

Chapter 2: World War I

- SS 11

WAR! CAUSES OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

(Note: "World War I" is an American term. The correct terminology in Canada [and Britain] is "The First World War")



ISMs

- You will need to define the following *six* terms. (First 4 concepts contributed significantly to the start of and escalation of wars. Second 2 consist of the main 3 countries on each side of WWI)
 - Nationalism
 - Militarism
 - Imperialism
 - Alliances
 - Triple Alliance
 - Triple Entente

The Old World Order

- In 1914, the world was dominated by imperialist empires. Almost all of these empires were based in Europe. As a result, empires like the British, German, French, Italian, Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman were in constant competition, particularly in Africa.
- Germany, in particular, ran into conflict trying to keep up with its French and British neighbours
- Why would Africa be the location for such competition? (think geographical reasons!)

Competition – Arms Race

- With all of these empires constantly in conflict with one another, the European nations started expanding their militaries as fast as possible
- This increased militarism led to a massive arms race, as Germany raced to keep up with Britain's navy in order to maintain a balance of power, and France tried to catch up as well
- By 1914, the three western European empires were armed to the teeth

Arms Race Continued

- By beginning of 20th century, Germany had the strongest army and the most powerful arsenal of weapons in Europe
- Its greatest rival on the sea was Britain
 - Built the largest battleship ever *HMS Dreadnought*



Balkans



'The Balkan Powder Keg'

- As we can see, the Balkans (modern day Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, etc.) are sandwiched in between three major empires
 - The Russians to the North
 - Austria-Hungary to the West
 - The Ottomans to the South/East
- Each empire felt they had a claim to the area, each had a different outlook towards it

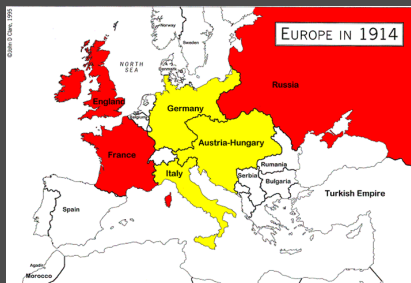
Balkans Continued

- Ottomans historically had controlled the area, but their empire was crumbling. It continued to control the stronghold at Constantinople (mouth of the Black Sea)
- Russia needed control of the Black Sea for shipping and promoted Pan-Slavism
- AH saw Pan-Slavism as a threat and wanted to keep the people of the area divided to keep control
- The local people hated all of the above, but particularly AH's ruling Hapsburg family, who were notoriously brutal and anti-nationalist

“I’ve Got Your Back” – The System of Alliances

- Despite their military strength, the empires of Europe recognized that their neighbours’ militaries rivaled their own
- Two competing alliances in Europe:
 - Triple Alliance (Central Powers): Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy (Ottoman, Bulgaria)
 - Triple Entente (Entente Cordiale): France, Britain, Russia (Canada, Belgium, the Slavs)
- The alliances were conceived to reduce the threat of war but instead meant that all of Europe would be sucked into any conflict any individual country got into.

Triple Alliance Vs. Triple Entente



Balkan Nationalism Explodes

- Nationalism was strong in the Balkans. A group of extreme Bosnian-Serb nationalists formed, called the “Black Hand”
- Can we think of some comparable modern groups?
- Two Balkan wars took place after Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. Upstart Serbia made significant gains in these conflicts.

- In June 1914, Franz Ferdinand, Crown Prince to the Hapsburg throne, visited the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo to inspect the imperial military there.
 - The visit was predictably well-publicized, and the Black Hand was ready for him. However, their attempted bombing of his motorcade failed.
- While in transit through the city, the Franz' car took a wrong turn. There, an opportunistic young member of the Black Hand, Gavrilo Princip, took out his gun and shot the Franz and his wife at point-blank range.

