

SECTION 2

The War

Guide to Reading

Section Preview

The stalemate at the Western Front led to a widening of World War I, and governments expanded their powers to accommodate the war.

Main Idea

- The war on the Western Front turned into a stalemate as a result of trench warfare, while on the Eastern Front Germany and Austria-Hungary defeated Russia. (p. 431)
- New weapons and trench warfare made World War I far more devastating than any previous wars. (p. 432)
- With the war at a stalemate, both the Allies and the Central Powers looked for new allies to gain an advantage. (p. 433)

- The U.S. attempt at neutrality ended when the Germans refused to stop unrestricted submarine warfare. (p. 434)
- World War I became a total war, with governments taking control of their economies and civilians undergoing rationing of goods. (p. 435)

Content Vocabulary

propaganda, trench warfare, war of attrition, total war, planned economies

Academic Vocabulary

suspend, submission, assure

People to Identify

Lawrence of Arabia, Admiral Holtzendorff, Woodrow Wilson

Places to Locate

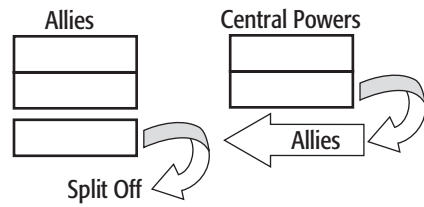
Marne, Tannenberg, Masurian Lakes, Verdun, Gallipoli

Reading Objectives

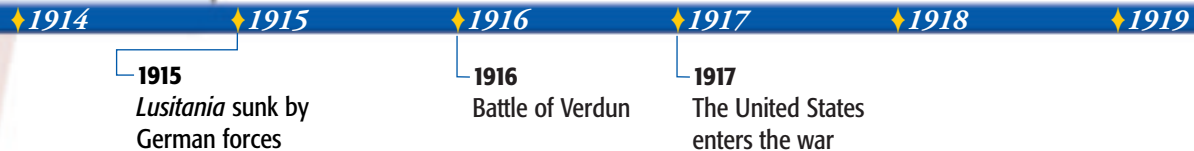
1. Describe how trench warfare led to a stalemate.
2. Explain why the United States entered the war.

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information Identify which countries belonged to the Allies and the Central Powers. What country changed allegiance? What country withdrew from the war?



Preview of Events



California Standards in This Section

Reading this section will help you master these California History–Social Science standards.

10.5.1: Analyze the arguments for entering into war presented by leaders from all sides of the Great War and the role of political and economic rivalries, ethnic and ideological conflicts, domestic discontent and disorder, and propaganda and nationalism in mobilizing the civilian population in support of “total war.”

10.5.2: Examine the principal theaters of battle, major turning points, and the importance of geographic factors in military decisions and outcomes (e.g., topography, waterways, distance, climate).



1914 to 1915: Illusions and Stalemate

Main Idea The war on the Western Front turned into a stalemate as a result of trench warfare, while on the Eastern Front Germany and Austria-Hungary defeated Russia.

Reading Connection How do political campaigns try to influence voters? Read on to see how governments tried to influence public opinion before World War I.

Before 1914, many political leaders thought that war involved so many political and economic risks that it was something to be avoided. Others thought diplomats would easily be able to control any situation and prevent war. At the beginning of August 1914, both ideas were shattered. When war came, however, another illusion was born—the concept that the war would be a thrilling and positive experience. For the first months of the war, many Europeans shared this belief.

Voices from the Past

The Austrian writer Stefan Zweig described the excitement Austrians felt going to war in 1914:

“What did the people know of war in 1914, after nearly half a century of peace? They did not know war; they had hardly given it a thought. They still saw it in the perspective of their school readers and of paintings in museums; brilliant cavalry attacks in glittering uniforms, the fatal shot always straight through the heart, the entire campaign a resounding march of victory—‘We’ll be home at Christmas,’ the recruits shouted laughingly to their mothers in August of 1914. . . . The young people were honestly afraid that they might miss this most wonderful and exciting experience of their lives; . . . that is why they shouted and sang in the trains that carried them to the slaughter.”

