Out of the Trenches to Peace After War

Examining the Toll of War and President Woodrow Wilson’s Plan for Peace
AEF Troops Storm Europe

“Let There Be No Gaps In The Ranks”

**Extra!**
Honolulu Star-Bulletin
3rd Edition

**Wilson Declares War**
Naval militia, reserves, are called to colors by the draft of 200,000 men.

President requests Americans to support war measures.

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**Congress Backs Wilson War Plan**
The Seattle Star

**U.S. To Fight With Allies**

**Library of Congress**

**The Seattle Star**
LAST EDITION

**Order U.S. Troops to France**

Gen. Pershing will lead first expeditionary force of Regulars; President sets date for Selective Service Registration; Nation Thrills to War Call.

**Library of Congress**

**Today's War Developments**

- President Wilson signs a draft act.
- The call for soldiers will take effect on August 16.
- Pershing will have 200,000 men under command.

- The Seattle Daily Times has announced that the first round of 500,000 will be chosen from the enlisted men.
- The new service will be known as the "selective service.

**Library of Congress**

**Finest Body of Troops in the World Going to France With "BlackJack" Pershing**

**Library of Congress**

**Herr La Follette Blocks Passage of War Measure**

**Library of Congress**

**All Resources of Country Pledged to Smash Kaiser**

**Library of Congress**

**The Philadelphia Inquirer**

**Wilson Orders Expeditionary Force to France Under Pershing, Calls Guard. Proclaims Draft**

**Library of Congress**

**Video**
Three years after the outbreak of the Great War, America’s uneasy policy of Cautious Neutrality evaporated and on 6 April 1917 the United States declared war on Germany, joining the Allied Powers as an Associated Power. In part, the nation was responding to the growing threat against its economic and diplomatic interests presented by escalating German hostility. However, America also wanted, in the words of President Woodrow Wilson, to make the world safe for democracy.

In previous wars, victory was claimed through territorial supremacy. In World War I however it was accomplished by simply outlasting the opponent. As 1917 began, German leaders realized their manpower losses over the previous year required assuming a defensive posture on the Western Front. Fearing they would lose a protracted war if the strategic situation remained the same, the Germans turned to unrestricted submarine warfare against all shipping, regardless of nationality in the waters off the British Isles and France, believing they could starve the British into submission before the Americans could train and deploy an Army across the Atlantic Ocean.

British and French leaders, dealing with massive losses in their own armies, urged President Wilson to send reinforcements to the Western Front stretching from Belgium to Switzerland. Despite the foreseeable carnage and casualties, Army leaders and planners saw the Western Front as the only place the United States could lay a decisive blow in defeating the Germans. However, the Army was ill prepared for a war of such large scale and it took time to properly assemble, train, and equip a fighting force of two million Americans.

The American Expeditionary Forces was desperately short of equipment with most of its artillery and tank firepower supplied by the British and French. Not convinced that the United States would offer a sufficiently prepared military force, a policy of amalgamation was suggested to train, equip, and incorporate Americans into the British & French armies in order to rapidly integrate American battalions and regiments. Using American troops in foreign armies, however, would decrease the visibility of the American contribution to the war and lessen the role American leadership wished to play in the war and ensuing peacetime.

The first contingent of the AEF commanded by General John J. Pershing reached France in June 1917 to bolster sagging French morale and symbolize American participation in the war. Marching his troops through Paris on the Fourth of July to encourage the French people, General Pershing’s troops gathered at the tomb of the American Revolutionary War hero Gilbert du Montier, the Marquis de Lafayette. Capturing the sentiments of many Americans for the repayment of an old debt, an officer on Pershing’s staff, Charles E. Stanton, gave a rousing speech ending with “Lafayette, we are here!”.

Facing the dilemma of sending American troops to Europe and wanting to exercise a definite influence on the outcome of the war, President Wilson resisted policies of amalgamation to avoid American forces being absorbed as reinforcements to the British and French. Additionally amalgamation proved an affront to national pride and an insult on American military professionalism. By the spring of 1918, the American Expeditionary Forces were ready, first blunting a German offensive during the Second Battle of the Marne, then contributing to the Allied Grand Counter-Offensive that ended with the Armistice of 11 November 1918.
To the Front

Americans Join the Bloody Battle
The Great War

*Trench Warfare Along Multiple Battle Fronts Claims Millions in Casualties*

- When the war began in 1914, Germany and Austria-Hungary made up the Central Powers. Great Britain, France, and Russia made up the Allied Powers. As the war escalated, new countries joined each side, such as Italy on the side of the Allies and the Ottoman Empire for the Central Powers. America joined the Allies in the spring of 1917 as an associated power.

