the headquarters of the U.S. Fourth Army Corps.

Ambulance crews conducting preparation drills prior to receiving flu victims.

A typical hospital ward during the Spanish flu epidemic. A nurse wears a mask as protection against the deadly illness.

Continued Fighting, Allied Occupation

Young women in Luxembourg waving flags, greeting the American Army of Occupation, 1918.

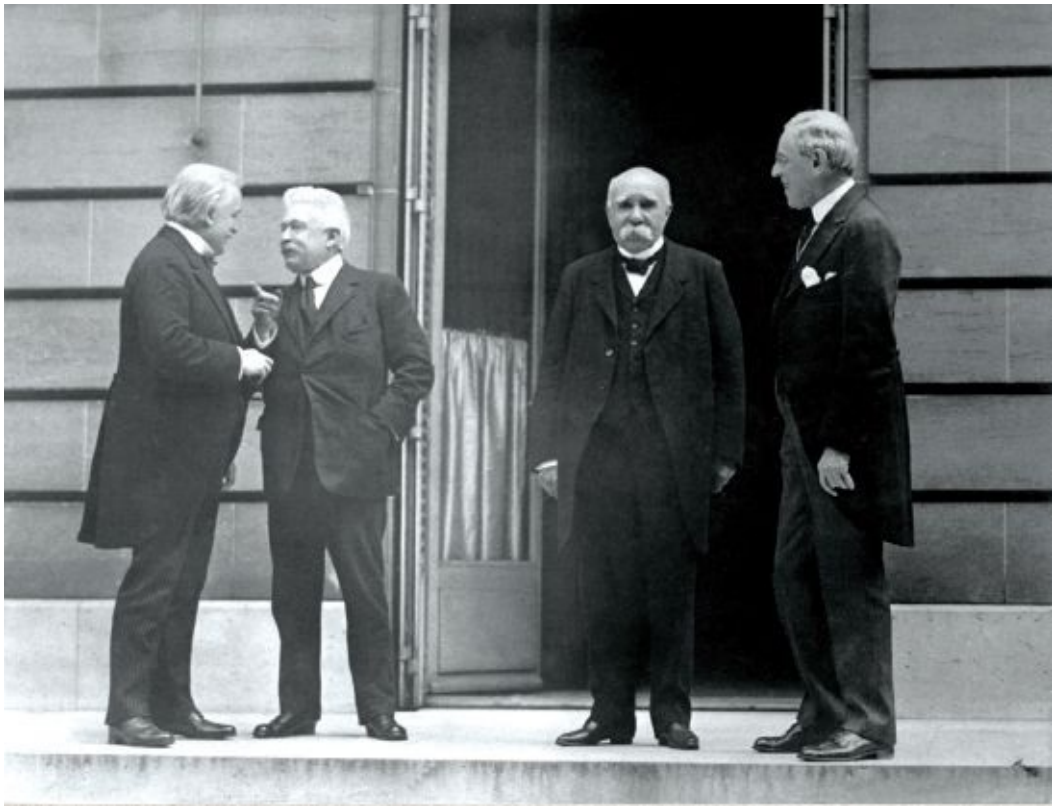
Fighting continued in many parts of Europe. In Russia, anti-Bolshevik forces fought to establish an alternative government. Vladimir Lenin's revolutionary Third International (the summoning of socialists of the world to form a new global organization) was eventually founded in Moscow in March 1919. Nationalist movements in the Ukraine and in the Baltic region struggled to set up independent states. In central and southeastern Europe, ethnic groups freed from Habsburg rule fought for national supremacy. By the terms of the armistice, the Allies occupied the German Rhineland: British forces occupied the area on the river's left and French forces on its right; the U.S. Third Army entered Luxembourg on November 20 to a surprisingly warm reception from German-speaking Luxembourgers. Proceeding to the Rhine, the Third Army then entered Germany on December 1 and its soldiers were also warmly greeted by most Germans, who welcomed a reprieve from French control. The Allies blockaded Germany and Austria until June 1919.

Economic Hardships

The Allied blockade of Germany and Austria added to the humiliation and economic hardships of a bleak winter in Berlin and Vienna. Throughout Europe, national economies were severely disrupted. Entire regions were devastated. When the hostilities terminated, the populations searched to find their former lives—and what they discovered was unimaginable. As profound as the loss of human flesh, the scars to the land were equally severe. Some villages had ceased to exist as they had before the war. Long stretches of forests had disappeared and land capable of cultivation was rendered barren. The industrial base, particularly in France, had also been decimated. The Germans had practiced a policy of excessive exploitation of all economic resources in the regions of France that they occupied for almost four years. These economic dislocations and hardships added to political instability as hasty preparations were made for the Peace

Conference in Paris.

