

# Causes of World War One



## Morocco 1905

- Kaiser defends Moroccan independence – he wants to show that Germany is a major imperial power.
- Britain and France support each other – showed strength of Entente Cordiale (1904).
- Conference at Algeiras in 1906 – Britain and France humiliate Germany.
- In 1907 Britain, France and Russia form the Triple Entente.

## Bosnia 1908

- After Turkey had lost its power in the area, Austria took control of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Russia and Serbia protested about what Austria had done.
- Despite not being told in advance, Germany supported Austria and Russia backed down.
- Russia promised they would not back down again.
- This showed that Germany would support Austria no matter what – giving them confidence in 1914.

## Morocco 1911

- France tries to take Morocco again.
- The Kaiser responded by sending a gunboat (Panther).
- Britain and France stick together again.
- Germany is given land in central Africa, France gets control of Morocco.
- Britain and France make an agreement to use their navy's to support each other.

Each one of these crises tested alliances and led to countries rearming and promising not to back down again in the future. A promise which became true in 1914.

## The Naval Race 1906-1914

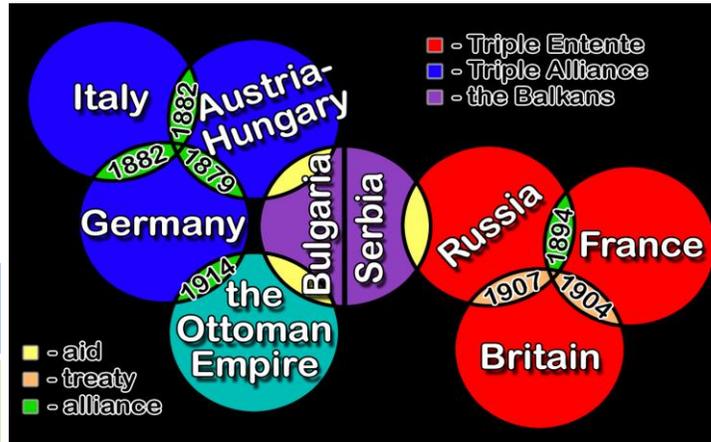
Dreadnoughts	Great Britain	Germany
1906	1	0
1907	3	0
1908	2	4
1909	2	3
1910	3	1
1911	5	3
1912	3	2
1913	7	3
1914	3	1
Total	29	17

## The Arms and Naval Race

- After Britain built the first 'Dreadnought' in 1906. Germany responded by building their own in 1908. Both countries spent millions building more and more with Britain 'winning' the race by 1914.
- Germany had the best trained army in Europe in this period and depended on the Schlieffen Plan for victory.
- Austria-Hungary needed Germany's help to stop Russia.
- Russia had by far the biggest army but it was badly equipped and slow to mobilise.
- France had a large, well equipped army and planned to invade Germany and force surrender.
- Britain had a small but well trained professional army called the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) – which was designed to be quickly sent to France to support the larger French army.

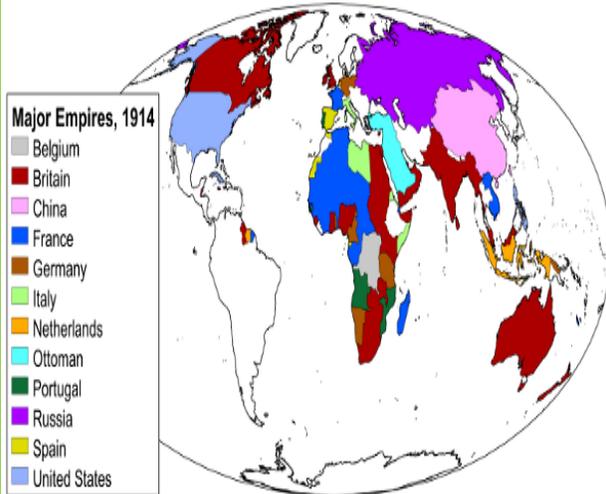
## Alliances

- Europe was split into two major alliances – the Triple Alliance (1882) and the Triple Entente (1907).
- All countries who joined alliances did so to make themselves stronger against an enemy.
- Britain had ended its policy of 'splendid isolation' by the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as they felt threatened by Germany's naval and imperial ambitions.
- Alliances made war in Europe more likely as it divided Europe into two blocks, meaning that a smaller incident would drag more and more countries into a conflict.



## The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand

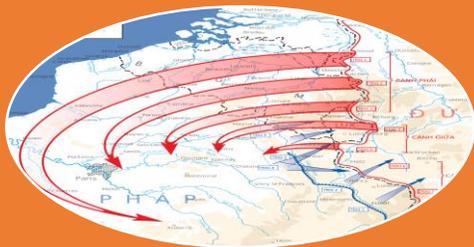
- The heir to the Austro-Hungarian visited Sarajevo on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1914.
- Members of the Bosnian Serb nationalist group the Black Hand Gang were there to try to kill the Archduke.
- Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Archduke.
- On 23<sup>rd</sup> July Austria Hungary sent a 10 point ultimatum to Serbia – Serbia accepted 9 out of 10 points but refused the last one.
- However, Austria was confident (because of the support of Germany) and declared war on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1914.
- The Alliances were then triggered – Russia began to mobilise and Germany responded by declaring war on the 1<sup>st</sup> August.
- The Schlieffen Plan (see next page) dragged Western Europe into this battle.



