

The Nation at War



The United States of America in World War I
1917-1919

The United States in World War I

Shifting European Alliances and Conflict Draw America into Battle

- ❖ World War I was the war to end all wars and had major consequences for Americans both at home and abroad.
- ❖ Though many in Europe and America believed the war would be quick and decisive, it became a war of attrition, with soldiers fighting in the trenches for years ferociously attempting to move the battle lines by mere inches.
- ❖ The war was one of the deadliest conflicts in human history claiming casualties in the tens of millions.
- ❖ President Woodrow Wilson had steered the United States away from war maintaining a policy of Cautious Neutrality until 1917 when America joined the effort on the side of the Allied Powers predominantly consisting of the United Kingdom, France, and Russia.
- ❖ Domestically, the war impacted the politics, culture, and society of the United States with women gaining the right to vote while other groups of citizens remaining marginalized or subject to systematic repression.

The European March Toward War

Understanding the Context of World War I

- ❖ After the Napoleonic Wars of the early 1800s, the Congress of Vienna met in 1814 seeking to create peace and a balance of power in Europe by dismantling the French Empire and giving monarchs back their thrones.
- ❖ At the same time, a new political ideal of nationalism was sweeping through Europe with the underpinning that nations should be formed based on the people who shared common heritage, language, and customs rather than by the rule of monarchs who had gained their land by winning wars, signing treaties, and arranging marriages.
- ❖ The result of monarch rule led to Europe having empires that included many nationalities within their borders such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire.
- ❖ As nationalism spread across Europe it tore apart empires and built nations. By the mid-1800s Italy and Germany achieved national unity with patriotic citizens devoted to their countries. Nationalism, however, also set the stage for war as it instigated competition between nations for materials to be used in factories, markets to sell goods in, and the rush to control foreign territories in Africa and Asia.
- ❖ As distrust between countries grew, the European powers built up their militaries with rivalries leading to the creation of complex webs of secret defense agreements between nations outlining specific stipulations and obligations. This pulled many nations into war when only a few of which were aggressive. These complicated alliance networks required members to enter into hostilities if their alliance partner was attacked, but not if their partner was the aggressor (this is how Italy argued that it did not have to go to war on the side of belligerent Germany).
- ❖ In the 1880s, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy formed the Triple Alliance (which later became the Central Powers and no longer included Italy). In response to the Triple Alliance, the Franco-Russian Alliance was formalized between 1891 and 1893 with Britain, France, and Russia joining together under the Triple Entente (later referred to as the Allied Powers which included Italy).
- ❖ While the alliances were designed to keep peace, a disagreement between any two rival powers could pull the whole continent into war. In 1914, a chain reaction starting with the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne would ignite the largest war Europe and the world had ever seen.

European Alliance System

Precipitating Events that Led to War in Europe

- ❖ On June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian empire, was assassinated by a Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip.
- ❖ Princip and other Yugoslav nationalists wanted to be liberated from Austrian rule.
- ❖ The assassination set a series of events in motion culminating in a declaration of war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia.
- ❖ The prevailing alliance system of the time drew all major European powers into the war and global conflict.

New York Tribune
NEW YORK, MONDAY, JUNE 29, 1914. PRICE ONE CENT

HEIR TO AUSTRIAN THRONE ASSASSINATED; WIFE BY HIS SIDE ALSO SHOT TO DEATH; EARLIER ATTEMPT ON THEIR LIVES FAILED

HEIR TO THE AUSTRIAN THRONE AND HIS WIFE, VICTIMS OF ASSASSIN.



Francis Ferdinand, Nephew of Emperor Francis Joseph, Killed in Bosnian Capital an Hour After Warding Off Bomb Which Injures Score.

SLAYER A SERBIAN SOCIALIST

Valley from Revolver Hits Archduke and Duchess of Habsburg as They Are Driving Together in Automobile in Town of Sarajevo—New Heir, Charles Joseph, 27 Years Old.

Sarajevo, Bosnia, June 28.—The Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary, and his emerald-green wife, the Duchess of Habsburg, were shot to death today in the main street of this, the Bosnian capital. Bullets from a 16-gauge revolver in the hands of an eighteen-year-old youth killed the heir apparent and his wife, and thus completed the grim task a madman had unsuccessfully attempted only a few hours before by hurling a bomb at the royal automobile.

Another terrible chapter has thus been written into the tragic and romantic history of the House of Habsburg, and tonight the aged Emperor lies prostrate by the news in his summer place at Bad Ischl.

The flying bullets struck Francis Ferdinand full in the face. One tore its way into the Duchess's body. Another pierced the great artery in her throat. As the blood gushed from her neck she fell senseless across her husband's knees.

An instant later he, too, sank to the floor of the car in a heap. Both were rushed with all speed to the palace. But no help was of avail. They died a few moments after they arrived.

ASSASSINATION CAREFULLY PLANNED

The assassination had been carefully planned. It was while they were on their way to the town hall that Nedeljko Gaborinovic, a journeyman printer, along a smoking booth at the royal automobile. It was while they were returning from the hall, perhaps an hour later, that Gavrilo Princip, a high school student, stood at the corner of the Radulovic street and poured his bullet into the helpless couple. Again, an unexploded bomb was found a few yards away from the scene of death. It had been flung in a corner by another madman after he had learned of the success of Princip's attack.

