

Section 1: The Road to War

OUTBREAK OF WAR

Even though Europe was at peace in the early 1900s, there was a dangerous tension. One reason for this tension was nationalism. People who shared a language and culture wanted to unite. In some places, such as Germany, nationalism brought stability. In other places, such as Austria-Hungary, it caused instability.

Another source of tension in Europe was imperialism. There was competition for territory in Europe and around the world. Nations began to focus on **militarism** and sought protection by forming new alliances.

As tensions grew, it became clear that a small “spark” could cause hostilities in Europe. The spark came when **Archduke Francis Ferdinand** was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.

Alliances caused other countries to be drawn into the conflict. The opposing sides **mobilized** their armies. The **Central Powers**, along with Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, faced the **Allied Powers** and Italy. Soldiers from 30 nations on 6 continents would take part in the Great War, later known as World War I.

EARLY BATTLES OF THE WAR

Both sides expected a short war but the German army met strong resistance in Belgium. Two fronts developed. One was the western front from the North Sea to Switzerland. The other was the eastern front from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea.

Trench warfare extended the battles. Soldiers died of injuries and disease as the two sides fought for months without gaining ground. New technology made the war deadlier than previous wars. Machine guns, artillery guns, and poison gas killed many soldiers. Tanks and airplanes were used in warfare for the first time.

After a year the war had become a **stalemate**. Both sides launched massive attacks, and nearly one million men were killed. Still neither side advanced very far.

The battle at sea was also very important. The British navy blockaded the Central Powers' ports and laid explosive mines. The Germans used **U-boats** to launch torpedoes against Allied supply ships. The Germans also attacked ships from **neutral** countries that they believed were helping the Allies.

Section 2: Americans Prepare for War

THE UNITED STATES ENTERS WORLD WAR I

Many Americans were immigrants or children of immigrants from European countries. Even so, they wanted the United States to remain neutral in the European conflict.

German U-boats attacked ships carrying supplies to the Allies. Then they began attacking passenger ships, such as the **Lusitania**. Later the Germans began attacks on American vessels. When Americans found out about the **Zimmerman Note**, a secret telegram, they were outraged. President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. War was declared on April 6, 1917.

MOBILIZING FOR WAR

Rallies were used to build public support as the country prepared for war. At the same time, some freedoms were limited. Freedom of speech was restricted, and opponents of the war were jailed.

The **Selective Service Act** was passed in 1917 to prepare the military for war. Almost three million Americans, including many African-Americans, were drafted into service. War preparations were very expensive, so money was raised through the sale of **Liberty Bonds**.

The government took other actions to provide supplies for the troops. Metals, cement, and rubber were produced. Farmers got price guarantees to increase crops. Citizens were encouraged to use less food and to grow their own.

NEW WARTIME OPPORTUNITIES

American factories needed to run work nonstop to produce weapons and supplies. But the war cut off immigration, and many young men were fighting in Europe. These factors combined to create a labor shortage in the United States. Labor shortages led to new opportunities for many workers. More than 1.5 million women worked in factories, and others helped in Europe.

Even with many women workers, factories needed more people. Mexican Americans from the West and African Americans from the South moved to northern industrial cities. Because labor was scarce, workers could demand better conditions. Union membership increased.

President Wilson set up the **National War Labor Board** in 1918. It settled disputes between workers and management. The board also helped establish a minimum wage and limited work hours, and it tried to get fair pay for women.

Section 3: Americans in World War I

AMERICAN SOLDIERS ARRIVE

The Allies were near defeat when U. S. troops began to arrive in Europe in 1917. French and British generals wanted the **American Expeditionary Force** to go to the front lines right away. General Pershing refused to spread American troops among Allied forces. He also insisted on completing training before sending soldiers into battle.

The Allies lost the help of Russia after **Communists** seized power in late 1917. The new leaders signed a peace agreement with the Central Powers in March 1918. Then civil war broke out in Russia. Rejoining the war in Europe became impossible.

WINNING THE WAR

After Russia left the war, Germany decided to move its soldiers from the eastern front to the western front. At the same time, General Pershing sent two divisions of American soldiers to the western front. The fresh troops helped stop the German advance on Paris. The Americans had helped bring about one of the major turning points in the war.

With more than one million American troops in France, the Allies began attacking German positions. Soon the Germans were retreating. Many U.S. soldiers became heroes. One group of African American soldiers, known as the Harlem Hell fighters, received the Cross of War medal from France for their bravery.

By November 1918, U. S. and Allied soldiers were moving quickly toward Germany. The Allies were also winning the war at sea. They used a new **strategy**, the convoy system, to protect merchant ships from the U-boats.

ARMISTICE

Germans were tired of the war. Food was scarce, and the country was running out of soldiers.

Germany's allies were also ready to end the war. Several of them signed peace agreements and quit fighting. On November 4 the German leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II, gave up his throne and left Germany.

The Germans agreed to a ceasefire. The Allies demanded that Germany return all conquered territory and destroy its weapons. The Germans accepted the demands, and an **armistice** went into effect on November 11, 1918.

Section 4: Establishing Peace

THE COSTS OF WAR

More lives were lost in World War I than in any previous war. More than 8 million soldiers died and 20 million more were wounded. The war also caused financial ruin and led to food shortages in much of Europe.

In 1918 a flu epidemic spread across the world. The disease spread rapidly, changing life in many places. The flu killed more people than had died in the war. By 1919 more than 800,000 Americans had died from the flu.

THE PEACE AGREEMENT

President Woodrow Wilson had a vision for the postwar world. His plan for peace became known as the Fourteen Points. The plan included ways to settle border questions. It encouraged military cutbacks, lower trade tariffs, and a ban on secret agreements between nations.

The final point in Wilson's plan called for the creation of the **League of Nations**. Its mission would be to settle disputes among countries and to promote democracy.

Some allied leaders disagreed with Wilson's plan. They wanted to punish Germany. They also wanted to make sure Germany could never again become a world power. Leaders from the United States, Britain, France, and Italy met at a peace conference to discuss the terms. Many leaders insisted on **reparations**, which were set at \$33 billion.

Wilson reluctantly agreed to the **Treaty of Versailles**. The League of Nations was formed, and the map of Europe was reshaped. Several new and independent countries were formed.

VERSAILLES TREATY REJECTED

In the United States, treaties must be ratified by at least two thirds of the Senate. Republican senators, led by **Henry Cabot Lodge**, insisted on changes to the treaty before ratifying it. They were afraid that the League of Nations could force the United States to send American troops to war.

Wilson refused to compromise. He worked to get the treaty ratified exactly as it was written. On November 1, 1919, a vote to ratify the Treaty of Versailles failed in the Senate. Wilson was extremely disappointed. The United States signed separate peace treaties with the Central Powers and did not join the League of Nations.