Britain had the largest empire in the world (25%). Germany wanted to become an imperial power – this was known as Weltpolitik. Britain felt threatened and did not want Germany to get an empire – as demonstrated by the Moroccan crises. This angered the Germans who began building up their army and navy to try and build up their empire.



# Stalemate of World War One



## The Schlieffen Plan – 1914

- This plan had been created in 1905 when Germany was concerned about fighting in the East and West at the same time.
- It was designed to defeat France in 6 weeks by attacking through Belgium where France would not expect it.
- The Germans then planned to move East and deal with the Russians (who were expected to be slow).
- Belgium defended well against the Germans but could not stop the advance – but crucially slowed them down.
- The BEF also managed to slow the Germans down.



## The Battle of The Marne – 1914

- Because the Russians had mobilised (got ready for war) quicker, the Germans had to move soldiers from East to West.
- The Germans went straight for Paris and they were overstretched and lacking resources.
- The British and French managed to stop the Germans at the River Marne.
- The British and French could not force the Germans out of France and both sides 'dug in', creating trenches and beginning the 'stalemate' of WW1.



## The Battle of Verdun – 1916

- The Germans wanted to capture forts around the important city of Verdun.
- To try and take the French out of the war the Germans wanted to 'bleed France white'.
- The German commander was called Falkenhayn and his tactic was attrition.
- The tactic failed and both sides lost equal numbers of men (around 700,000) in 6 months.
- General Petain (French commander) managed to help the French stay in the battle.
- By the summer of 1916 the French were near collapse.



## The Battle of The Somme – 1916

- To try and help the French after Verdun the British launched an attack near the River Somme.
- The British started the attack with a week long artillery attack.
- On the first day of the attack the British had 57,000 casualties.
- By November 1916 1.25 million men had died.
- The losses in this battle horrified the British public and led to the commander (General Haig) being called the Butcher of the Somme.
- Despite the losses the British had succeeded in reducing German pressure on the French.



## Weapons of WW1

- **Machine Guns** – Fired hundreds of bullets per minute, making it nearly impossible to attack across open ground.
- **Artillery** – Massive shelling killed many (70% of all casualties) but rarely helped advance positions.
- **Poison Gas** – Caused fear and injuries, but gas masks reduced its long-term impact.
- **Barbed Wire** – Slowed down attackers and made them easy targets for defenders.
- **Trenches** – Protected soldiers so well that both sides dug in and stopped moving.
- **Old Tactics** – Generals used outdated strategies that failed against modern weapons.

# Stalemate of World War One



## The Battle of Passchendaele – 1917

The battle started in July 1917 and is sometimes known as the battle of Ypres.

The battle started with the British detonating huge mines which killed 10,000 Germans straight away.

The battle is most famous for the awful conditions and is now known as the battle of the mud.

Even when tanks were used in November they made some progress but were unable to hold their ground.

The allies lost 250,000 men and the Germans more.



## The Ludendorff Offensive – 1918

-By 1918 the Germans were starving because of the blockade. Their commander Ludendorff planned one final attack to win the war.

- Ludendorff used a new tactic of quick, lightly equipped storm troopers – it was very successful and they advanced 64km.

- However, the advance cost 400,000 German men and had no reserves left.

- The German soldiers ran out of supplies and had poor discipline, whereas with the support of the USA the allies were well supplied and resourced.



## The 100 Day Offensive – 1918

- The Germans had ended trench warfare with the Ludendorff offensive.

- Thanks to the USA joining in 1917 the allies now had lots of resources and soldiers.

- The accuracy of artillery had also greatly increased which helped the allies advance with smokescreens. This was further helped with technological developments such as tanks.

- The allies started their attack in August, by September they had reached the Hindenburg Line and by October the Germans were in full retreat.

- The Germans surrendered in November 1918.



## The Battle of Gallipoli – 1915-16

- As the battle on the Western Front became a stalemate British leaders (including Churchill) wanted a way to break it and support the Russians.

- They planned to attack the Turkish at Gallipoli, open up a new front and help supply the Russians.

- The British ships were badly damaged by mines as they tried to attack.

- The ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand soldiers) attacked and had huge losses in terrible conditions.

-By December the allies withdrew and it was a complete disaster.



## The Battle of Jutland – 1916

- This was the only major sea battle of the war.

- The battle started well for the Germans, however they were forced to return to port by the following morning.

- The British lost 14 ships and 6000 sailors.

- The Germans lost 13 ships and 2,500 sailors.

- It looked like a German victory but in the long term the Germans never came out to sea again and Britain controlled the seas.



