The Great War: WWI

What happened in WWI to change history, forever?
The Image of WWI

- Image vs. Reality
  - What is it?
  - Think about why people might have been so eager to go to war.
    - Why do people glorify war today?
    - Why are war video games popular?
What factors could cause the continent and world to go to war?

Militarism

Alliances

Imperialism

Nationalism
Long Term Causes:

MILITARISM

- Arms Race
- Bigger and better weapons leads to contest between nations.
- British naval superiority - AREA where Germany wanted to challenge their supremacy
Long Term Causes:

- **RIVAL ALLIANCES**

  Created by Germany

  The major European countries were organized into two alliances:

  - Triple alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy)
  - Triple entente (Britain, France, and Russia).

  When Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914, diplomats, statesmen, and monarchs quickly lost control of events. The alliance system in combination with the rigidly scheduled mobilization plans meant that war was automatic.
Long Term Causes:

IMPERIALISM

- Britain and Germany in conflict over existing and new colonies
- Austria Hungary wanted more land
- British & French wanted N Africa & Mid East
- Ottoman grew weak (economy, military, technology) = have to reestablish power (HOW?!)
Long Term Causes:

- **NATIONALISM**
  - Deeply rooted in European culture → united individual nations
  - Unifying and dividing... at home and in colonies
    - B/C of nationalism, most people saw war as a crusade for liberty or as revenge for past injustices
S.E. Europe

Nationalism = newly independent from Ottoman empire

- New nations were weak and "easy" prey to more powerful, established empires
The Balkans
“Powder Keg of Europe”

Why were they known as the Powder Keg?

1. Prone to outbursts of wars or other conflicts
   1. 1912 attacked Turkey (Ottomans) for independence
   2. Went to war amongst themselves

2. May seem peaceful and dormant until a minor event triggers a large outburst of violence = Powder Keg!
Weakening of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire Under Suleiman I the Magnificent, 1580

200 Miles
Which powers could look for profit and exploitation there and why?

Ottoman Empire grows weak

Desire to rule themselves along ethnic lines...
"One day the great European War will come out of some damned foolish thing in the Balkans"
Serbia: Fighting for freedom from Austria-Hungary she makes a binding military alliance with Russia.

Here in the Balkans is where the spark for this powder keg of tensions would be set off.
Serbian Nationalism

- June 1914, Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand visits Bosnia
- Under the control of the A-H Empire
- Many Serbians still lived there
Serb Nationalism

- Serbians wanted their fellow Serbs in Austria to be free too (Pan-Slavism)
- Serbs thought the Archduke was rubbing the Serbs nose into the fact that they were ruled by Austria
The Black Hand

- A Terrorist organization of Serb nationalists
- 7 Black Hand members hired to assassinate Archduke Ferdinand
  - Gavrilo Princip successful
The Archduke and his wife
The Assassination

- Ferdinand & wife Sophie set off in a convertible to parade through the streets of Sarajevo.
  - 1st attempt: assassin claims a policeman’s presence prevented him from throwing a bomb into the car
  - 2nd attempt: the bomb thrown into car was hit away by Ferdinand and blew up in the crowd (hurting officers behind car).
“Shot in Sarajevo”
Success!!

- Archduke & Sophie sped past next 3 assassins on the way to their meeting at the capital.
- After visit, they left to go to hospital to visit wounded. They got lost & had to make a U-turn, giving the final assassin a chance to shoot them.
  - Gavrilo Princip fired 2 shots & hit the Archduke in the neck and Sophie in the stomach.
  - Both died instantly.
Archduke and wife Killed!

When Gavrilo Princip fired the two bullets at the archduke's vehicle.