Convention of the Paris Peace Conference

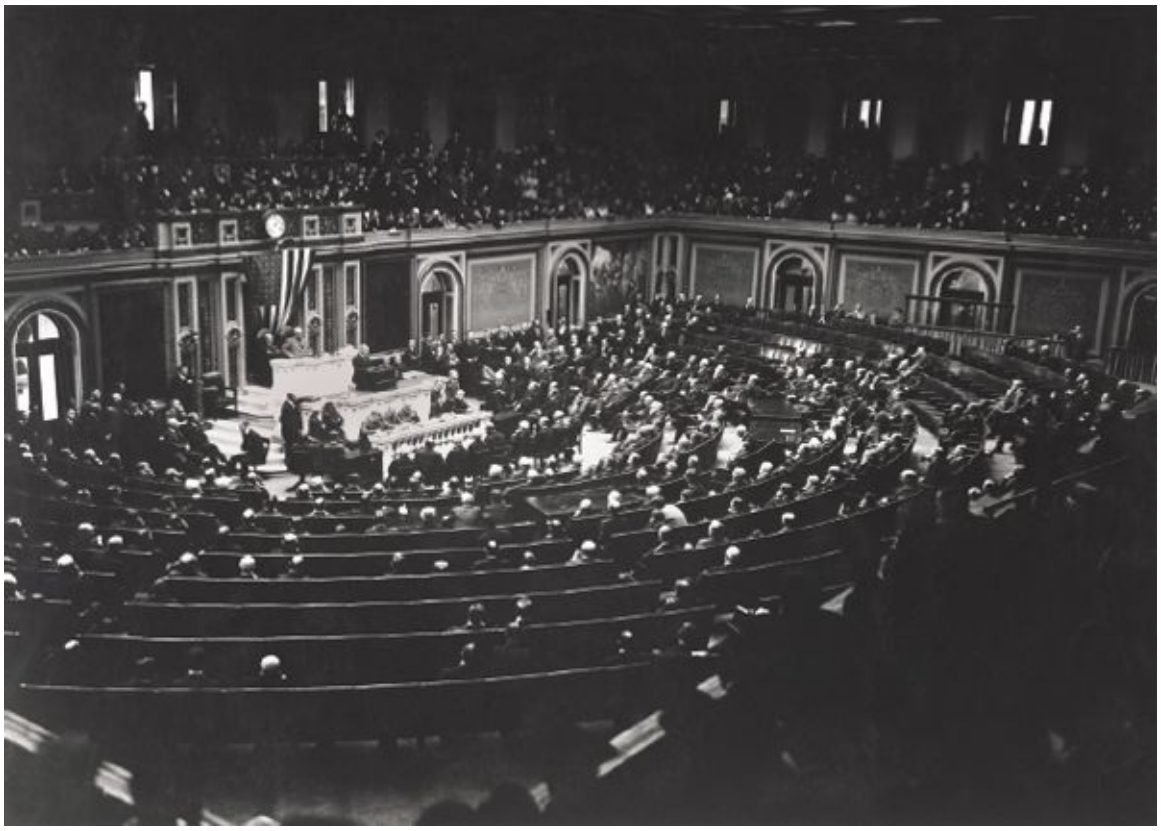


The Counsel of Four of the Peace Conference—David Lloyd George of Great Britain; Vittorio Orlando of Italy; Georges Clemenceau of France; Woodrow Wilson of the United States—at the Hôtel de Crillon, Paris, France, May 27, 1919.

For six months, from January to June 1919, the leaders of the victorious powers met in Paris to impose their will on the defeated. The Council of Four dominated the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference: President Woodrow Wilson of the United States; Premier Georges Clemenceau of France; Prime Minister David Lloyd George of Great Britain; Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando of Italy. Other nations played a lesser role, such as Japan, the first Asian state to be recognized formally as a Great Power. As for the vanquished nations, the German delegation was all but excluded from the conference. Kept under virtual house arrest, the Germans were not permitted to discuss terms of the treaty with the Allied delegations, instead having to submit their comments in writing. And with imperial Russia replaced by a Bolshevik regime, the former Allied power was absent from the conference.

A press pass to the 1919 Peace Conference proceedings.

War Aims and the Fourteen Points



President Woodrow Wilson reading the armistice terms to Congress, November 11, 1918.

Wartime emotions colored the public's expectations for a peace settlement. The long war had necessitated massive propaganda campaigns to rally the home fronts. The famous author H.G. Wells coined the phrase that came to rally the populations of the Entente, or Allied, nations—"the war that will end war." President Wilson in particular shifted the dialogue of Allied war aims from a fight over national interests to a crusade for a lasting and just peace. On January 8, 1918, in the traditional State of the Union address before the U.S. Congress, Wilson outlined in "Fourteen Points" a vision for such an enduring peace. The culminating principle was the formation of a "general association of nations"—what came to be the League of Nations—to keep the peace and guarantee the safety of all nations. In 1919, as Wilson toured parts of Europe en route to Paris, he was met by adoring crowds, especially in Italy. It was Wilson's Fourteen Points that the Germans asked to be the basis of an armistice.