ARCHDUKE WAS INDIGNANT

After the bomb exploded the Archduke and the Duchess were hurried to the City Hall. The automobiles were fast and the crowd had not yet filtered through the crowd in waiting. Indeed, the gas had hardly been time to telephone. So the burgomasters were astonished when he met his royal guests at the door to have his customary address of greeting interrupted by the snapping words of Francis Ferdinand:

"Here burgomasters, we come to pay you a visit and bombs are shot down at us. It is an insult!"

Then his princely dignity overcame his indignation, and he resumed and said:

"How do you sleep?"

After the commotion the Archduke and his wife accompanied them they would visit the wounded members of their suite in the hospital on their way to the palace. They set out in their car, it is now protected by a cordon of police. They drove rapidly down the Franz Joseph street and were entering the Radulovic street when Princip, a pale faced boy—indeed, a mere stripling, but with all the air of a fanatic shining in his countenance—popped out of the front rank of the crowd like a seed from an orange. He shot or aimed exactly to realize what he meant to do. It was as real and as cruel as a moving picture.

GET RHINELANDER THIEF

Police Search of Robbery by Arrest in Hamilton County.

GRAVES MIDAIR PERIL

High Building Has No Terrors for Fire Captain.

FIND SCHANCK GIRL DEAD IN CREEK

Teacher's Six-Month Mystery Partly Solved When Body Is Identified by Her Pin.

BIG LINER STUCK BETWEEN ROCKS

Wireless Reports All Safe on California and Gunboats at Hand.

PASSENGERS TAKE ACCIDENT CALMLY

Sea Quiet, but Coroner's Trainsman Whose Vessel Is Fast Off Irish Coast.

ARCHDUKE PARRIED BOMB WITH ARM

Warded Off the Deadly Missile from Himself and Wife.

MET HIS END LATER BY BULLET WOUND

Crowd in Both Cases Tried to Make Assassins Pay Sums for Crime.

THE AGED EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH

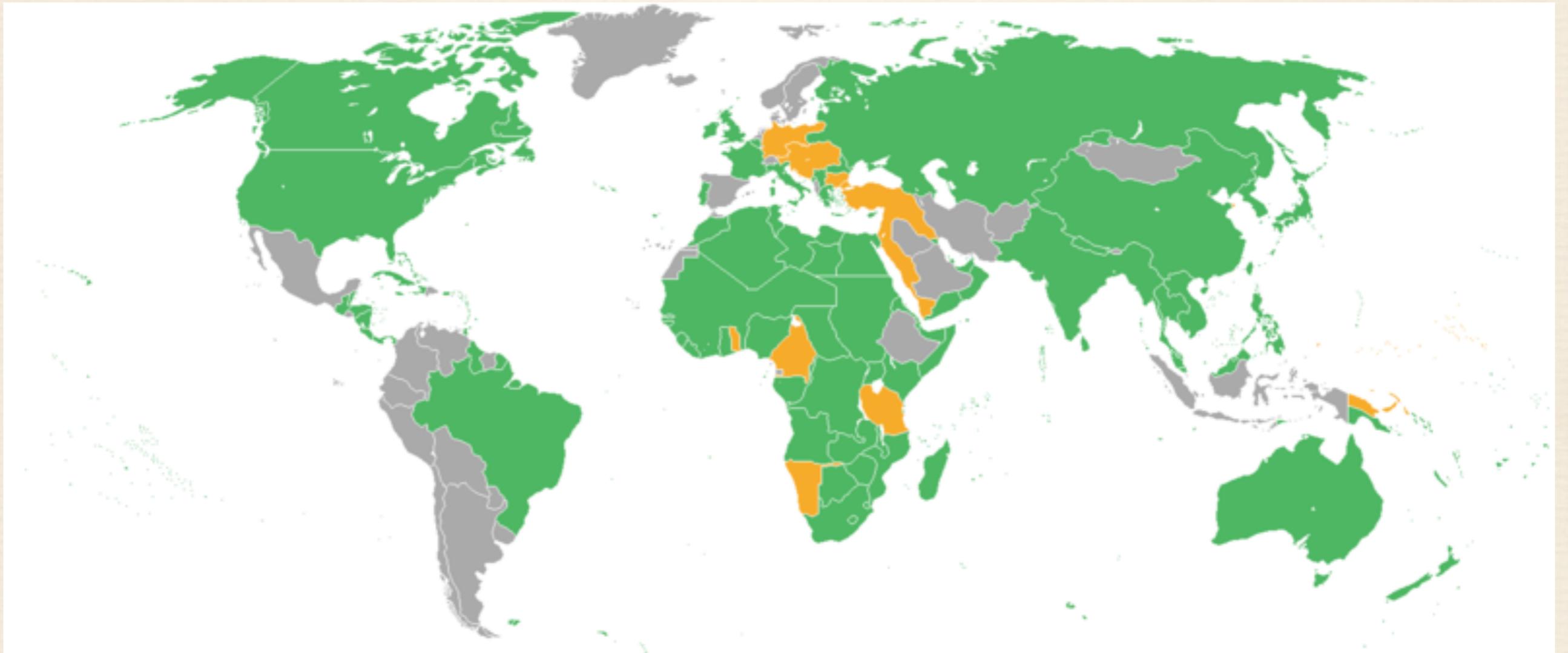
WANAMAKER FLYER TESTED BY STORM

Over-Loaded Boat, Blown Into the Air by a Stry Mile Gale, Withstands Severe Buffets of Wind, Rain and Hail.