Why were people so eager for war? First, government **propaganda**—ideas spread to influence public opinion for or against a cause—had stirred up national hatreds. Thus, Europeans responded eagerly to the urgent pleas of their leaders in August 1914 to defend the homeland against aggressors. Most people seemed genuinely convinced that their nation’s cause was just.



▲ *Troops going to war*

Second, at the beginning of the war, almost everyone believed it would be over in a few weeks. People were reminded that almost all European wars since 1815 had, in fact, ended in a matter of weeks. Both the soldiers who boarded the trains for the war front in August 1914, and the jubilant citizens who showered them with flowers as they left, believed that the warriors would be home by Christmas.

The Western Front German hopes for a quick end to the war rested on a military gamble. The Schlieffen Plan had called for the German army to make a vast encircling movement through Belgium into northern France. According to the plan, the German forces would sweep around Paris. This would enable them to surround most of the French army.

The German advance was halted a short distance from Paris at the First Battle of the **Marne** (September 6–10). To stop the Germans, French military leaders loaded two thousand Parisian taxicabs with fresh troops and sent them to the front line.

The war quickly turned into a stalemate, as neither the Germans nor the French could dislodge each other from the trenches they had dug for shelter. These trenches were ditches protected by barbed wire. Two lines of trenches soon reached from the English Channel to the frontiers of Switzerland. The Western Front had become bogged down in **trench warfare** that kept both sides in virtually the same positions for four years.





The Eastern Front In contrast to the Western Front, the war on the Eastern Front was marked by mobility. The cost in lives, however, was equally enormous.

At the beginning of the war, the Russian army moved into eastern Germany but was decisively defeated at the Battle of **Tannenberg** on August 30 and the Battle of **Masurian Lakes** on September 15. As a result of these defeats, the Russians were no longer a threat to German territory.

Austria-Hungary, Germany's ally, fared less well at first. The Austrians had been defeated by the Russians in Galicia and thrown out of Serbia as well. To make matters worse, the Italians betrayed their German and Austrian allies in the Triple Alliance by attacking Austria in May 1915. Italy thus joined France, Great Britain, and Russia, who had formed the Triple Entente. The four nations now were called the Allied Powers, or Allies.

By this time, the Germans had come to the aid of the Austrians. A German-Austrian army defeated the Russian army in Galicia and pushed the Russians far back into their own territory. Russian casualties stood at 2.5 million killed, captured, or wounded. The Russians had almost been knocked out of the war.

Buoyed by their success, Germany and Austria-Hungary, joined by Bulgaria in September 1915, attacked and eliminated Serbia from the war. Their successes in the east would enable the Germans to move back to the offensive in the west.

✓ Reading Check **Contrasting** How did the war on the Eastern Front differ from the war on the Western Front?

▼ *British women in a munitions factory*



1916 to 1917: The Great Slaughter

Main Idea New weapons and trench warfare made World War I far more devastating than any previous wars.

Reading Connection Have you read about soldiers' experiences in World War II or the Vietnam War? Read on to learn about the trench warfare that characterized World War I.

On the Western Front, the trenches dug in 1914 had by 1916 become elaborate systems of defense. The lines of trenches for both sides were protected by barbed-wire entanglements up to 5 feet (about 1.5 m) high and 30 yards (about 27 m) wide, concrete machine-gun nests, and other gun batteries, supported further back by heavy artillery. Troops lived in holes in the ground, separated from each other by a strip of territory known as no-man's-land.

Tactics of Trench Warfare The unexpected development of trench warfare baffled the generals. They had been trained to fight wars of movement and maneuver, and now faced stalemate. They decided that the only solution was to throw masses of men against enemy lines after artillery had bombarded the enemy for hours. Once the decisive breakthrough had been achieved, they thought, they could return to the war of movement that they knew best.

At times, the high command on either side would order an offensive that would begin with an artillery barrage to flatten the enemy's barbed wire and leave the enemy in a state of shock. After "softening up" the enemy in this fashion, a mass of soldiers would climb out of their trenches with fixed bayonets and hope to work their way toward the enemy trenches.