The Council of Four in Paris deliberated, however, not only on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points. Their debates were shaped by prior treaties and agreements made by the various Allies, and by the national strategic and economic interests of the victorious powers. The Allied governments had tried to expand their alliance through a series of secret treaties and promises. To prevent Russia from negotiating a separate peace, Britain and France had agreed in the spring of 1915 to permit Russian control of Constantinople and the Straits in return for acceptance of British influence in Egypt and French control of Alsace-Lorraine after an Allied victory. Then there was a secret treaty with Italy, signed in April 1915, which promised in exchange for Italian entry into the war on the Allied side that it would, in the event of their victory, receive the Alpine areas up the Brenner Pass,

islands and coastline at the head of the Adriatic Sea, the south coast of Turkey, and expansion of Libya and other Italian African colonies. Italy shortly thereafter ended its neutrality and declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary. Romania joined the Allies as well after promises in August 1916 of parts of Hungary, especially Transylvania. At the end of the war, the Allied governments also made promises to minority peoples in the multinational Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, especially to the Poles, who received support for postwar independence. When Russia exited the war in the spring of 1918, the Allies promised a unified Polish nation, taken from German Poland, Austrian Poland, and Russian Poland, as a war aim. Other minorities of the multinational empire of Ottoman Turkey, the "sick man" of Europe, were subjected to vague and contradictory promises. Britain had tried to encourage Arab separatism against the Turks by supporting guerilla warfare in areas that are now Saudi Arabia. The British government made what turned out to be empty promises to a main Arab family for an independent kingdom in return for help in destroying the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, an agreement in May 1916 between Britain and France carved out future colonial spheres of influence in the Near East: France would have primary influence in regions that today are Syria and Lebanon, while the British would exercise predominant control in what is today Iraq, Israel, and Jordan. Finally, in perhaps the agreement of most enduring consequence, the British Balfour Declaration of November 1917 promised to "look with favor" on the creation of a Jewish "national home" in Palestine, an agreement potentially at odds with other British promises in the region.

Chronology of Events

1918

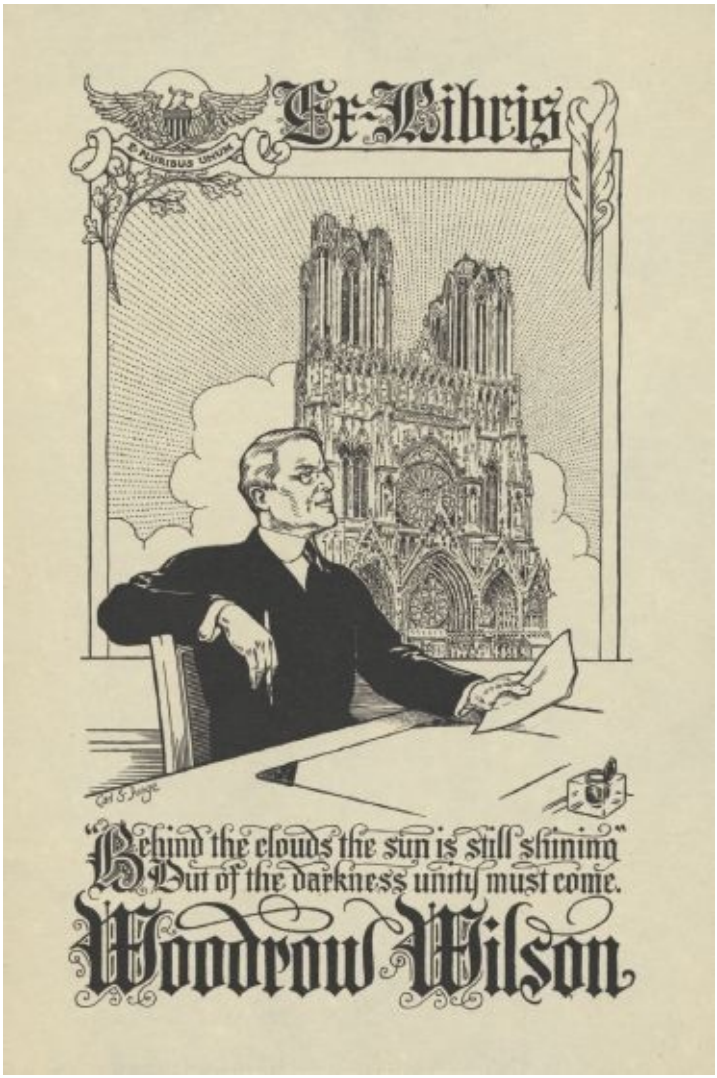
November 9	Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany abdicates
November 10	Ghent is reoccupied by Belgium
November 11	German armistice is signed
November 14	Independent Czechoslovakia is created
November 16	Allied armies begin to occupy Germany; Poland's independence is declared
November 18	Belgians reoccupy Brussels
November 19	Belgians reoccupy Antwerp; France reoccupies Metz
November 21	German fleet is surrendered; Belgian government is reinstated
December 13–14	Last Anglo-Turkish hostilities at Hodeida (Yemen)