- The war was fought on multiple fronts in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The most famous were the Eastern Front along the Russian border with Germany and Austria-Hungary and the Western Front, which ran from the Swiss border to the English Channel where the majority of Americans fought.

- In August 1914, the Allies blunted a German invasion before it could reach Paris, France. After a series of failed attacks by both sides the entire front turned into a stalemate that neither side could overcome. It would remain relatively unchanged for four years.

- The two armies dug miles of trenches that were deep enough for soldiers to stand and walk in and were protected by barbed wire and interlocking concrete machine gun nests. The strips of land separating the Allied trenches from the Central Powers trenches was known as “no-man’s-land.”

- In the intervals between large-scale attacks, soldiers hunkered down in the trenches where they ate and tried to rest before commanders would give the order to climb out of the trenches and cross a shell-cratered expanse to assault the enemy. The soldiers worked their way across the open fields of no-man’s-land, exposing themselves to deadly machine gun fire, artillery, and poisonous gas used as a weapon by both sides. Most gains were soon lost in an enemy counterattack. In these battles, thousands of soldiers died in order to win a few hundred yards of territory.

- The use of rapid-fire artillery expending millions of rounds of high-explosive and gas shells, as well as heavy machine guns and new technologies such as armored tanks that could move across barbed wire; airplanes armed with machine guns; and large, gas-filled blimps called zeppelins that dropped bombs from the sky over enemy territory, claimed the lives of over ten million soldiers in the trenches with millions more maimed or wounded.

- By the time the Allies won the war in 1918, the years of constant attacks resulted in both sides suffering heavy losses to disease, weather, and combat and made the prospect of an end to warfare an alluring but all together unrealistic ideal.
“Those of us who used to laugh at danger have stopped laughing…. We don’t come back any longer and tell each other with excited interest how close to our cars [a] shell burst— it is sufficient that we came back.”

—William Seabrook, American Field Service Ambulance Volunteer in France
At the front

I recently had the high privilege of visiting the battlefront of freedom from the English Channel to Venice. I saw the superb and veteran armies of Great Britain, France and Italy. I saw the heroic associates with whom our own army is to fight, and I had then, as I have now a sense of stirring and rising pride in the feeling that America's great and splendidly equipped and prepared army is composed of men worthy to be classed with those heroes and that they will find heroes worthy of their fellowship.

As the great army of American boys is streaming across the sea, and taking its place beside the British and the French, my mind projects that picture to another which I saw in Europe. Mountains unscaled by human feet, descended by Italian engineers with cable-ways running up them from valleys which seemed bottomless, and carrying up CANNONS, men, and munitions until these white-fingered, up-pointing mountains were really, each of them, converted into fortress sentinels guarding Italy and guarding freedom as well, by day and by night.

As an illustration of the spirit in heroic France, I heard of a French woman who went to the intelligence office of a hospital to inquire whether her husband, reported to her seriously wounded, had any chance of recovery. They told her there, that her husband was dead. She turned. It was not her first sacrifice in the war and as she turned, seemed to stagger from the room. A kindly disposed man followed her to see whether he could be of any comfort or consolation in her distress. He overtook her at the sidewalk, and she seemed almost distraught as he said to her: "Madam I beg you to let me express my profound sympathy for this terrible blow." She turned round, faced him squarely, and catching her breath and choking back what would have been a sob said: "Sir, under these circumstances there is only one proper sentiment to express, vive la France!" That is the spirit of the people and the armies in Europe. It is the spirit of America, and we shall be blessed in the victory we are to win by the sacrifices which will have purified us as they will have glorified our cause.
Moving an army of two million soldiers across an ocean was a feat never before seen and its successful accomplishment demonstrated that America, along with other industrialized countries, had the ability to fight large-scale wars across the globe.

While the initial belligerent nations engaged in four years of grueling warfare, the United States faced combat predominantly in the last six months of the war. Casualty figures reflected: 37,171 killed in action; 12,934 died of wounds; and 193,602 wounds not mortal, equalling 243,707 total casualties. Another 55,868 non-battle deaths resulted mainly from influenza.