[Video](#)

War in Europe

The Spreading Conflict from the European Continent



Wikimedia Commons

- ❖ **GREEN:** Countries aligned the Allied Powers.
- ❖ **ORANGE:** Countries aligned with the Central Powers.
- ❖ **GREY:** Countries that remained neutral in the war.

[InteractiveTimeline](#)

Principal Combatants

Allied Powers

United Kingdom (Britain)

France

Russia

Italy

Serbia

Montenegro

Belgium

Japan

Greece

Romania

United States

Central Powers

Germany

Austria-Hungary

Ottoman Empire

Bulgaria

American Neutrality Evaporates

The United States Joins the Fight on the European Continent



- ❖ President Wilson sought to maintain American neutrality, however, escalating German aggression drew the United States into conflict.
- ❖ Instigating factors such as the May 7, 1915, German U-boat sinking of the RMS Lusitania ocean liner carrying over 100 Americans, the January 1917 German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, and the early 1917 interception and publication of the Zimmermann Telegram sent by Germany urging Mexico to collude against America prompted Congress to formally declare war on Germany on April 6, 1917.

Instigating Factors on the Road to War



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GERMANY PLOTTED TO INVOLVE US IN WORLD CONQUEST

United States Was Marked by Kaiser as One of Links in His Dream of Empire

NUMBERED US AMONG ENEMIES FROM FIRST

Sought to Align Mexico Because of English Oil Supplies Originating There

Decline Interview. (United Press.)

Made Overtures to Japan and Mexico

ALFRED ZIMMERMANN

Library of Congress

EXTRA!

First Extra Honolulu Star-Bulletin 10:30 Edition

"If any man hauls down the American flag, shoot him on the spot!"—Gov. Dix of New York, in the Civil War

—HONOLULU, TERRITORY OF HAWAII, TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 1917. PRICE FIVE CENTS

SENATORS BACK WILSON IN WAR UPON GERMANY

GREAT ARMY TO BE RAISED; 500,000 IS ONLY FIRST STEP

COUNTRY'S RESOURCES PLEDGED TO LIBERTY; TO RAISE WAR TAXES

19 SURVIVORS OF AZTEC; ONLY SMALL HOPE FOR THE FIVE HAWAIIAN SAILORS

Mighty Army and Navy Will Uphold American Freedom

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 3.—Every agency is moving swiftly today to give the nation against that government which the president in his message characterized as "the natural foe of liberty."

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War Industry

Global War Requires Unprecedented Cooperation

- ❖ The vast scale of World War I required the American public to form an unprecedented labor force organized to support the concerted effort.
- ❖ To avoid suggestion of government coercion, voluntary collaboration between government and business was encouraged by the Wilson administration.
- ❖ Congress established the War Industries Board to align national interests with those of industry. The board achieved its nationalistic and financial objectives by cajoling domestic businesses, growing profit margins and threatening public shaming by labeling uncooperative businesses and their owners/proprietors as unpatriotic.



War Industry

Unions Cease Opportunity of the War to Improve Worker's Lives



TWO THINGS THE COUNTRY NEEDS
LESS WASTE
MORE PRODUCTION

What the People Save
AND
What the People Make
ARE THE MEANS OF WINNING THE WAR

KEEP WORK MOVING
STOPPING OR DELAYING
WORK HELPS THE ENEMY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

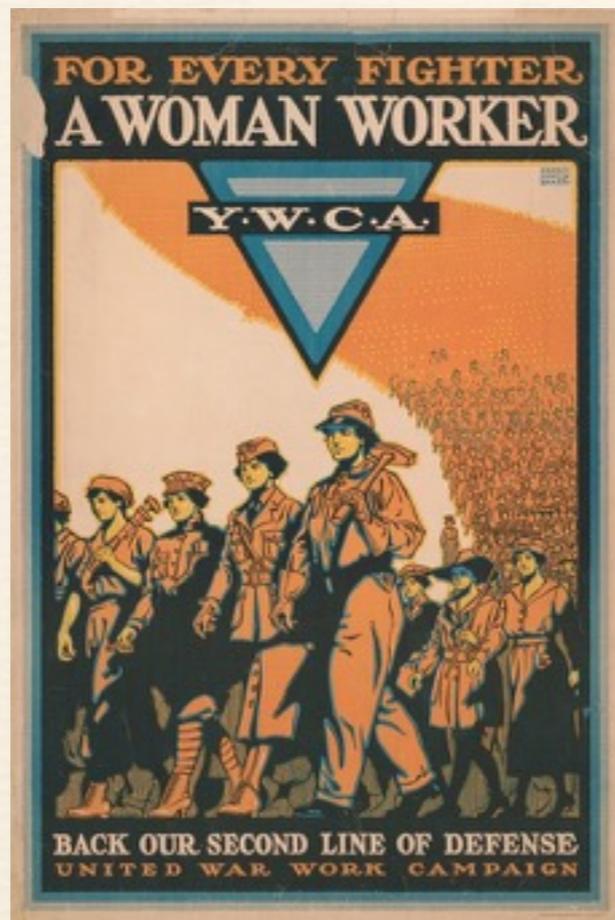
- ❖ Large unions such as the American Federation of Labor capitalized on the need for organized labor to secure better wages and working conditions for American laborers.
- ❖ Conflicts arose within the workforce during the war with thousands of strikes in 1917 resulting in work stoppages in the war effort dependent industries of mining, forestry, and ship building.
- ❖ The war also presented more than one million American women the opportunity to move away from domestic service work and non factory textile labor as they found temporary employment in skills based jobs located in factories and offices across the country.