The attacks rarely worked because men advancing unprotected across open fields could be fired at by the enemy's machine guns. In 1916 and 1917, millions of young men died fighting for the elusive breakthrough.

The Battle of **Verdun** was symbolic of the new kind of war that had come about. Verdun was a French fortress city on the German border. The French general in charge encouraged his troops with the phrase, "They shall not pass." Knowing that the French felt honor-bound to defend Verdun, the Germans attacked again and again. The German goal was to bleed the French army white. In the 10 months of fighting at Verdun in 1916, 700,000 French and German young men lost their lives over a few miles of land. World War I had turned into a **war of attrition**, a war based on wearing the other side down by constant attacks and



Then and Now

The introduction of airplanes greatly changed the nature of warfare during the twentieth century.

What kind of aircraft did the Germans use during World War I?

British fighter plane, c. 1917 ▶

U.S. jet fighter, 2001 ▼



heavy losses. (See page 774 to read an excerpt from Arthur Guy Empey's memoir of World War I in the Primary Sources Library.)

The Industrial Revolution was largely responsible for bringing about this change in how wars were fought. Railroads were able to supply the troops much more quickly, and to replace worn-out troops with ready reserves. Factories churned out munitions on a scale never seen before, and long bombardments became routine. Shelling and bombing maimed and disfigured many World War I soldiers—yet another sign that the war had been fought by industrialized nations.

War in the Air By the end of 1915, airplanes had appeared on the battlefield for the first time in history. At first, planes were used to spot the enemy's position. However, planes soon began to attack ground targets, especially enemy communications.

Fights for control of the air occurred and increased over time. At first, pilots fired at each other with handheld pistols. Later, machine guns were mounted on the noses of planes, which made the skies considerably more dangerous.

The Germans also used their giant airships—the zeppelins—to bomb London and eastern England. This caused little damage but frightened many people. Germany's enemies, however, soon found that zeppelins, which were filled with hydrogen gas, had a fatal weakness. They quickly became raging infernos when hit by antiaircraft guns.

Reading Check Explaining Why were military leaders baffled by trench warfare?

Widening of the War

Main Idea With the war at a stalemate, both the Allies and the Central Powers looked for new allies to gain an advantage.

Reading Connection In the American Revolution, what country did the colonists get aid from? Read to learn how nations looked for allies in World War I.

Because of the stalemate on the Western Front, both sides sought to gain new allies who might provide a winning advantage. The Ottoman Empire had already come into the war on Germany's side in August 1914. Russia, Great Britain, and France—the Allies—declared war on the Ottoman Empire in November.

The Allies tried to open a Balkan front by landing forces at **Gallipoli** (guh•LIH•puh•lee), southwest of Constantinople, in April 1915. However, Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers, as Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire were called. A disastrous campaign at Gallipoli forced the Allies to withdraw.

In return for Italy entering the war on the Allied side, France and Great Britain promised to let Italy have some Austrian territory. Italy on the side of the Allies opened up a front against Austria-Hungary.

By 1917, the war that had started in Europe had truly become a world conflict. In the Middle East, a British officer known as **Lawrence of Arabia** in 1917 urged Arab princes to revolt against their Ottoman overlords. In 1918, British forces from Egypt destroyed the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East.



World War I in Europe, 1914–1918



For their Middle East campaigns, the British mobilized forces from India, Australia, and New Zealand. The Allies also took advantage of the war to seize German colonies in the rest of the world. Japan, a British ally beginning in 1902, seized a number of German-held islands in the Pacific. Australia seized German New Guinea.

Reading Check **Describing** What caused the widening of the war?

Entry of the United States

Main Idea The U.S. attempt at neutrality ended when the Germans refused to stop unrestricted submarine warfare.

Reading Connection Is it possible today for the United States to ignore problems in other countries? Read to learn what caused the United States to enter World War I.

At first, the United States tried to remain neutral. As World War I dragged on, however, it became more difficult to do so. The immediate cause of United



Geography Skills

Trench warfare produced a stalemate on the Western Front.