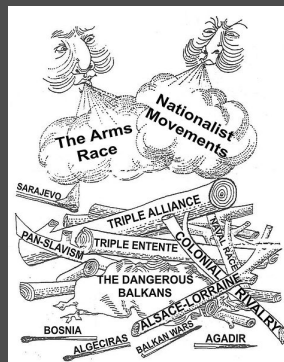


- ### Chain Reaction Leads Everyone to War
- Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia for the assassination and declared war
 - Germany offered their unconditional support
 - Russia swooped in to protect its Slavic friends
 - Germany mobilized against Russia
 - France mobilized against Germany
 - Germany violated Belgium's neutrality to attack France, and Britain declared war in defense of both
 - Canada, as part of the British Empire, was automatically considered at war as soon as Britain was

So, what was the cause of the war???

Possible Causes of the War

- The system of alliances
- Gavrilo Princip/The assassination
- The gradual build-up of tensions for decades in Europe
- The arms race/militarism
- Imperialism vs. Nationalism (particularly in the Balkans)
- Disputed territory/lack of official agreements on borders





Discussion:

- How does Canada factor into this system of alliances? Did this war present any threat to us at all?
- In other words, could we justify entering the conflict? Try to think the way Canadians would have at the time.

Canada's Response to the War



Canada's Response to the War

- Canada did not have a choice in the matter, they automatically went to war as soon as Britain declared war (British Empire)
- This was in line with the support Canada had given during the Boer war in S. Africa
- Canadian support for the war effort was widespread
- 25000 soldiers were promised to Britain by PM - Robert Borden and more than 32 000 volunteered in the first month



Why did they join?

- Most believed it would be short (home for Christmas)
- Looking for adventure (chance to be a hero!)
- No job = escape financial hardships at home (\$1.00 /day pledged)
- Patriotic urge to defend their mother country (Britain)

Who could go?

- Women were not encouraged to volunteer (seen as too frail and emotional for military service)
- Those that did enlist were nurses and ambulance drivers
- Originally no Aboriginals or African/Japanese Canadians were accepted
 - Eventually these groups overcame the racism that they faced and were accepted (but few were promoted)



Training the Troops & Financing the War

- Sam Hughes – Minister of the Militia
- Appointed by the government to oversee the production and maintenance of Canadian Military
- Shell Committee – manufacture of shells for the war effort (helped finance the war)
- By 1917, 1/3 of all shells were provided by Canada to Britain (But did they work?)



Training the Troops Continued

- Brought diverse Canadians together as a group
- Bootcamp together built bridges between them and started to develop a National Identity sense of being Canadian
- Formed the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF)
 - When went to Britain initially thought they would integrate with British Units but generally fought as a distinct Canadian unit (contributing to sense of national identity)

Minister of Militia Continued

- Sam Hughes was dismissed for patronage, inefficiency, and confusion (However he was knighted by King George V)



Canadian Made?

- Hughes wanted Canadian soldiers outfitted in Canadian goods **"Good for morale, good for business"**
- Soles of boots made of pressed cardboard
- **Ross rifle** – prone to jamming – soldiers would pick up British made rifles (Lee Enfield) from dead soldiers and carry on
- In order for the government to meet its demands, Borden realized he needed more power



War Measures Act

- Introduced by Prime Minister Borden almost immediately after war was declared
- Granted the Canadian government the authority to do everything necessary **"for the security, defense, peace, order and welfare of Canada"**
- For the first time it could intervene directly in the economy of the country and control transportation, manufacturing, trade, and agricultural production in whatever way it deemed necessary
- Could strip Canadians of their civil liberties

War Measures Act Continued

- Mail could be censored, **Habeas Corpus** was suspended – police could detain without pressing charges
- Anyone expected of being an enemy alien or threat to the government could be imprisoned or deported, or both.
- Recent immigrants from Germany and Austro-Hungarian Empire were treated harshly (8,579 were held **in internment camps**)
- Hughes was dismissed from his position in 1916

Social Studies 11 WWI Unit

A NEW KIND OF WAR: WWI ON LAND

The Schlieffen Plan

- Germany knew they were facing a two-front war and had to develop a plan to defeat it.
- Relied on two key assumptions:
 - 1. Russia would not be able to mobilize their army quickly
 - 2. Britain would remain neutral because they didn't like France either
 - They were wrong on both counts.
- With this in mind, the plan called for France to be defeated by the time Russia was ready



The Schlieffen Plan (3)