On the Home Front

The War Increases Labor Needs, Food Conservation, and Volunteer Efforts



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Audio

- ❖ America's deepening involvement in the global war positioned women to play a critical role on the home front as Selective Service-age men headed overseas to serve in the Armed Forces.
- ❖ Working in factories, planting and harvesting war garden crops, and organizing volunteer services groups, women provided domestic services and goods for American troops headed overseas.
- ❖ The federal government capitalized on state and municipal activism through women's organizations to help fuel the war effort.
- ❖ While some states gave women leadership positions and the right to vote, a glass ceiling prevented full gender equality during this era.
- ❖ Despite social, political, economic barriers, and disappointments, women viewed the war as an opportunity to expand upon their constitutional rights.

Home Front Contributions

Volunteerism as the Fulcrum for Female Empowerment

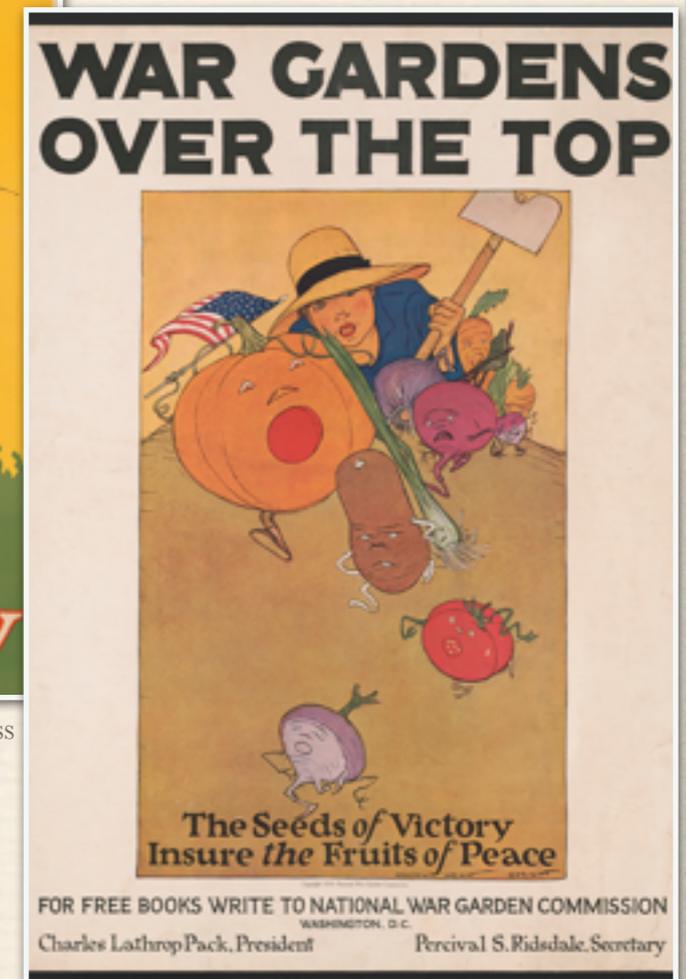
- ❖ Active in thirty-three states by the summer of 1918, volunteer groups such as the Women's Land Army sought to use women's labor to address the threat of food shortages due to the war.
- ❖ The "Farmerettes" secured labor contracts guaranteeing wages, hours, and working conditions rarely seen for agricultural workers at the time.
- ❖ Victory Gardens played a pivotal role in the war by increasing the national food supply and educating the nations school aged children and general public to decrease waste as an act of patriotism.



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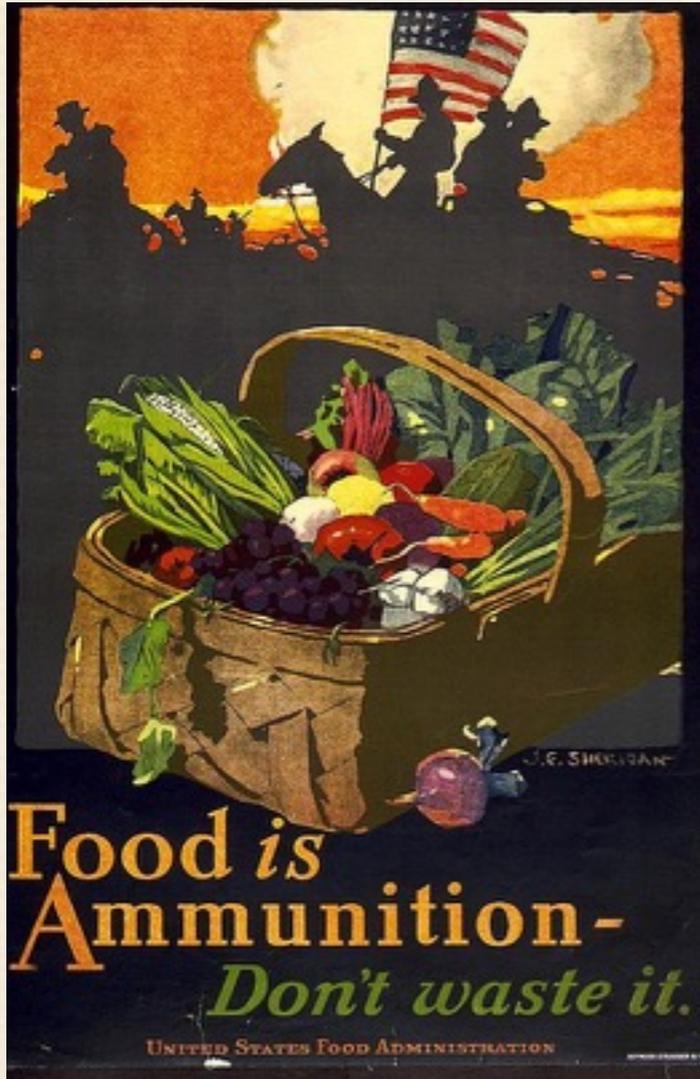
Library of Congress



