

WORLD WAR I
1914-1918

Causes

- Nationalism – Pride in one's Country
- Imperialism – policy by which one country takes control of the economic and political affairs of another country or region.
- Militarism – policy of building up strong Armed Forces to prepare for war.
- Alliances – countries agree to support each other if attacked.

Triggering Event

The heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Ferdinand visited the city of Sarajevo. A group of Serbian nationalists hurled a bomb into the Archduke's car. It bounced off the Archduke's arm and exploded in the crowd. The car sped away. The Archduke changed his plans and went to the hospital to visit the people who were wounded when the bomb exploded.

The driver took a wrong turn and stopped in front of a café. Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Black Hand, was at the café drinking coffee 5 feet away from the car. He shot 3 times, killing Archduke Ferdinand and his wife. The next day Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.

CENTRAL POWERS

Austria-Hungary
Germany
Bulgaria
Ottoman Empire

ALLIED POWERS

France
Great Britain
Russia
Italy

The Deadliest War

Everyone hoped for a quick victory, but both sides implemented new kinds of warfare that made the battles more lethal and prolonged the war.

During World War I a Variety of new weapons were used.

- Rifle – the main weapon used by soldiers had a bolt Action. 15 rounds could be fired in a minute and a person 1400 meters away could be killed.

- Machine gun - It needed 4-6 men to work them and had to be on a Flat surface. They had the fire-power of 100 guns.
- Field guns - They had a long range and could deliver devastating blows to the enemy but needed up to 12 men to work them. They fired shells that exploded on impact.

Poison Gas

- Chlorine Gas – This was first used by the German Army in 1915. It caused a burning sensation in the throat and chest pains. Death was painful – you suffocate! The problem with chlorine gas is that the weather must be right. If the wind changes direction you could end up killing your own troops.
- Mustard gas – It was the most deadly weapon used. It was fired into the trenches in shells. It is colorless and takes 12 hours to take effect. Effects include: blistering skin, vomiting, sore eyes, internal and external bleeding. Death can take up to 5 weeks.

More Weapons

- Zeppelin – also known as blimp, was an airship that was used during the early part of the war in bombing raids by the Germans. It carried machine guns and bombs. They were used only for a short time, because they were easy to shoot down.
- Tanks – They were developed to cope with the conditions on the Western Front. The first tank needed a crew of 3. Its maximum speed was 3 mph. A more modern tank was developed just before the end of the war. It could carry 10 men, had a revolving turret, and could go 4 mph.
- Planes – At first they were used to deliver bombs and for spying, but became fighter aircraft armed with machine guns, bombs, and sometimes cannons. Fights between 2 planes in the sky became known as "dogfights." The average life expectancy of a new pilot was between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Torpedoes – they were used by submarines. They were used to blow up ships carrying supplies from America to Britain.

The War

The war became a stalemate. For 3 years huge battles would be fought but no one gained much territory. Both sides used Trench Warfare. Soldiers lived in a maze of trenches protected by mines and barbed wire. The day was spent shelling the enemy. Then the commander would yell over the top and the soldiers would attack the enemy.

Heavy rain made the trenches even more hazardous. Thousands of soldiers drowned. Many more were wounded as they fell in the mud. It was not uncommon for a soldier to stand many days in parasite-filled water as high as his chest. One result of this was a disease called trench Foot. Many soldiers had to have their feet or arms amputated because of standing in the water-filled trenches.

In trench warfare, wounded soldiers could often not be rescued. Dead bodies from both sides of the conflict became part of the landscape. The decomposing bodies attracted rats. Soldiers were often afraid to sleep at night, fearing an attack of rats.

America remains neutral

America was determined to avoid being dragged into a European war. They practiced isolationism, which means having little to do with other nations. America also tried to remain neutral by choosing not to fight on either side. But trade with the Allies was growing and the American economy boomed. Both sides used propaganda, the spreading of ideas or beliefs that help a particular cause and hurt an opposing cause. Each side pictured the other as savage beasts.