During this time, Americans encountered unprecedented challenges fighting as part of a coalition in a new kind of total war in which highly industrialized nations utilized large-scale military operations and new technologies.

The mass production capabilities of the belligerents, their networks of railroads, and new rapid-firing weapons contributed to the deadlock on the European front lines.

Machine guns killed tens of thousands on both sides, but far more troops died under the rain of artillery shells.

Millions of fallen soldiers were buried in hundreds of cemeteries behind the lines. However, due to the destructive nature of WWI weaponry, there were often no remains of the dead left for recovery and burial.
By the summer of 1917, the United States entered a deadlocked war. Opposing armies were dug in, facing each other in trenches along the notorious Western Front.

The rapidly expanding AEF followed the Allied system of setting up special training centers and schools across America including thirty two training camps and cantonments to teach soldiers subjects such as trench and gas warfare, demolitions, and the use of hand grenades and mortars.

While the French and British had become imbued with trench warfare, General Pershing insisted on additional training in offensive tactics such as rifle marksmanship and the use of the bayonet as he believed that victory would come by driving the Germans from their trenches and defeating them in open warfare.

By the end of the war, many towns across Europe were destroyed and landscapes deforested by artillery fire. Fields were crisscrossed with trenches, pockmarked with craters, and littered with debris.

Populations were devastated. In total more than two million German, one million British, 1.7 million Russian, and 1.7 million French soldiers lost their lives.
Beginning in April 1915, the Western Front saw extensive chemical operations utilizing phosgene, chlorine, and mustard gas. The use of airborne chemical gas on the battlefield was mainly meant to incapacitate the enemy, however, exposure could be fatal.

While the German Army was the first to use chemical agents, all nations incorporated chemical weapons into their arsenals.

The United States entered the war woefully unprepared for chemical warfare and had to rely heavily on French and British expertise for chemical training, doctrine, and materiel.

Building on this knowledge, the U.S. Army eventually established a Chemical Warfare Service to coordinate offensive, defensive, and supply problems involved in the use of chemical weapons.

While most gas casualties were nonlethal the psychological torment and physical terror caused by the use of poisonous gas inflicted casualties on the AEF and impacted civilians across Europe.
Chemical Weapons History

Chemical Weapons Technology, Uses, Effects, and Methods of Treatment

Run Time: 56 Minutes

Video🔗
Despite camouflage techniques, modernized military uniforms, helmets, gas masks, and equipment, millions of soldiers were maimed and wounded during the war.

Advances in medical technology, hygiene, and the rigorous use of antiseptics during surgery saved the lives of many soldiers who would have perished in previous conflicts because of their wounds.

Survivors, however, were often left with disfiguring facial injuries, missing limbs, and other lasting disabilities.

The profound nature of the wounds inflicted during the war spurred innovations in reconstructive surgery, facial and limb prosthetics, and mobility devices.

Health and fitness were central to building a strong military force, and sick and wounded soldiers required treatment to return them to the fight.

Developments in science-based medicine, including identifying microorganisms as the cause of diseases, earned the practice of medicine increased prestige. Armed with new technologies and scientific methods, medical leaders were confident that health could be measured, disease prevented, and wounded bodies restored.

The war would put these ideas to the test on an unprecedented scale under the most difficult conditions. Medical practices developed during the war changed the country’s approach to health care in ways that continue to affect Americans today.
Shell Shock in World War I

The Discovery of “Shell Shock” in the Great War and Search for a Cure

Run Time: 50 Minutes
America's choice and opportunity

Newton Diehl Baker, Secretary of War, 1918

America has chosen -- nay, she chose in 1776 -- that she intended to be democratic in her policies and in her government. And our whole history of more than one hundred years justifies the statement that our people are wedded and devoted to the idea of international justice as the rule upon which nations shall live together in peace and amity upon the earth.

So that when we entered this war, we entered it in order that we and our children's children might fabricate a new and better civilization, under better conditions, enjoying liberty of person, liberty of belief, freedom of speech, and freedom as to our political institutions. We entered this war to remove from ourselves, our children, and our children's children, the menace which threatens to deny us that right. I want to appeal to you and to all Americans: never during the progress of this war let us for one instant forget the high and holy mission with which we entered it, no matter what the cost, no matter what the temptation. Let us bring out of this war the flag of our country as untarnished as it goes in -- sanctified and consecrated to the establishment of liberty, for all men who dwell on the face of the earth.

