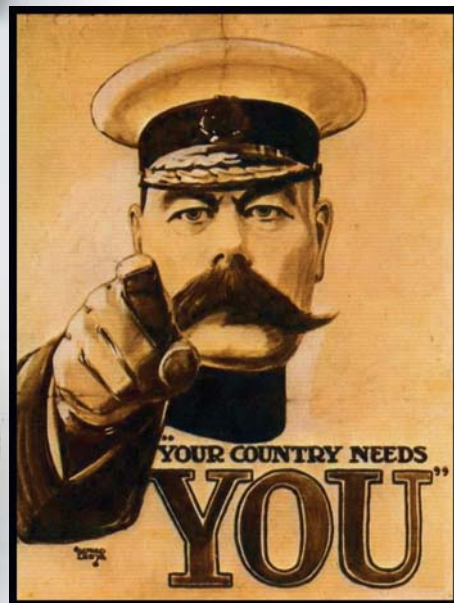


1914-1918



The Great War

Key Players and Leaders



Kaiser Wilhelm II

Wilhelm was the last German emperor (Kaiser) and King of Prussia, whose aggressive behaviour helped to bring about World War One. He was a grandson of Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom.



King George V

King of the United Kingdom, also a grandson of Queen Victoria.



Archduke Franz Ferdinand

Heir to the Austrian throne whose assassination was the immediate cause of World War I.



Gavrilo Princip

A Bosnian revolutionary responsible for the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand

Causes / Assassination / Britain and Ireland involved

What was Europe like in 1914?

Europe was a continent at peace in 1914. However, even though all looked well, some countries didn't trust each other, some countries wanted to invade and take over others and some countries were friendly with each other. The map of Europe in 1914 looked very different than it does today: some countries were much larger and had empires and colonies. For example, Ireland was part of Britain's empire. Austria and Hungary had their own empire, Austro-Hungary. Belgium and France had colonies in Africa and Germany had colonies not only in Africa but even in China.

Who didn't trust who in 1914?

Serbia didn't trust Austria-Hungary. The Austro Hungarian Empire had already invaded Serbia in 1908, and in 1913 Austria made statements that they had plans to invade Serbia and make it part of their empire.

Germany didn't trust Britain. Germany had plans to become the most powerful country in Europe, but Britain was expanding its industries and its navy. This made Germany nervous and distrustful.

France didn't trust Germany. They had been at war before, in 1870, and the memories of that war were still fresh in the minds of the French people.

The spark: What happened to start the war?



Archduke Franz Ferdinand walks towards his car on the day of his assassination in Sarajevo

On June 28th 1914, the next-in-line leader of the Austro Hungarian Empire, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, paid a visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Serbia. Serbians were very unhappy with this because of Austria's attempt to take over their country in 1908 and the fact that the Archduke was visiting on their national feast day – the feast of St. Vitus (a bit like St. Patrick's Day in Ireland). While they were touring the city in their open top car, a number of assassins from an organisation called the Black Hand were moving among the crowds lining the streets. One threw a bomb at the car. The driver, seeing the danger, went faster and the bomb missed its target, injuring some of the Archduke's travelling companions and several spectators. The car was afterwards driven faster along the streets so the assassins could not carry out their mission to kill the Archduke.

Later, Franz Ferdinand said he wished to visit some of the injured in hospital. He and his wife were driven towards the hospital, but the driver got lost. He stopped and reversed the car slowly, to get back onto the correct street. Unbelievably, this happened right in front of a man named Gavrilo Princip, one of the Black Hand gang who happened to be walking out of a coffee shop, and was probably feeling very disappointed that his earlier killing mission had been unsuccessful. His luck was about to change. He pulled out a gun from his pocket and fired five shots at the car, fatally injuring Franz Ferdinand and his wife. They died hours later.



Archduke Franz Ferdinand's blood-stained uniform

The reaction: How did Austria respond to the killing of one of their royal family?

The world took little notice at first. The killing took place in a country most Europeans had never heard of, and it took a week before the world fully understood what had happened. Austria's response to the assassination was to send a list of demands to Serbia. Examples of the demands included not to print anything, or teach anything to children, that made Austria look bad. Among other things they were told to get rid of the Black Hand organisation.