## The War at Sea

In 1914 the British blockaded the German ports, with the aim being to stop Germany getting supplies.

750,000 Germans died of hunger and disease during WWI.

The Germans responded using Submarines (U Boats) in two ways;

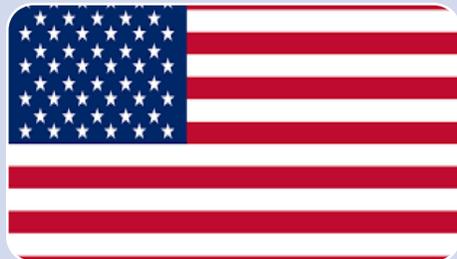
**Unrestricted warfare**- shooting war ships as well as non-war ships that had civilians on them.

**Restricted warfare**- shooting only war ships.

Germany used unrestricted submarine warfare in 1916, sinking a quarter of British merchant ships. The British responded by using Q Ships (ships with hidden guns) and the Convoy System – this made a huge difference by 1917.

However unrestricted submarine warfare was crucial in causing America to join the war.

# Ending the War



## Russia Leaves

- Revolution in Russia in 1917 – Lenin promises ‘Peace, Land and Bread’.
- Russia signs Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany to leave the war – this gives Germany lots of land and resources – e.g. 27% of Russia’s farmland.
- Russia leaving the war means that Germany could move 50 divisions of men to the Western Front.
- Germany also got more resources which allowed them to stay in the war even with the British Naval Blockade.

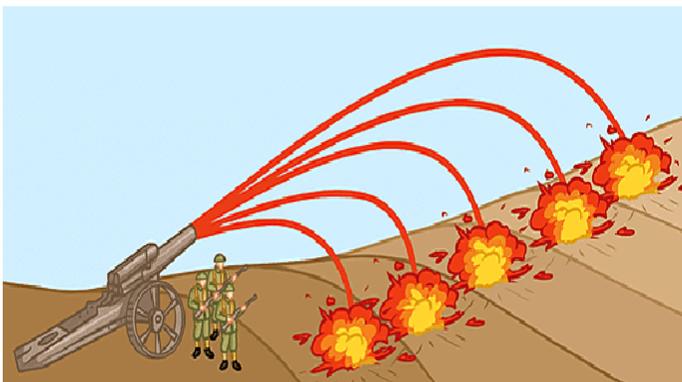
## USA Joins

- **USA joined in 1917 due to:**
  1. The Zimmerman Telegram – Germany secretly inviting Mexico to join the war and invade USA.
  2. Unrestricted Submarine Warfare – the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 started to change US public opinion, but it was the sinking of ships such as the Housatonic in 1917 that led to war.
- **Impact:**  
2 million extra soldiers. Materials. 50,000 US soldiers per week by 1918. Psychological impact of such a powerful country joining when already weak



## The Naval Blockade

By 1916 – Food riots in Germany. 420,000 starved to death in 1918 alone. Couldn’t get material to fight the war and people protested at home as well!



## Haig and Foch

Both important Generals and leaders, did make some changes to tactics (e.g. Haig used new tech such as Tanks and in battle ground the Germans down (attrition) and Foch was put in charge as ‘unified Allied Commander’ and led well in the 100 day offensive of 1918.

New tactics such as the ‘Creeping Barrage’ and ‘Bite and Hold’ were also used in the war to break the stalemate.

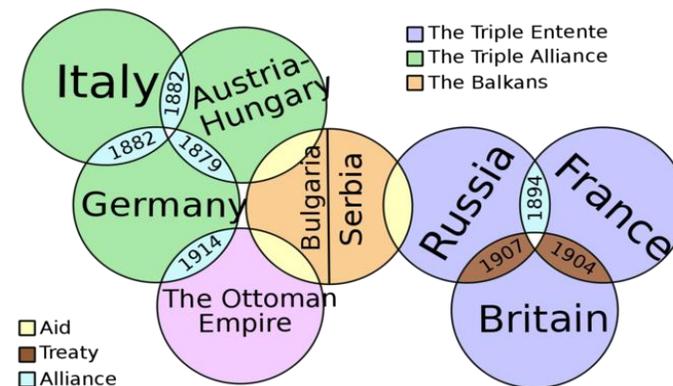
## The Failure of Ludendorff Offensive

Lost 800,000 troops. Germans knew they needed 200,000 troops a month to continue the war – they didn’t have enough reserves left!



## Weapons

Germans only produced 20 tanks. In one battle (Amiens) in 1918 allies used over 600! New tanks called whippets were quicker. Also had control of the sky – 5x as many planes as Germany.



## Alliances Changing

Bulgaria surrendered in Sept 1918, Oct 1918 Turkey quit and in November 1918 Austria-Hungary left the war. Leaving Germany with no allies.

Germans with similar political ideas as Russia (revolution in 1917) wanted to remove Kaiser, made worse by food shortages. Riots and strikes such as the Kiel Naval Mutiny in November 1918 made it worse. Kaiser abdicated. Fear of communism was worse than fear of losing war.