Nobody knows what the world is going to be like when this war is over. No imagination is able to picture the sort of civilization the world will have after this conflict. But we do know that when this war is over, the rehabilitation of a stricken if not paralyzed civilization is going to be a long, drawn out, and uphill task, and that there will be need on every hand for trained minds -- for trained and schooled men.

When the reconstruction of the world takes place, and a finer and better civilization has been worked out, when the human race puts its shoulders to the wheels of industry and begins to spread abroad the incalculably valuable discoveries of science, I can imagine that a new history of the world will begin to be written. And it will date, I think, from this great war, when men realize, perhaps for the first time in a fundamental way, that the waste in conflict is an unrecoverable waste -- that the upkeep of enormous armies is too great a burden to bear -- and that the real happiness of mankind is based upon those peaceful pursuits which aim to make available the great resources of the world. When peace comes, America will have a special opportunity for a great service.
Claiming Victory
Driven from the Trenches, the Allied Powers Deliver Decisive Blow to the Central Powers

World War I ended on 11 November 1918, when the German government signed an armistice with the Allies agreeing to end fighting.

The Meuse-Argonne offensive had given the Allies an important victory, however the main territory of Germany had not been invaded and a large German army remained in the field.

While German allies Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria had abandoned the fight, the Allied blockade continued to threaten the economy and food supply of Germany.

The prospect of the growing AEF and millions more American soldiers flowing across the Atlantic convinced German leaders that the situation would worsen, therefore the armistice was negotiated.
Worldwide the fighting killed an estimated 10 million soldiers and wounded twice as many. Millions of civilians also perished directly or indirectly from the conflict mostly due to starvation and disease. People across the world were angry and bitter about the war. The Allies blamed the war on the defeated Central Powers and wanted the Central Powers to pay for war damages.

While the U.S. declared war on Germany, it was never a formal ally of Britain and France as President Wilson was determined to maintain American freedom of action and avoid foreign entanglements. Although the United States provided loans, supplies, and troops for the war effort and coordinated military plans, it never formally signed a treaty of alliance with Britain and France. Resultantly, the United States entered the war as an Associated Power, which allowed it to shape future peace settlements without being tied to any European agreements.

Before the armistice, President Wilson advocated a peace pact in Europe based on justice and in his “Fourteen Points” address on 8 January 1918 he laid out a vision of a peaceful international order. President Wilson’s plan included freedom of the seas, arms limitations, the return of territory conquered by Germany, autonomy for nationalities ruled by the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, and a new association of nations to guarantee the political independence and territorial integrity of all states.

With the signing of the European armistice, President Wilson announced, “Everything for which America has fought has been accomplished.” Wilson noted the opportunity the armistice presented to Americans to assist by “sober friendly counsel and by material aid in the establishment of just democracy through the world.” The armistice however only ended the fighting between the Allies and Central Powers and violent conflict persisted in Eastern Europe where a civil war in Russia had broken out as well as in the Middle East where the borders of Turkey would be contested for another three years.

While the world leaders gathered in January 1919 in Paris to establish a plan for peace, a total resolution was impossible as warring countries put their arms aside, but not their differences.
Extension Activity: The Military Lens
A Brief History of the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps in the World War I Era
American involvement in the war capped a period of reform and professionalization that transformed the Army from a small dispersed organization rooted in constabulary operations to a modern industrialized fighting force capable of global reach and impact.

The Selective Service Bill of 1917, instituting the draft produced a huge supply of manpower for the American Expeditionary Forces. To better utilize the draftees sent to training camps across the country, divisions were created separating soldiers into administration, engineering, medical, supply, and transportation units.

Additional artillery and mortar regiments with specialized machine gun and mortar batteries were attached to each division consisting of three brigades and three battalions. Each infantry battalion employed four 250-man companies that were divided into platoons and finally 8-man squads which constituted the basic fighting unit. Many of these units saw combat and required medical care and assistance both during and after the war.