SARAJEVO ASSASSINATION
Video: assassination of the Archduke
Consequences of the Assassination
Austria’s Ultimatum to Serbia

1. Serbia had to stop all anti-Austrian activity
2. Austria got to kick Serbs (they didn’t like) out of Serbian govt.
3. Serbs must allow Austrian officials to enter Serbia to investigate role in assassination

*Serbia felt this was a ploy for Austria to take over
Serbia’s Decision

- Didn’t accept the ultimatum
  - Historians feel Austria made harsh demands that they knew Serbia wouldn’t accept so Austria had an excuse to declare war & eventually take over Serbia
  - Germany was pushing Austria into war with Serbia
The Alliances Fall into Place

1. Serbia is confident-"big brother" Russia will back them up
2. A-H is confident Germany will back them up.
3. Austria declares war on Serbia on July 28, 1914
   1. Russia Aug 6
   2. Belgium Aug 28
Within one week of Austria’s declaration of war, all of Europe was plunged into war.
Russia

- Mobilizes troops toward the German and Austrian Frontiers

No declarations of war against Germany and Austria though…?
Germany

- Takes Russia’s actions as an act of war & demands:
  1. Russia demobilize (Russia refuses)
  2. France must declare neutrality (France chose to honor its alliance with Russia)
Germany Attacks

Declarations of War:
- Declared war with Russia – Aug 1, 1914
- Declared war with France – Aug 3, 1914
- Declared war with Belgium – Aug 4, 1914

Attacks France through the coastal plains of neutral Belgium
Britain

- Britain jumps in to help Belgium and to honor its agreements with France & Russia

- Declarations of war:
  - Declared war with Germany on Aug 4, 1914
  - Declared war with A-H Aug 12, 1914
Nationalism and Militarism created a positive, excited feeling toward a national show of armed strength.

British Newspapers proclaimed that the “boys would be back by Christmas.”
Soldiers were glorified and believed that they would return hero's.
Men lined up to register to join the military
The Schlieffen plan
The Schlieffen plan

- Drawn-up by the German General Staff
- Goal: Not fight a 2 front war
- Plan: defeat France before Russia
  - France would be ready to fight sooner than Russia.
Schlieffen Plan

- **Goal: Paris in Six Weeks**
- Concentrate German strength on the western front
- Forces would sweep through neutral Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, brushing against the English Channel,
  - Then turn south in a huge arc to defeat the French army and capture Paris.

The plan **required** victory over France within six weeks.
“Poor little Belgium”: Germany invaded through neutral Belgium, surprising France = angering Britain.
British newspapers accused German soldiers of a series of crimes including: gouging out the eyes of civilians, cutting off the hands of teenage boys, raping and sexually mutilating women, giving children hand grenades to play with, bayoneting babies and the crucifixion of captured soldiers.

The Bryce Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages (May 1915)
One witness saw a German soldier cut a woman's breasts after he had murdered her, and saw many other dead bodies of women in the streets of Belgium. Another witness testified that she saw a drunken German soldier kill a two-year-old child: The soldier drove his bayonet with both hands into the child's stomach, lifting the child into the air on his bayonet, he and his comrades were singing." Other witnesses saw a German soldier amputate a child's hands and feet.
Belgian Miners Form Living Shield for Germans.

Germans came Aerschot was as smiling, prosperous a place as you find anywhere; this is what it looked like when they left.
Belgian Atrocities  (video clip)
**Schlieffen Plan**

- **The Eastern Front:**
- Goal: Defeat France, then Germany could march against Russia.
- Germans calculated that it would take Russia 6 weeks to mobilize troops and deploying them for action.
  - Inefficiency of the Russian army
  - Enormous size of the country
  - Lack of railroads
Failure of the Schlieffen Plan

- The French recover in time to defend Paris
  - With support from the British they are able to pin down the Germans
- Both sides experience a stalemate
- New type of warfare – The Trenches
Stalemate: **deadlock in which neither side is able to defeat the other**
Stalemate Video
As German advance falters in September, both sides spread out and formed an unbroken line of trenches.

Leaders on each side tried for 4 years to take enemy positions by ordering their troops to charge across open fields, only to have them cut down by machine gun fire.