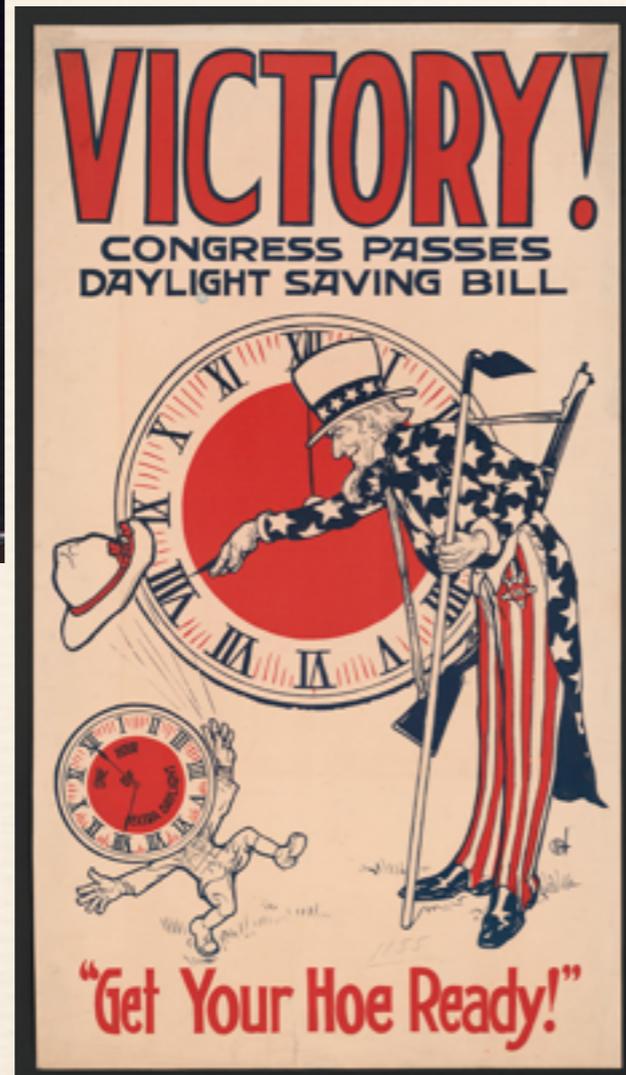
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Wartime Government Oversight

Following European Lead, America Seeks to Streamline the Economy



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- ❖ To stem the tide of food waste within the country, the U.S. Food Administration launched a campaign in 1917 targeting schools, libraries, grocery stores, and public transit.
- ❖ Utilizing women's group volunteers, the campaign and others like it highlighted the ways homemakers could plan economically and nutritionally balanced meals for their families while also supporting the national war effort.
- ❖ Other measures undertaken to increase American efficiency included the adoption of Daylight Savings Time in March 1918 as a means to conserve electricity in urban areas.

**Keep Good Food Out of Your Garbage Pail and Kitchen Sink
Don't Feed High-Priced Human Food to Hogs or Chickens**

WASTE NO FOOD!

HOUSEHOLD WASTE ABOUT 700 MILLION DOLLARS

"For partial immediate relief, every individual and community should consider earnestly the matter of food conservation and the limitation of waste. As a nation we seem to have a disinclination of economizing. In many homes there is a strong feeling that it is 'only decent' to provide more food than will be eaten and that it is demeaning to reckon closely. The experts of the Department of Agriculture report to me that the dietary studies made by them point to an annual food waste of about \$700,000,000. Of course, the waste in families of very limited means is slight, but in the families of moderate

and ample means the waste is considerable. Even if the estimate were reduced by half, the waste would still be enormous. "The food waste in the household, the experts assert, results in large measure from bad preparation and bad cooking, from improper care and handling, and, in well-to-do families, from serving an undue number of courses and an over-abundant supply and failing to save and utilize the food not consumed. As an instance of improper handling, it is discovered that in the preparation of potatoes 25 per cent of the edible portion in many cases is discarded."—Secretary of Agriculture, March 1, 1917.