- Ultimately, the Germans could have captured Paris despite underestimating both the Russians and the British
- They were within sight of the city but chose to turn south to capture the River Marne first
- Stretched their supply lines too far and were forced after being slowed at the Marne to dig in
- British and French forces countered with their own trenches and a 3 year-plus stalemate would begin

New Technology and the War

- By 1914 new weapons were so powerful and deadly it was suicidal to charge across open ground
- Machine guns
- Airplanes
- Tanks



War Technology

- Dirigibles = inflatable airships for scouting and bombing missions
- Field guns & Cannons – Germany's "Big Bertha" artillery could arch shells almost 25km upward to hit targets up to 120km away
- Shrapnel – metal balls or fragments
- Fighter planes – at first used to find the enemy, later used to attack
- Submarines or U-Boats (from Unterseeboot or "under-sea boat) used diesel engines and traveled faster on the surface than most ships.
- Torpedoes – cigar-shaped bombs driven by a propeller
- Tanks – developed by the British to crush barbed wire and shelter the crew from gunfire while crossing no man's land

War Technology Continued

- ◉ Poison Gas – Germany was the first to use chlorine gas at Ypres in 1915. The gas burned the skin and lungs of the Allied forces. Later, both sides used phosgene gas (invisible but suffocating) and mustard gas (which creates huge skin blisters)



Trench Warfare



- ◉ By the end of Sept. 1914, the Western front had been established.
- ◉ Canadians would fight entirely on this front

Trench Warfare (2)

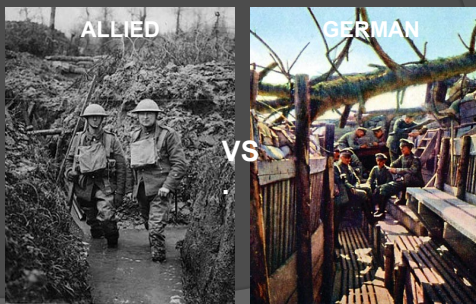
- ◉ (Video Clip by the National Film Board: “THE TRENCHES (Front Lines Vignettes)”)
- ◉ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3QJRM7tCI0>

Trench Warfare (3)

- The Allied Trenches were much more hastily dug than the German ones. As such, the conditions were even worse.



Trench vs. Trench



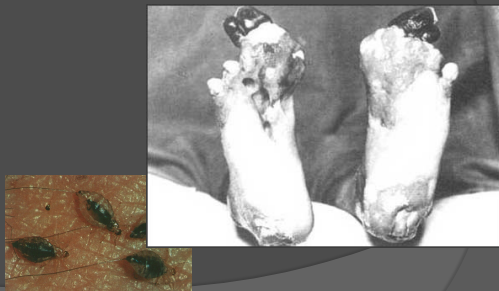
Trench Life

- Work schedule: 8 days front, 4 days reserve, 4 days rest (often subject to change)
- Cold, scarce rations, often wet
 - Also often filled with human waste
- This led to conditions such as trench foot, frostbite, dysentery, lice and rat infestations
- Conditions were so bad that soldiers often looked for ways to give themselves a "blighty"...which was slang for an injury that was just bad enough it would force them from combat

Trench Warfare Continued

- Daytime = dangerous (frontline trenches were 25-100m of enemy line)
- Night-time = worse (men had to climb out of the trenches for patrols in no-man's land to repair the parapets and string barbed wire) & often time for surprise attacks
- Dawn = worst time (favoured for major attacks and "[going over the top](#)")

Trench Damage



"No Man's Land"

- No Man's Land was the neutral territory between the two sides
- It was a chaotic mess of mud-filled artillery craters, decomposing bodies and barbed wire



Misery

- Danger of trench warfare was often too much for some soldiers and they suffered mental breakdowns
- victims of "shell shock" or battle fatigue were unfit for fighting and sent to asylums in England and Canada



Assignment

- You are a Canadian Soldier at the end of the war. You are meeting with your doctor tomorrow and you desperately need him to give you medication to deal with the psychological damage from the war. Write a letter to him detailing the horrific conditions as well as you possibly can. You need to convince him that you need the medication, so make it as good as possible! (If you need extra details, use p. 35-37 in your textbook)