1919

June 28	Treaty of Versailles is signed Wilson's Fourteen Points

Wilson's Fourteen Points

President Woodrow Wilson presented the Fourteen Points, intended as a brief statement of Allied war aims, before the U.S. Congress on January 8, 1918. In his two-hour address, delivered in a crescendo of idealistic fervor, Wilson articulated the moral reasons that he believed had justified the revolutionary step of American entry into the Great War. The Fourteen Points eventually became the basis of the armistice with Germany, but the European allies never shared nor agreed to Wilson's principles. Most of them were never implemented.



1. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at.
2. Freedom of navigation upon the seas, in peace and in war.
3. The removal of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations.
4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
5. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
6. The evacuation of all Russian territory.
7. Belgium must be evacuated and restored.
8. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine should be righted.
9. Readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.
10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

11. Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along lines of allegiance and nationality.

12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secured sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.

13. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea.

14. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

The national interests of the Allied governments also clashed with the idealistic language of Wilson's Fourteen Points. France, represented at the Peace Conference by Georges Clemenceau, had endured four years of bloodletting on its soil, and the brunt of Allied deaths. Clemenceau was determined that peace terms would favor French security, meaning measures that would keep Germany as weak as possible militarily, politically, and economically. One faction in France strongly favored the detachment of the Rhineland from Germany. Clemenceau did not ultimately back this campaign, but his refusal to do so made him unwilling to budge on other French security interests, namely the return of Alsace-Lorraine (lost to Prussia in 1871), levying heavy reparations on Germany, and German disarmament. Britain's David Lloyd George had won the election for prime minister in November 1918 using such rousing slogans as "Hang the Kaiser" and "Squeeze Germany 'til the Pips Squeak," by promising the populace that Germany would ultimately pay both materially and morally. Lloyd George also sought to obtain an active role in the Middle Eastern territories of the former Ottoman Turkish empire, as well as in the former German colonies in Africa. Even President Wilson, despite his idealistic rhetoric, was influenced by domestic political concerns. A large Polish constituency within the United States gave him incentive to support Polish claims for a nation-state beyond their ethnic boundaries. Principles set forth in the Fourteen Points for freedom of navigation and removal of barriers to international trade were strategically favorable for a rising commercial power.

Fears of Revolution

The fear of revolution was never far from the minds of the leaders of the victorious powers as they met in Paris. In Britain and France there were economic difficulties and labor unrest. The transformation from war to peace and the accompanying demobilization of their vast armies took their toll on the populations. Fear of social instability was well founded, given the wave of revolutions sweeping Russia and Europe in late 1918 and early 1919. The Allied leaders were not well informed about what was transpiring in Russia. They were apprehensive about the nature and aims of the Bolsheviks. Between October

1918 and the spring of 1919, revolutions erupting in Germany, Austria, and Hungary heightened concerns about the new Soviet regime in Russia. In defeated Germany, the new republic headed by the Social Democratic Party teetered. The Kaiser's abdication and Ludendorff's resignation had precipitated German revolution. Just two days before the armistice, a general strike erupted in Berlin. Soldiers in the German Reserve Army openly revolted. Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were being set up across Germany. And in the rapidly disintegrating Austro-Hungarian Empire, the authority of the emperor over the peoples of the monarchy vanished. In Prague, a new independent Czechoslovakia was proclaimed. Croats and Slovenes declared solidarity with Serbs in a new southern Slav nation soon to be known as Yugoslavia. The Poles in Galicia united with fellow ethnicities in what had been Russian and Prussian Poland to form a new republic. Romanians claimed the Hungarian province of Transylvania. Yet the frontiers, forms of government, and economic bases for the new successor states awaited establishment.