FOOD IS WASTED

When anything edible is allowed to go to the garbage pail or allowed to spoil for lack of proper handling

FOOD IS WASTED

When too much is served at a meal. Uneaten portions are left on the plate and later thrown into the garbage pail. Learn to know the needs of your family and serve each no more than you think he will want.

When too much is prepared for a meal. Unserved portions are likely to be thrown into the garbage pail or allowed to spoil. Many housekeepers do not know how to use left-over foods to make appetizing dishes.

FOOD IS WASTED

When burned or spoiled in cooking. Improperly prepared or poorly seasoned food will be left on the table and probably wasted. Buy food wisely and then prepare it carefully.

When handled carelessly. Buy clean food, keep it clean until used, and be neat in all details of cooking and serving. This lessens waste and is a valuable health measure as well.

FOOD IS WASTED

When we eat more than our bodies need for growth and repair and to supply energy for our work

Overeating tends to poor health and fat instead of leanness, makes us sluggish and indolent instead of energetic and resourceful. Eat enough and no more. Eat for physical and mental efficiency.



**DEMONSTRATE THRIFT IN YOUR HOME
MAKE SAVING, RATHER THAN SPENDING, YOUR SOCIAL STANDARD**



Begin to save to-day. For practical advice on how to feed your family efficiently and make the most of the food you buy or raise write to-day to your State Agricultural College, to your county agent, or to the

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Waste Not, Want Not



Funding the War

Liberty Loans, Victory Drives, and Taxation Finance National Effort



- ❖ To avoid disrupting the economic advances America made during neutrality, the Committee on Public Information engaged patriotic citizens with short, carefully worded speeches to promote the sale of critically important war bonds called Liberty Loans.
- ❖ Calling on citizens across the economic spectrum, the U.S. government raised \$20 billion through four Liberty Loan drives and one Victory Loan drive with almost one third coming from Americans earning less than \$2,000 annually.
- ❖ As war expenditures rose exponentially, government debt also ballooned with officials realizing borrowing alone would not sufficiently fund the war effort.
- ❖ The War Revenue Act of 1918 forever impacted American taxation by flipping three fourths of federal revenues derived from custom and excise taxes before the war to three fourths revenues coming from income, profit, and estate taxes after the war.
- ❖ To garner support for the war, celebrities exhorted civilians to buy bonds and artists stressed the potentially dire consequences of inaction by conjuring images of American liberty in ruins.

Video 



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*Do Your Part,
Be A Patriot*

SECOND LIBERTY LOAN

THE SLOGAN OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT:

**“Back the Boys in the Trenches
—Buy a Liberty Bond.”**



OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,
WASHINGTON, D. C., October 10, 1917.

To the Officers and Employees of the Post Office Department:

Among the finer influences born of the bitter experiences and evil results of a great war are not alone the patriotism and loyalty which weld the people into one, but the encouragement which it lends to the spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice, and the frugality which it engenders among individuals.

The Postmaster General is highly gratified with the splendid showing made by postal employees in the way of subscriptions to the First Liberty Loan. Many who had never theretofore been the possessor of an investment found to their agreeable surprise that they had paid, with comparative ease, for a Liberty Bond and had effected a substantial saving for the future in providing for themselves and their dependents. One of the most unfortunate things in life to contemplate is growing old without any visible means of livelihood. How fine it is to make a small saving to fall back on when a man's health fails, his earning capacity is reduced, and he finds himself and his family in want. The subscriptions to the **Second Liberty Loan** is the safest investment in the world, and it will be the means, not only of bettering the individual financially, but of contributing to the great common cause in which our hearts are so deeply concerned—the winning of the war against Germany.

Some people are laboring under the impression that there is something complicated about the purchase of a Liberty Bond. It is a very simple proposition. Any bank will cheerfully give full information as to the very easy terms upon which purchases may be made, and will lend the money necessary for the transaction. If the would-be purchaser has no bank connections, it does not matter. He should take up the question with any local bank, or with his postmaster.

It is earnestly hoped that the postal employees throughout the country will make a showing in the **Second Liberty Loan** equal to that attained in the first.

