

I. World War I and Total War

1. War fever gripped the populations of Europe, many felt that the war was necessary and just
2. Also felt it would be short and would be home by Christmas

B. Overview of the War: Western Front

- a) Following declarations of war July & August 1914, governments made opening moves when Austria-Hungary opened fire on Serbia, and Russia mobilized their troops, Britain prepared its British Expeditionary Force, Germany put its Schlieffen Plan into action
2. Failure of the Schlieffen Plan
 - a) Wars of German unification convinced strategists that future wars would be short and rapid
 - (1) a strong opening attack would be important
 - b) Schlieffen thought that the worst case scenario would be fighting war on two fronts
 - c) Reasons that Schlieffen's plan failed
 - (1) Belgian resistance was unexpectedly strong and took Germans more than two weeks to capture Brussels, the Belgian capital
 - (2) Attack on Belgium brought Britain into the war
 - (3) Germany delayed in getting through Belgium gave the British time to organize themselves
 - (4) German forces marching to Paris were weakened by the deployment of some of their troops to the east (where Russia was mobilizing), giving them troubles in maintaining their supplies
 - (5) Paris sent reservists to meet the Germans and fight them, and the Germans were already weary from travel and lack of supplies, which was called the battle of the Marne on September 9th
 - d) The 'miracle of the Marne' marked the failure of the Schlieffen Plan
3. 1915: Stalemate
 - a) The Stalemate in the western front continued in 1915.
 - b) Several attempts were made to break this stalemate,
 - (1) British at Neuve Chapelle and Loos
 - c) French lost thousands of men
 - d) Germans were driven from Ypres, and Germans used poisoned gas to get back this land
4. 1916: Verdun and the Somme
 - (1) 2 key battles
 - b) Verdun
 - (1) February 1916, Germans launched massive attack against an important French fortress town, Verdun.
 - (2) French effectively held against the Germans, and launched counter attacks as well.
 - c) The battle of the Somme
 - (1) Series of attack led mainly by the British under General Haig

- (2) aims of the attacks was to take the pressure off of the French at Verdun, and to ensure the Germans that they were supporting the French 100%
 - (3) The first attack used mainly artillery attack, and failed, and the second used tanks for the first time, but still no breakthrough
5. 1917: the USA joins the War
 - a) Germans withdrew behind fortified Hindenburg Line fortifications in north-eastern France
 - b) French and British lead many of the offensive attacks the rest of the year, but didn't make any major breakthroughs
 - c) British and Austrian forces were using tanks broke through the German lines and achieved an 8 km advance
 - d) Eventually though the British offense slowed, and the Germans were able to push the British back from some of the land they had captured.
 - e) The USA joined the war in 1917,
 - f) Americans had suffered as a result of German policy in submarine warfare
 - g) The final straw was when the Zimmerman telegram was intercepted, causing America to declare war on Germany
 - h) Still took time for the US to get troops into Europe, and Russian troops were suffering from rebellions that were taking place in their own country
6. 1918: victory for the Allies
 - a) Germany was on the verge of starvation as a result of the success of an Allied blockade, and under the threat of US troops arriving to join the Allies, the German commander Erich Ludendorff decided to risk everything on a quick victory in his 'Peace Offensive'.
 - b) Initial attacks were successful, using lightly equipped storm troops instead of the normal infantry
 - c) Germans over-stretched themselves through this however, and had no reserves to replace the casualties
 - d) Allied forces at the time were now stronger though their new technology (planes, tanks) and had growing forces that overcame the German
 - e) On August the 8th, the Allies achieved the furthest advance since the beginning of the war, and Ludendorff requested that the Kaiser make an armistice without any hesitation to stop the fighting
7. The Armistice
 - a) The Armistice was agreed at 5:00 on 11 November and had the following points
 - (1) Termination of military hostilities within six hours after signature
 - (2) immediate removal of German troops from France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine
 - (3) Removal of all German troops from territory on both sides of Rhine, with the replacement of the Allied troops
 - (4) Removal of all German troops from the eastern front
 - (5) Renunciation of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Russia and of the treaty of Bucharest with Romania
 - (6) Internment of the German fleet and surrender of other weapons