- Applying Geography Skills** Create a bar graph with dates as one axis and miles as the other. Using Berlin as the starting point, plot the Central Powers' advances from the earliest to the latest dates shown on the map.
- Interpreting Maps** Where did the majority of World War I battles occur?

States involvement grew out of the naval war between Germany and Great Britain.

Britain had used its superior naval power to set up a naval blockade of Germany. The blockade kept war materials and other goods from reaching Germany by sea. Germany had retaliated by setting up its own blockade of Britain. Germany enforced its blockade with the use of unrestricted submarine warfare, which included the sinking of passenger liners.

On May 7, 1915, the British ship *Lusitania* was sunk by German forces. There were about 1,100 civilian casualties, including over 100 Americans. After strong United States protests, the German government





Beitmann/CORBIS

suspended unrestricted submarine warfare in September 1915 to avoid antagonizing the United States further. Only once did the German and British naval forces actually engage in direct battle—at the Battle of Jutland on May 31, 1916, when neither side won a conclusive victory. By January 1917, however, the Germans were eager to break the deadlock in the war. German naval officers convinced Emperor William II that resuming the use of unrestricted submarine warfare could starve the British into **submission** within six months.

When the emperor expressed concern about the United States, he was told that the British would starve before the Americans could act. Even if the Americans did intervene, **Admiral Holtzendorf** assured the emperor, “I give your Majesty my word as an officer that not one American will land on the continent.”

The German naval officers were wrong. The British were not forced to surrender, and the return to unrestricted submarine warfare brought the United States into the war in April 1917. American troops did not arrive in large numbers in Europe until 1918, but they gave the Allied Powers a psychological boost, as well as a major new source of money and war goods.

✓ Reading Check **Evaluating** Why did the Germans resort to unrestricted submarine use?

The Home Front: The Impact of Total War

Main Idea World War I became a total war, with governments taking control of their economies and civilians undergoing rationing of goods.

Reading Connection Do you think the government should ever be allowed to censor what newspapers publish? Read to learn why many governments resorted to censorship and similar practices during World War I.

As World War I dragged on, it became a **total war**, involving a complete mobilization of resources and people. It affected the lives of all citizens in the warring countries, however remote they might be from the battlefields.

Masses of men had to be organized and supplies had to be manufactured and purchased for years of combat. (Germany alone had 5.5 million men in uniform in 1916.) This led to an increase in government powers and the manipulation of public opinion to keep the war effort going. The home front was rapidly becoming a cause for as much effort as the war front.

Increased Government Powers Most people had expected the war to be short, so little thought had

▼ In December 1915, these Italian troops posed for a camera as they rested in camp.





been given to long-term wartime needs. Governments had to respond quickly, however, when the war machines failed to achieve their goals. Many more men and supplies were needed to continue the war. To meet these needs, governments expanded their powers. Countries drafted tens of millions of young men for that elusive breakthrough to victory.

Throughout Europe, wartime governments also expanded their power over their economies. Free-market capitalistic systems were temporarily put aside. Governments set up price, wage, and rent controls; rationed food supplies and materials; regulated imports and exports; and took over transportation systems and industries. In effect, in order to mobilize all the resources of their nations for the war effort, European nations set up **planned economies**—systems directed by government agencies.

Under conditions of total war mobilization, the differences between soldiers at war and civilians at home were narrowed. In the view of political leaders, all citizens were part of a national army dedicated to victory. As United States president **Woodrow Wilson** said, the men and women “who remain to till the soil and man the factories are no less a part of the army than the men beneath the battle flags.”

Manipulation of Public Opinion The war continued, casualties grew worse, and the patriotic enthusiasm that had marked the early stages of World War I waned. By 1916, there were signs that civilian morale was beginning to crack under the pressure of total war. Wartime governments, however, fought back against the growing opposition to the war.

Authoritarian regimes, such as those of Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, relied on force to

subdue their populations. Under the pressures of the war, however, even democratic states expanded their police powers to stop internal dissent. The British Parliament, for example, passed the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). It allowed the government to arrest protesters as traitors. Newspapers were censored, and sometimes their publication was even suspended.