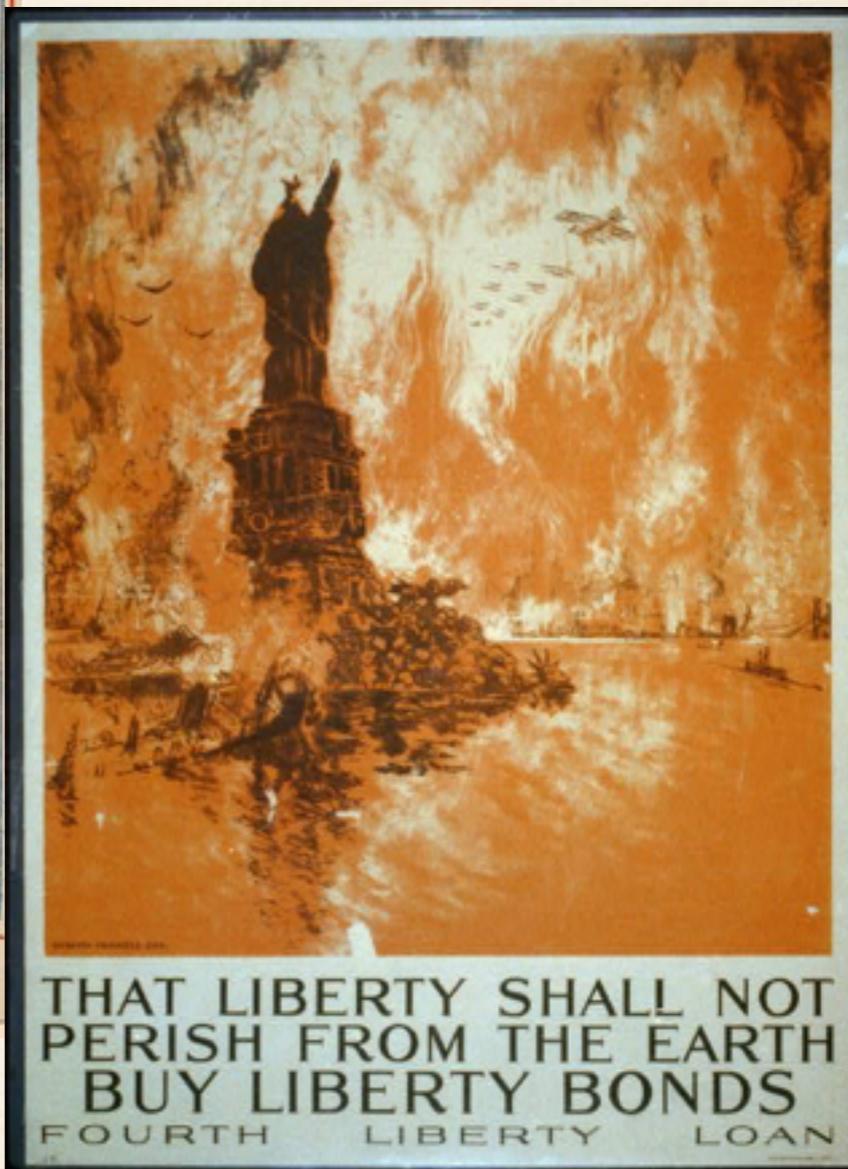
The Postmaster General desires to take this opportunity of congratulating the postal employees upon their fine sense of loyalty and patriotism, and to express his gratitude for their devotion to their duties in the postal service, as well as for their earnest and effective co-operation in every thing which pertains to the good of the country in the present great crisis.

A. S. BURLESON,
Postmaster General.

Library of Congress

*Buy War Bonds,
Fund the War Effort*

*A Call to All
Americans*



Library of Congress

Audio

Extension Activity: The Military Lens

Doughboys, Industrialized Warfare, and the Western Front

The Yanks are Coming

European Anticipation for a Short Conflict Turns into a Global Stalemate

- ❖ While a majority of Europeans thought the war would be short and decisive, there was a vocal minority who anticipated a protracted war.
- ❖ Combat soon bogged down on the Western Front where both sides dug complex trench networks stretching across hundreds of miles from the English Channel to the border of Switzerland.
- ❖ The rise of industrialization allowed rapid mass production of artillery, machine guns, and ammunition. European railroads were utilized to transport the continuous flow of munitions along with new waves of soldiers, including Americans, to the front lines.
- ❖ To break the looming stalemate, combatants pursued emerging technological means including the use of expanded artillery, poisonous gas, tanks, and the military use of airplanes. However, some of these innovations were too new to have a dramatic effect on the outcome of the war.