The Controversial Peace Settlement

Collectively known as the peace settlement of Paris, the terms produced by the conference were actually five separate treaties. Each treaty with a defeated nation bore the name of the place near Paris where the formal signing ceremony occurred. This gave rise to the Germans' disdainful reference to them as the "suburban treaties." The most significant Treaty of Versailles, with Germany, was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Hall of Mirrors of the palace. On September 10, 1919, the Treaty of Saint-Germain was signed with Austria. The Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria was signed on November 27, 1919. Terms were reached with Hungary in the Treaty of Trianon on June 4, 1920, after revolutionary Béla Kun's soviet regime was destroyed. Fear of Bolshevism was sufficiently strong to make the Paris Peace Conference leaders forget some of their commitment to democracy. In Hungary they permitted the formation of a reactionary government as the successor to Béla Kun's soviet experiment. Lastly, the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey was signed on August 10, 1920, but never came into operation because the Turkish nationalist movement refused ratification. It was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. Criticism of the overall peace settlement began before it was even completed, and that criticism persisted for the remainder of the century, if not beyond.

Reparations were the most contentious issue created by the Versailles Treaty. In principle, all the victorious powers agreed that Germany should pay war damages for the devastation wrought in Belgium, northeastern France, and other occupied areas. The question was how much and on what timetable. France sought the harshest terms possible to keep Germany in an inferior position on the Continent. Britain realized that the revival of its own economy depended upon a vital German market. Irreconcilable differences amongst the Allies precluded agreement upon on an exact amount until 1921, a couple of years after the armistice. Throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s, the reparations question was disastrous for the economies of Europe, as first Germany and then country after country plummeted into financial depression. Compounding the problem was the treaty's infamous "war guilt clause," which attributed sole responsibility for starting the war to Germany. Infusing morality into the legal terms of the treaty angered the new

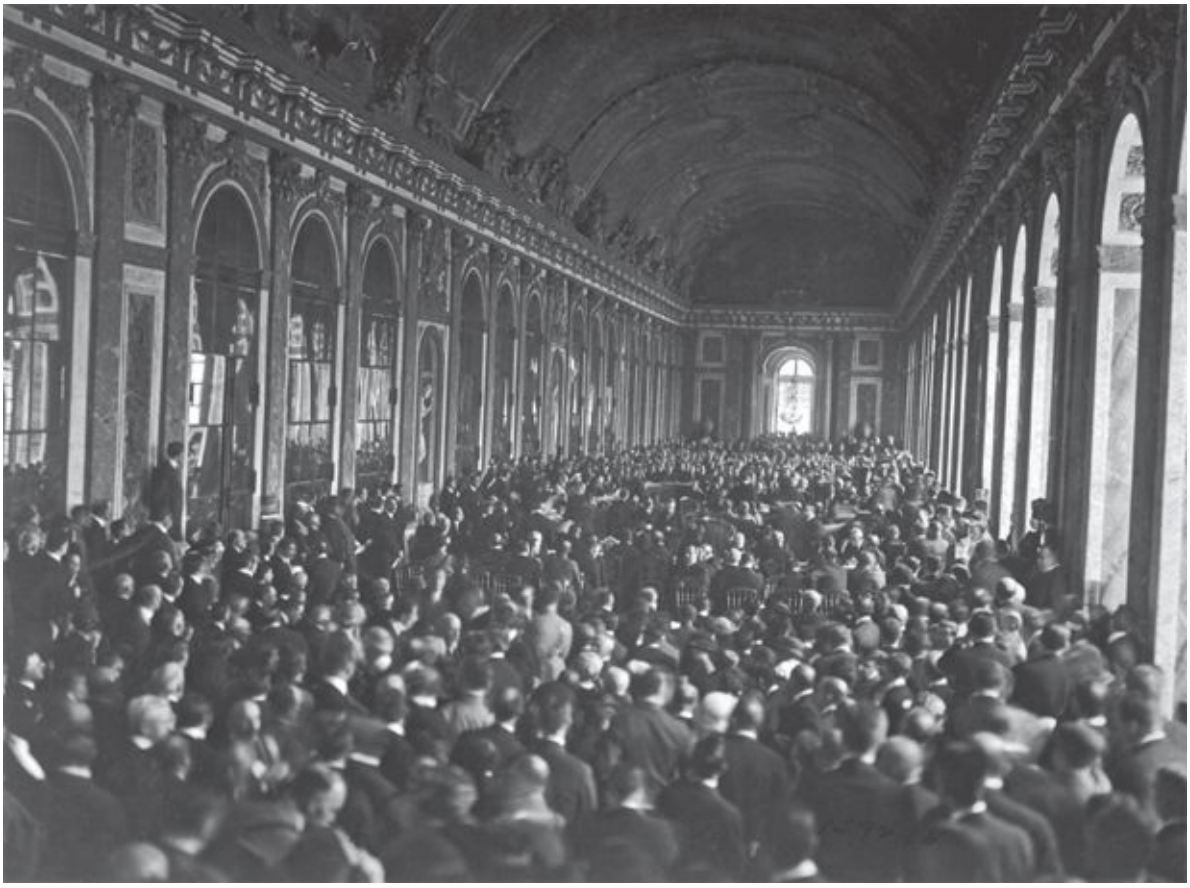
German government. The leaders considered rejecting the ultimate settlement. The moral aspect led to a lasting bitterness amongst the Germans, and the opinion that a dictated punitive peace, a *Diktat*, had been imposed on them.