Governments actively used propaganda to arouse enthusiasm for the war. At the beginning, public officials needed to do little to achieve this goal. The British and French, for example, exaggerated German atrocities in Belgium and found that their citizens were only too willing to believe these accounts.

As the war progressed and morale sagged, governments were forced to devise new techniques for motivating the people. In one British recruiting poster, for example, a small daughter asked her father, “Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?” while her younger brother played with toy soldiers.

Total War and Women World War I created new roles for women. Because so many men left to fight at the front, women were asked to take over jobs that had not been available to them before. Women were employed in jobs that had once been considered beyond their capacity. These included such occupations as chimney sweeps, truck drivers, farm laborers, and factory workers in heavy industry. For example, 38 percent of the workers in the Krupp Armaments works in Germany in 1918 were women.

The place of women in the workforce was far from secure, however. Both men and women seemed to expect that many of the new jobs for women were

People In History

Edith Cavell

1865–1915—British nurse

Edith Cavell was born in Norfolk, England. She trained as a nurse and moved to Brussels in 1907 to head the Berkendael Medical Institute. After the outbreak of war, the institute became a Red Cross hospital. Cavell worked to shelter French and British soldiers and help them reach safety in the Netherlands.

Outraged, German military authorities in Brussels put her on trial for aiding the enemy and ordered her to be shot. Before her execution, Cavell said, “I am glad to die for my country.” To arouse anti-German sentiment, both the French and British used her as an example of German barbarism. The Germans insisted they had the right to execute a traitor, whether man or woman.



only temporary. This was evident in the British poem “War Girls,” written in 1916:

“There’s the girl who clips your ticket for the train,
 And the girl who speeds the lift from floor to floor,
 There’s the girl who does a milk-round in the rain,
 And the girl who calls for orders at your door.
 Strong, sensible, and fit,
 They’re out to show their grit,
 And tackle jobs with energy and knack.
 No longer caged and penned up,
 They’re going to keep their end up
 Till the khaki soldier boys come marching back.”

At the end of the war, governments would quickly remove women from the jobs they had encouraged them to take earlier. The work benefits for women from World War I were short-lived as men returned to the job market. By 1919, there would be 650,000 unemployed women in Great Britain. Wages for the women who were still employed would be lowered.


Nevertheless, in some countries the role women played in wartime economies had a positive impact on their social and political emancipation. The most obvious gain was the right to vote, which was given to women in Germany, Austria, and the United States immediately after the war. Most British women gained the vote in 1918.

Many upper-class and middle-class women also gained new freedoms. They took jobs, had their own apartments, and showed their new independence.

Reading Check **Summarizing** What was the effect of total war on ordinary citizens?



▲ This famous British recruiting poster put moral pressure on young men to serve in the war.

HISTORY  **Study Central**
Online

For help with the concepts in this section of *Glencoe World History—Modern Times*, go to wh.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

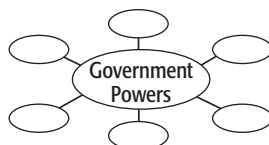
- Vocabulary** Define: propaganda, trench warfare, war of attrition, suspend, submission, assure, total war, planned economies.
- People** Identify: Lawrence of Arabia, Admiral Holtzendorff, Woodrow Wilson.
- Places** Locate: Marne, Tannenberg, Masurian Lakes, Verdun, Gallipoli.

Reviewing Big Ideas

- Explain** why World War I required total warfare.

Critical Thinking

- Historical Analysis** **Connecting Events** What methods did governments use to counter the loss of enthusiasm and opposition to the war at home? **CA HI 1**
- Organizing Information** Use a diagram like the one below to identify ways in which government powers increased during the war.



Analyzing Visuals

- Examine** the poster shown on this page. This is a recruiting poster used in World War I. What kind of motivation was it using to encourage young men to enlist?

Writing About History

- Expository Writing** What lasting results occurred in women’s rights due to World War I? What were the temporary results? Write an essay discussing the effect of the war on women’s rights. **CA 10WA2.3a,b**