War Overseas: Shipping Troops Over

The U.S. Navy and Merchant Marines Move a Massive Army Across an Ocean

THE TIDAL WAVE



JULY 4, 1918

95 Ships Launched

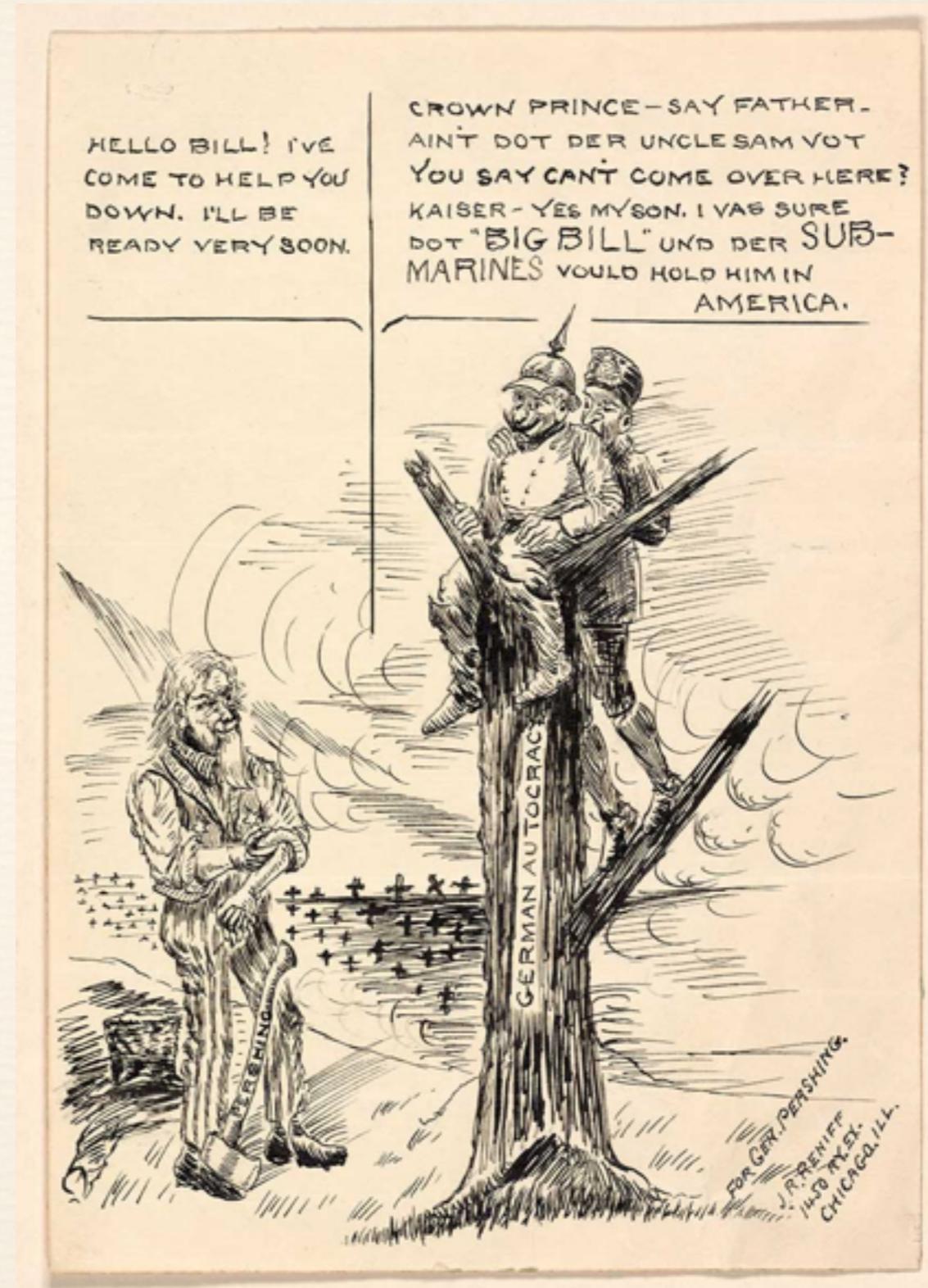
UNITED STATES SHIPPING BOARD EMERGENCY FLEET CORPORATION

- ❖ The British fleet kept most of the German navy at bay in the North Sea and the United States did not engage in any major naval battles with the Central Powers.
- ❖ The U.S. Navy, however, played a vital role transporting the U.S. Army across the Atlantic Ocean, escorting troop and supply convoys while under constant threat of German submarine attacks.
- ❖ Ten days after America declared war on Germany, the Emergency Fleet Corporation was established under congressional mandate with the purpose of acquiring, maintaining, and operating the merchant ships needed to transport U.S. troops and their supplies to France.
- ❖ Acutely short of ships, shipyards, and workers in 1917, a tidal wave of ships were constructed through 1918 and sent to Europe to aid the war.
- ❖ Despite these efforts, British ships, or ships confiscated from the Central Powers carried the majority of U.S. troops and supplies to Europe throughout the war with the Allies shipping two million American military personnel to Europe by war's end.

American Expeditionary Forces

Uncle Sam's Troops Commanded by General Pershing Arrive in Europe

- ❖ The successful sealoft operation allowed the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) under the command of General John J. Pershing, to become the largest U.S. force deployed overseas to that point with a total strength in November 1918 of 80,004 officers and 1,849,756 enlisted soldiers.
- ❖ As the first contingent of U.S. troops were nearing entry of the frontline trenches, General Pershing was promoted to the top rank in the U.S. Army due to the scale of his responsibility as the commander of the AEF.
- ❖ Only George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Philip Sheridan previously held ranks higher than major general in the U.S. Army.
- ❖ During his tenure in World War I, General Pershing would command an Army of nearly two million soldiers, known as doughboys, and oversaw battles including Belleau Wood, St. Mihiel, and the Meuse-Argonne.
- ❖ At peak strength the AEF included three field armies, nine corps, and forty-three divisions. By wars end the U.S. Army awarded thirteen campaign streamers to the AEF and its subordinate units.





They Deserve: America's Doughboys

Run Time: 6 Minutes

[Video](#)

Industrialized Warfare

Weapons of War: Artillery, Cannon, Machine Guns, Tanks, and Airplanes



National Archives



Library of Congress



National Archives



Library of Congress



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- ❖ Tanks were introduced to the battlefield to plow through enemy lines and break the stalemate. Early tanks, however, were prone to frequent breakdown and could not navigate war-torn land, leaving soldiers exposed and vulnerable to attack. Later tanks proved more efficient in battle as they were smaller, quicker, and had mounted rotating turrets equipped with cannon or machine guns.
- ❖ Heavy machine guns, capable of firing over 500 rounds per minute, greatly increased the firepower for the infantry.
- ❖ Advancements in artillery brought a new level of lethality to the battlefield. Rapid-fire, breech-loading field guns and howitzers dominated the battlefields and forced the armies to seek protection in trenches.
- ❖ While a relatively new use of force, airplanes were equipped with high rate of fire weaponry and pilots were trained to evade increasingly sophisticated enemy aircraft.

Video 

The Western Front

America Makes an Entrance on the Battlefields of Europe



[InteractiveMap](#)

[Video](#)

National Archives

Text Resources

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