For 4 years the war was inconclusive on both land and at sea.
Trench Warfare
Trench Warfare

- Armies must mass great bodies of soldiers and try and outmaneuver their opponents by size and force.
- Soldiers tried to outflank the trenches or assault frontally the opposing line.
- Charging forces tried to create a breech or hole in the line in which the secondary group could pour through the line.
  - As the gap opened the troops would spread out and try to hold the line.
Crossing “No Man’s Land”
Effect of Fighting
(Video: WW I Intro)
How is WWI seen as the first modern war?

- TECHNOLOGY - Inventions in HOW to kill were thought of before SHOULD we kill
- New Strategies were needed: Leaders were using outdated strategies in a new era… used soldier’s lives instead of new tactics
Industrialization’s Impact on warfare?

- Industrialization improved the existing technology
  - Increased the level of production for countries all over Europe.

- Result?
  - Improvement in the quantity, power, and efficiency of war weaponry, making this war like nothing the world had seen before.
Industrialized War

What weapons were invented during WWI?
Machine Gun
Artillery: Howitzers

Artillery was an utterly destructive form of WWI weaponry. It laid cities to complete rubble and killed countless men in the trenches.

60% of casualties
Some super guns could fire up to 75 miles.
Snipers
Tanks
With the invention of the airplane, another dimension was added to warfare. Now air raids and spy missions became an intricate part of war.
Shooting thru Props
Grenades
Poison Gas
Poison Gas
Poison Gas
Industrial war meets canine power
Effects of Mustard Gas
If the gas did not cause you to cough up your lungs it burned out your eyes.
British soldiers blinded by mustard gas at an advance aid station near Béthune during the German Lys spring offensives, 9–29 April 1918.
Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .

Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est
Pro patria mori.

Dulce et Decorum est Pro patria mori ("Sweet and honorable it is, to die for the fatherland").
What were issues the soldiers faced during WWI?
Issues: Mud
Boredom
Weather
Rats
Disease

Trench foot
Gangrene
Water
Total War

WWI was called a “total war” → demanded a huge sacrifice on the part of civilians back on home front.

- Many foods and materials (rubber, fuel, metals) were rationed.
- In 1916 Britain started conscription or draft (tried raise a large army to counter the Germans).
- Women worked in jobs traditionally held only by men.
- Many men from Europeans colonial countries were sent to the war
Propaganda: Information designed to influence peoples beliefs or actions. The Allies used this to demonize Germany and make the war a struggle for democracy.
EAT LESS BREAD

Total War

Food will win the war
You came here seeking Freedom
You must now help to preserve it
Wheat is needed for the allies
Waste nothing

Now
Back the Bayonets with your War Savings Certificates
Come into the ranks and fight for your King and Country—Don’t stay in the crowd and stare

You are wanted at the front

Enlist to-day

Remember Belgium

Enlist to-day
Germany

“God Punish England”
Austria

“Death to England”
The Western Front

- Early Battles of the war
- Immovable front for two and a half years
- Trench warfare
- Cavalry gives way to Infantry
- Germany has planned attack on France 9 years prior to it actually happening.
Verdun: France’s unbeatable fortress. If Germany could take it, France might surrender. 700,000 French and Germans died or were injured in the battle and nothing changed.

- 1916
- Germany tries to overwhelm the French in this German offensive
- An attempt to end the stalemate
- Lasted over 11 months
Empty shells at Verdun
It was the longest and bloodiest battle of the war.
The Somme: To help the French, the British attacked the Northern German lines. Over 1 million British casualties and no land gained. First use of the tank.

It was the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army, which suffered 57,470 casualties, including 19,240 deaths.
The British shelled the German positions for 7 days straight.
The Eastern Front:

The Germans and Austrians now engaged the Russian Armies. By mid-1915 Russia had given up more land than the size of France.
Russian Problems:

Heavy Russian losses, food shortages, high unemployment and low morale in the Army would eventually lead to Russian backing out of the war and into the Russian Revolution.
Germany is now able to concentrate its forces.
Not only had submarines been invented but now battleships with immense armament were used in naval battles.
U BOOTE HERAUS!
Allied supply ships were fair game to the Germans.
Lusitania

But what about ocean liners?
The Grandest liner of the day!