The war was bloody and casualties were high. The combatants would suffer over 34 million military and civilian casualties, including nearly 8 million deaths from wounds and disease. A latecomer to the fighting, the United States mobilized over 4 million soldiers and deployed over 2 million to Europe with nearly 300,000 casualties before peace returned. Great battles using manpower at an incredible rate demanded a staggering need for medical support. To meet the demand, U.S. Army surgeon general, Major General William M. Gorgas presided over an enormous expansion of the U.S. Army Medical Department.

Consisting of less than 1,000 personnel when the United States entered the war, the Medical Department numbered over 350,000 when peace returned in November 1918. At the onset of war the Medical Department was authorized 44 physicians. By war’s end it had 31,530 with nearly a quarter of American physicians serving with the AEF. Other specialties including dentistry, nursing, sanitation, and veterinariany medicine also dramatically increased.
An Expanding Army Medical Department Leads Innovation in Population Based Health Standards, Disease Prevalence, Treatment & Prevention
Preparedness Efforts Pay Dividends

Measuring Men and Medical Resources Reforms American Medicine

Believing that the United States would need its entire medical personnel if it entered the war, civilian professional organizations such as the American Medical Association and the American College of Surgeons formed the Committee on Medical Preparedness to survey the nation’s medical resources including physicians, nurses, hospitals, and equipment. Additionally, the committee advocated for medical schools to make courses in military sanitation mandatory.

Health and fitness were central to building a strong military force as ill or injured troops required treatment to return them to the fight. The U.S. Army Medical Department met these demands by using scientific techniques to test and analyze the mental and physical fitness of America’s male draft-age population, resulting in the first large-scale study of the health of the American people.

Keeping soldiers fit to fight required an array of trained medical personnel including professionals in new medical specialties such as psychology and radiology.
Military Medicine in WWI

Dr. Sanders Marble, U.S. Army Office of Medical History

Presentation & Run Time: 63 Minutes & Video
Medical treatment for wounded soldiers entailed a highly organized hierarchical system of treatment designed to move soldiers quickly off the battlefield and toward successive levels of care away from the front lines.

The primary goal was to treat soldiers and return them to active service as quickly as possible. Studying and adopting the methods of European nations already engaged in war allowed America to successfully treat wounded troops and later focus on rehabilitation efforts after the war to restore disabled soldiers to conditions of normalcy.

Emphasis on troop education for injury, illness, and disease prevention, as well as new rehabilitation therapies, helped injured troops heal and develop new job skills for employment after the war, thus keeping them off government pensions.

The rapid expansion and modernization of the U.S. Army Medical Department during World War I provided a testing ground for the application of new medical procedures and technologies that accelerated advances in medicine.

However, not all areas of medicine saw progress during the early twentieth century with prejudice shown toward minorities and women, excluding many eligible care providers from the field.

Ultimately, wartime medical practice proved a training space for America as the country coped with the ever-changing complexities of a modern industrial society that demanded the skilled labor and knowledge base of every citizen regardless of gender or cultural background.
During the war Americans mobilized a medical and public health effort unprecedented in scale and scope. Nearly one-third of the U.S. population contributed to the Red Cross as volunteers or donors with an astounding $400 million in funds and material raised to support its programs at home and abroad. The small medical corps in the standing armed forces resulted in the American Red Cross playing a critical role in providing medical care to ill and injured troops.

Thousands of American men and women volunteered for the Red Cross, staffing dozens of hospitals in Europe, even prior to America’s official entrance into the war. Having arrived before the American Expeditionary Forces, American volunteers including Red Cross nurses, medical workers, and ambulance drivers served with the allied armies and were later incorporated into the U.S. Army to serve as professional soldiers with the AEF.

At the request of the Secretary of War, the Red Cross stood ready to provide organized units and individual personnel including physicians, nurses, stenographers, and lab assistants to aid with war casualties and assisting the wounded throughout Europe. Red Cross base hospital units were designed so that when activated they could easily meet Army personnel and equipment requirements.

In addition to treating those wounded in war, the medical services struggled to fight the worldwide influenza epidemic that broke out in 1918. The flu killed more than 30 million people around the world, including 675,000 Americans, more than were killed in the fighting of the Great War.
The Spirit of Courage

Medics: The Unsung Heroes of Every Army

Run Time: 24 Minutes

Video
Text Resources


Text Resources


Image Resources


Image Resources


Audio/Video Resources