German U-boats

Germany used U-boats (submarines) that attacked any ship that entered or left British ports. U-boats torpedoed enemy and neutral ships. Germany warned neutral nations to keep their ships out of blockade zones. President Wilson rejected this warning and vowed to hold Germany responsible if Americans lost lives or property. Germany ignored Wilson's threat.

The Lusitania

On May 15, 1915 Germany torpedoed the Lusitania, a British ship. 1,200 people die including 128 Americans. Germany did not want to risk war with the United States, so it apologized and agreed to stop attacking neutral ships without warning.

America Enters the War

In 1917 several things occur that affect the war. In February 1917, the British intercepted the Zimmermann Telegram, in which Germany asked Mexico to join the Central Powers in exchange for help in regaining New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. Americans were outraged. German U-boats continued to torpedo American ships and sank 3 American ships. In March 1917 the Russian Revolution overthrew the tsar, Nicholas II, and withdraws from the war. America enters the war on April 6, 1917.

Building the Military

Although the U.S. had a large NAVY, its army was small. The nation had to quickly mobilize, or prepare for war. Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which required men between the ages of 21 and 30 to register for the draft. American soldiers in WWI were called Doughboys.

Women were not drafted, but more than 30,000 volunteered for the army and navy. Most served as nurses or did clerical work. Native Americans volunteered, even though they were not citizens yet. 380,000 African Americans also served.

Managing the War

Herbert Hoover was appointed to head the new Food Administration. He was to make sure that there was enough food for both the troops and civilians. Rationing of food included "Wheatless" Mondays and "Meatless" Tuesdays so troops could have food. People planted victory gardens to provide food for themselves to help the war effort.

Women filled many of the vacant jobs in the Factories. Liberty Bonds helped Finance the war. By buying a bond, Americans were lending money to the government. 21 billion dollars was raised through the sale of bonds.

Shaping Public Opinion

The Committee on Public Opinion was created to maintain support for the war. Members gave speeches at movie theaters, produced pro-war cartoons and had movie stars sell war bonds. The Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 closed newspapers and Jailed people for expressing antiwar opinions. Over 1600 people were arrested.

America Joins the Fight

To get much needed supplies from the U.S., the Allies developed a convoy system in which Allied destroyers accompanied large groups of merchant ships. The American Expeditionary Force was under the command of General John J. Pershing.

The End of the War

In October 1918 Germany faced many problems. Sailors were rebelling and the army lost ground daily. In November the ruler, Kaiser Wilhelm II, was forced to resign. The new leaders agreed to an Armistice, (an agreement to stop fighting) on November 11, 1918 at 11AM. (The 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month)

This was the bloodiest and most brutal war the world had seen. 10 million soldiers had died. Millions of soldiers were maimed for life. The number of civilian deaths was equal to the number of military deaths.

Peace Conference in Paris

The peace process was led by the Big Four.

- Woodrow Wilson - President of U.S.
- Georges Clemenceau - Prime Minister of France
- David Lloyd George - Prime Minister of Great Britain
- Vittorio Orlando - Prime Minister of Italy

Fourteen Points

The Fourteen Points was Wilson's plan for peace. It included the following items.

- Putting an end to secret agreements
- Allowed for freedom of seas, free trade, and it limited the amount of arms a country could have.

- It called for a League of Nations to protect the independence of all countries.

Treaty of Versailles

Germany was forced to accept full responsibility for the war. Germany had to pay huge reparations (payments to cover war damages). Germany had to completely disarm. Germany was stripped of its colonies.

The treaty was signed in June 1919.

Separate treaties with the other Central Powers redrew the map of Europe. Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia became separate states. Yugoslavia was formed. Poland became independent. The Ottoman Empire became the new republic of Turkey.

U.S. rejects treaty

The U.S. Senate opposed the Treaty of Versailles because of the League of Nations. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge led the opposition. The Senate was afraid America would be drawn into European problems. The U.S. will sign a separate treaty with Germany in 1921.

Postwar Troubles

A worldwide epidemic of influenza (flu) killed more people than the war had. Soldiers returning home could not find Jobs. Union workers demanding higher wages went on strike. Americans thought the Communists, or "Reds," were behind the labor troubles. Thousands of immigrants suspected of Communists or other radical sympathies were sent back to their home countries.