- First Class cabins aboard *Lusitania* sold for as much as $4,000 for a one-way trip.
- Lounges, smoking rooms, libraries, salons, private parlors and an elevator were all on board.
Grand Ballroom
Last known photo of Luisitania

May 1915
Passengers boarded the British liner R.M.S (Royal Mail Ship) Lusitania in New York on May 1, 1915, for the voyage to Liverpool, England. The Lusitania was described as a "floating palace." German authorities, however, saw her as a threat. They accused the British government of using the Lusitania to carry ammunition and other war materials across the Atlantic.

At 2:10 pm on May 7, 1915, Walther Schwieger, the 30-year-old commander of the German submarine U-20, fired a single torpedo at the Lusitania from a range of about 750 yards. The great liner disappeared under the waves in 18 minutes, leaving behind a jumble of swimmers, corpses, deck chairs and wreckage.

Looking back upon the scene from his submarine, even German commander Schwieger was shocked. He later called it the most horrible sight he had ever seen. News of the disaster raced across the Atlantic: Of the 1,959 people aboard (123 were Americans), only 764 were saved. The dead included 94 children and infants.

American blood is shed and the first brick in the path to U.S. entry into the war is laid.
The LUSITANIA sinking on her starboard side in about 300 feet of water, and 8 miles South by West of the Old Head of Kinsale.

Only two of the BOATS of this, the port side could be launched owing to the list, but about 20 were got from the starboard side.

Where the second torpedo was reported to have penetrated.

Where the first torpedo penetrated the Engine Room.

Position of the PIRATE SUBMARINE about 200 yards from the LUSITANIA, from which its cowardly GERMAN Crew were able to MURDER over 1400 innocent and defenceless people, without fear of retaliation.
LUSITANIA SUNK BY A SUBMARINE, PROBABLY 1,260 DEAD; TWICE TORPEDOED OFF IRISH COAST; SINKS IN 15 MINUTES; CAPT. TURNER SAVED, FROHMAN AND VANDERBILT MISSING; WASHINGTON BELIEVES THAT A GRAVE CRISIS IS AT HAND

SHOCKS THE PRESIDENT

BULLETINS AT WHITE HOUSE
Wilson Ros-ed Them Gently, but is Silent on the Nation's Course.

HINTS OF CONGRESS CALL
Losses of Lusitania Recall First Time of Our First War-ing to Germany.

CAPITAL FULL OF RUMORS
Reported First Line Was in the Same Area Where Newfoundland, When Saved, Was Taken. Some Say the Lusitania Has Been Sunk as a Result of the Losses. The Early Aggre-gate Body has been Said to Have the Names of all the Lusitania's Passengers, but the Report will surely involve the greatest possible loss.
Although America did NOT immediately declare war on Germany (April 1917) her sinking contributed to the mood that turned the tide of American public opinion against Germany and led the United States to join the Allied cause in World War I.
Video - Luisitania
The Zimmerman Telegram

The **Zimmermann Telegram** (The Zimmermann Note) was a coded telegram dispatched by the Foreign Secretary of the German Empire, Arthur Zimmermann, on January 19, 1917, to the German ambassador in Mexico, Heinrich von Eckardt, at the height of World War I. It instructed the ambassador to approach the Mexican government with a proposal to form a military alliance against the United States.

It was intercepted and decoded by the British Naval Intelligence and its contents hastened the entry of the US into World War I.
On the first of February we intend to begin submarine warfare unrestricted. In spite of this, it is our intention to endeavor to keep neutral the United States of America. If this attempt is not successful, we propose an alliance on the following basis with Mexico: That we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give general financial support, and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The details are left to you for settlement.... You are instructed to inform the President of Mexico of the above in the greatest confidence as soon as it is certain that there will be an outbreak of war with the United States and suggest that the President of Mexico, on his own initiative, should communicate with Japan suggesting adherence at once to this plan; at the same time, offer to mediate between Germany and Japan. Please call to the attention of the President of Mexico that the employment of ruthless submarine warfare now promises to compel England to make peace in a few months. Zimmerman (Secretary of State)
- US joins war due to
  - Unrestricted submarine warfare (Lusitania)
  - Zimmerman telegram
  - April 1917 war declared
- Turns the tide due to massive amounts of resources, troops, and morale
• Germany tries one last all out offensive on both fronts which succeeds but they are unable to hold back the Allied counter offensive
  • Kaiser Wilhelm steps down and German gov’t seek an armistice with the Allies
Result of the Great War?
Impact of the War