The Council of Four more easily agreed on the demilitarization of Germany. Yet even on this issue, the victorious powers negotiated from differing policy assumptions. The French government wished to forever cripple Germany militarily. Clemenceau sought essentially the permanent disarmament of Germany. Wilson and to a lesser extent Lloyd George inserted intentionally vague language into the treaty that all nations would strive to reduce their armaments to the lowest level consistent with national security. In the end, clauses in the treaty limited the German army to 100,000 volunteers. Conscription was abolished. Certain types of weapons, such as aircraft and tanks, were not permitted. The German navy was severely limited.

Territorial changes resulted in bitterness amongst the defeated powers and even amongst the ethnic groups that would ostensibly benefit from the settlement terms. The map of Eastern Europe was largely rewritten. The attempt to apply the principle of self-determination, promised in Wilson's Fourteen Points, was impossible given the lack of distinct ethnic boundaries. New nations were carved out of the old empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottomans. Romania gained territory from Russia, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Serbia enlarged to the future Yugoslavia, which included a kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and a separated Austria and Hungary all came into existence. In the West, the national boundaries of the pre-war era remained largely intact. France abandoned its call for a separate Rhineland to serve as a barrier against Germany, but realized the coveted return of Alsace-Lorraine, lost to Germany in 1871.

Overseas men welcomed home: this parade of returned fighters is passing the New York Public Library, 1919.

The Hall of Mirrors and (opposite page) the signing of the peace terms, Versailles, France, June 28, 1919.



Perhaps initially the least controversial part of the settlement (but that which became forever linked with the Treaty of Versailles, at least within the United States), was President Wilson's insistence that the establishment of the League of Nations, a permanent peacekeeping organization, be the first major item of business at the Paris Peace

Conference. In the eyes of the U.S. president, the creation of the League was the last fight of the Great War. Within the first week of the conference, the victorious powers unanimously adopted the League in principle. The precise terms took much longer. The League was formally adopted at the end of April 1919; it was comprised of a General Assembly of all member states and a Council of the five Great Powers. (In this respect the composition of the League of Nations was later replicated in the United Nations, after World War II.) The League was to respect and preserve the territorial integrity of all member nations and adjudicate international disputes. The League created a mandate system of three classifications to administer the former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific as well as those of the non-Turkish provinces of the Ottoman Empire. But the League of Nations was fatally flawed from the beginning. The lack of an enforcing arm to combat a nation's aggression severely undercut its effectiveness. And the organization's notion of collective security required unanimous support of the Great Powers to enforce resolutions.

The League of Nations would die without the support of the United States. President Wilson, who suffered a severe stroke while lobbying across the country for popular support for the League, was unable to prevail. The Republican-majority Senate, with Wilson's political nemesis Henry Cabot Lodge leading the anti-League crusade, ultimately refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

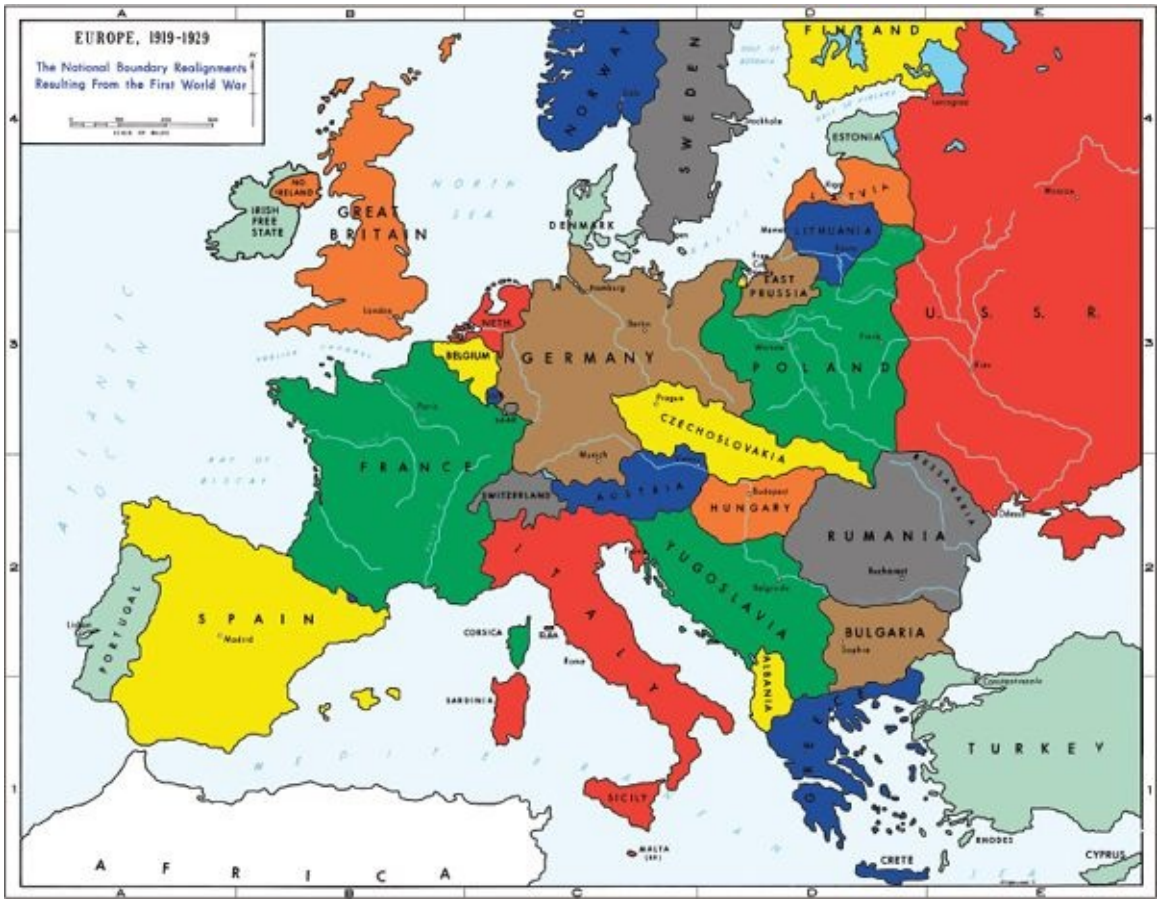
The Paris peace settlement was not instantly in effect after the first and most prominent Treaty of Versailles was signed. Not only did the United States ultimately fail to ratify it, but throughout Europe, complications delayed implementation. Terms of the treaty had been left intentionally ambiguous. The disarmament of all the Central Powers needed to be completed and their amputated military forces inspected. The sum of reparations was yet to be calculated. The setting up of the League of Nations was a logistical nightmare. Plebiscites promised in regions of mixed populations on Germany's border had to be fulfilled. And in many other ways, the peace of 1919 was illusory. The ethnic groups of Eastern Europe continued to fight over their new national boundaries. The Russian civil war persisted. And the tumultuous decade of the 1920s became the more turbulent decade of the 1930s with the Ethiopian War of the mid-decade, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and Japan's aggression beginning in the Pacific.