- More dead and wounded than any other conflict EVER
- Millions became refugees and immigrated (US closes doors)
- Pandemic flu kills approx 30 million
- Serious damage to environment
Casualties (shell shock) (9 minutes)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>45,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Empire</td>
<td>942,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,368,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>23,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>680,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>8,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>116,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria-Hungary</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>87,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1,935,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman Empire</td>
<td>725,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other victims…

Armenian Genocide

- Systematic destruction of the Armenian People by the Ottoman Empire
  - Started April 1915 to 1918 (officially ended 1923)
- Death marches, deportation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation
  - Population: 2 million on the eve of WWI → 1-1 ½ million Armenians died (known)
  - By end of genocide, E. Europe expunged of total population
- Greeks and Assyrians also attacked
THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: 1915-1923

- Massacre sites: The marker size represents the number of deaths.
- Death March Routes: Turkish troops forced Armenians into the desert, without food or water, to die of starvation and heat exhaustion.
- Concentration Camps
- Deportation Checkpoints

Present day regional country borders
Historic Armenia borders
Current Armenia borders

© 2004 Armenian National Committee of America
Armenian National Committee of America
888 17th Street NW, #904 | Washington, DC 20006
phone: 202.775-1918 | fax: 202.775.5648
www.anca.org | anca@anca.org
The "Big Three" meet
- US, France, & Great Britain

Series of unsatisfying compromises whose only real results were:
- Forces Germany to
  - Accept blame
  - Pay reparations
  - Limit future military
  - Loses some land but remains primarily intact
- Dismantles A-H Empire and Ottoman Empire and creates new nations—Self Determination—allowed to rule themselves
  - i.e. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, etc
Countries created due to “self determination”
Treaty of Versailles - signing of the Peace Terms
The Big Three

U.S. Wilson

France Clemenceau

G.B. George
Wilson’s 14 points

League of Nations created by Wilson – hope for global peace “to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security”

US does not join

Ultimately ceases when it fails to prevent WWII
The Fourteen Points

- Listed in a speech delivered by President Woodrow Wilson to a joint session of US Congress on January 8, 1918.
- Wilson intended to set out a blueprint for lasting peace in Europe after World War I. Only four points were adopted completely.

THE FOURTEEN POINTS (Woodrow Wilson—Jan. 18, 1918)

1. “Open covenants of peace . . .”
2. “Absolute freedom upon the seas . . .”
3. “The removal, . . . of all economic barriers . . .”
4. “Adequate guaranties . . . [of disarmament]”
5. [Equitable colonial self-determination]

6-13. Specific provisions relating to:
- Russia, Belgium, France (including Alsace-Lorraine),
- Italy, Austria-Hungary,
- Balkan Nations, Turkey (and the Dardenelles),
- “An independent Polish state . . .”

League of Nations:

One of Wilson’s provisions that was adopted. This group of nations would govern Europe to prevent another war. (It did not happen)
Did Wilson place too much emphasis on the League when the world was not ready for it?
US Congress fails to ratify the treaty
US wishes to remain isolated from European politics.
Results of the War - Shatters Europe

- Four great empires collapse
  - German Reich, Russia’s czarist regime, Austria-Hungary’s Habsburg dynasty, Ottoman Empire
- Cultural shift from optimism to despair
- Colonial superiority view exposed as an illusion
- Social Changes
  - Final decline of aristocracy
  - Rise of middle and lower classes
  - Greater democratization of politics
  - Complete industrialization and modernization
  - Suffrage for women
- Shift of power
  - European dominance on the decline
  - US emerges as powerhouse
  - Colonial possessions begin period of decolonization