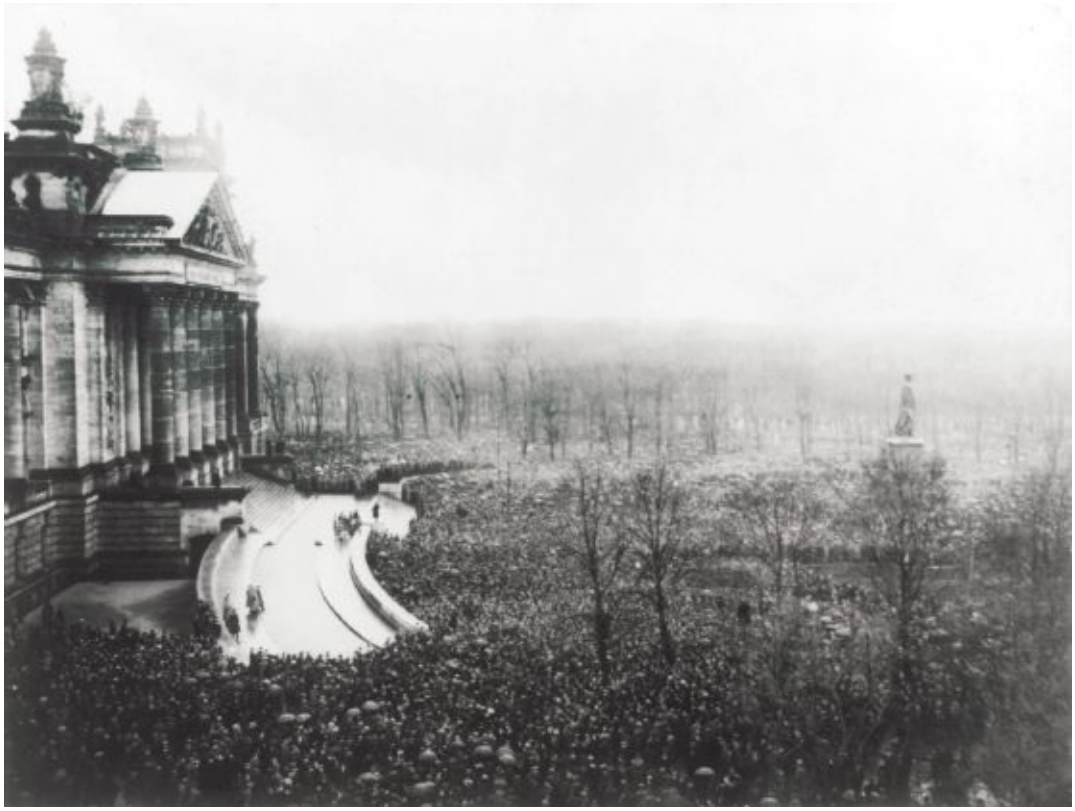
The World After the First World War

In 1914, Europe dominated the world. By 1918, Europe left the Great War exhausted. Four empires collapsed: the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires were partitioned into new nations; Russia plunged into a war between the Bolsheviks and the "White" Russians; Germany teetered on the edge of civil war. The British Empire was gravely wounded. France emerged from the Paris Peace Settlement with all but its power and influence on the Continent. Outside Europe, the differences rendered between 1914 and 1918 were perhaps less stark but nonetheless great. America's entry into the war set it on a course steadily closer toward a permanently prominent place in the international arena. In Asia, Japan's imperial ambitions apparent in 1914 emerged full-blown by the end of the war. Across the globe, the Great War forever changed the world order. The European and

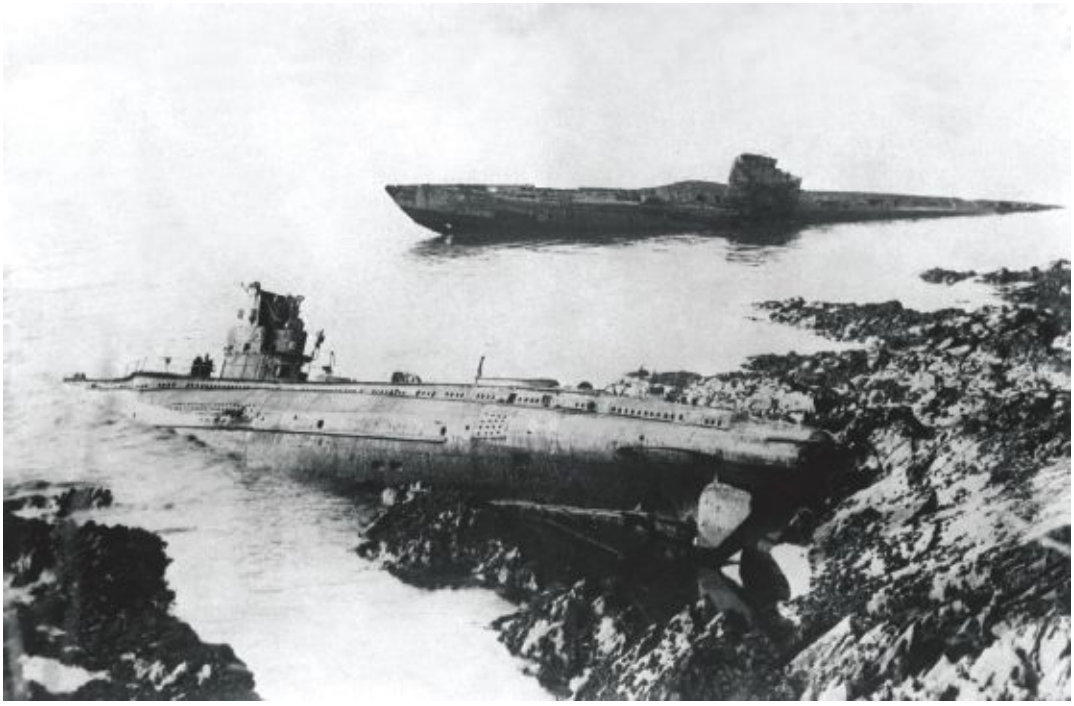
ultimately global bloodletting began again in less than a decade. By 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland, sparking yet another world war.

The 1900s had opened with great promise for mankind—unprecedented scientific advances, improvements in quality of life, expanded opportunities for social mobility, and the incredible achievement of breaking man's earthly bonds and attaining flight. This promising era forlornly would be remembered as a violent century of continuous carnage.





Demonstration in front of the Reichstag by the Central Communistic Organization to block the law of the "workmen council," 1919.



In 1921, a most remarkable incident occurred: a winter storm washed two German U-boats up onto the rocks at Falmouth, England. They had been sunk after the Great War as part of the scuttling of the German navy.

Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini fought in the Great War. He later was one of the key figures in the creation of Facism, coming to power in Italy in 1922 with dreams of a new Italian Empire.

Adolf Hitler, a corporal in the Great War, rose to power with his Nazi Party playing on the post-war turmoil in Germany.

About the Authors and Acknowledgments

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