Serbia agreed to all of the demands except one - that Austrian police be allowed into Serbia to carry out an investigation into the assassination. This was a step too far for the Serbians, and they refused. The refusal infuriated the Austrian government, giving them the ideal excuse to declare war on Serbia.

So a Serbian shot an important Austrian. Why wasn't the war just between Austria and Serbia?

Austria asked the Germans if they would help if there was a war. Germany said that they would give support in **whatever action was necessary** to deal with Serbia. This encouraged Austria to take immediate action against Serbia. The German leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II, on July the 5th, announced to the world that Germany would join Austria against Serbia, and on July the 28th Austria declared war on Serbia. Russia decided to help Serbia by declaring war on Austria. This meant that Russia was now also declaring war on Germany.

War spreads: How did Britain get involved?

Six years before the start of World War 1, a German general called Alfred Graf von Schlieffen created a plan for war, later named after him. Von Schlieffen believed that in any future war France would be



Belgian refugees flee with their belongings

Germany's most dangerous enemy and should be attacked first. When war broke out, Germany's first target was France. To invade France, Germany had to go through Belgian territory. The problem was that Belgium was one of the neutral countries that didn't take any sides and wanted no part in any war. German troops marched through Belgium. Many villages were attacked and hundreds of men, women and children were killed by the Germans. Those who weren't killed became refugees, carrying their few belongings with them as they took to the roads in their thousands

looking for a place of safety. When the British saw the invasion of a neutral country, they decided to take immediate action. On August the 4th, Britain declared war on Germany. Ireland, being then part of Britain, was also involved. Within days, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa (because they were all part of the British Empire) all declared war on Germany.

With the Germans now in France, the British Army (including thousands of Irishmen) were sent to fight them, and in a small Belgian village called Mons, they attacked the German army for the first time. The Germans fought back so fiercely that the British retreated for three days; then the British attacked again sending the Germans back from where they came as far as the river Aisne.

Why did Irishmen join the British Army?

Ireland was part of Britain during the First World War. There was a lot of unemployment and poverty in Ireland. Also, when someone joined up, their friends felt that they should also. The British Army had a long history in Ireland, and few people thought it unusual to join the British Army. The army provided a steady income, clothing and three square meals a day. The excitement and adventure of going to war also helped. When war was declared, it was assumed that it would be over by Christmas. For this reason it was important that anyone who wanted to play their part should join quickly.



Irish poster encouraging Irishmen to join the British Army

Trenches, Trench Life and some big WWI Battles.

First Trenches Dug

In September 1914, along the river Marne in France, the first trenches were dug. Trenches were used to provide cover for each of the opposing armies and in this way they worked well; they kept the Germans and British out of sight of each other. However trenches also “fixed” the fighting in one place. No movement was possible. It was difficult to attack the opposing army because the land between the trenches was constantly being checked for any enemy soldiers. Anyone appearing above a trench or entering this piece of land during daylight would be immediately shot by the other side. The land between the German and British trenches became known as “No Man’s Land”.

Trenches spread: “The Race to the Sea”

Thousands more soldiers were sent to France from Britain and Germany. Each set of troops set about digging more and more trenches. So many troops were sent, and so many trenches built, that from the Marne River all the way north to the Belgian coast, two parallel lines of trenches 320 kilometres long were dug. This is the same as digging two trenches alongside each other, two metres deep, along the eastern Irish coast from Wexford to Belfast. The war was only one month old, but already 21,000 British, 250,000 French and 250,000 German soldiers had been killed. If you add these figures, the number killed **for the first month of the war alone** would fill Croke Park stadium over six times.

As the war went on, the trenches that were dug became very muddy and very smelly. When men were killed by an artillery explosion in a trench, their bodies sometimes were not removed for proper burial. There were no toilets as we know them. They were usually a plank of wood with a hole over a pit in the ground. These sometimes overflowed. There were many dead horses. The numbers of dead men and animals meant that rats were very well fed, and these sometimes grew as big as cats. There was also a big problem with lice that lived in clothes and sucked blood. When it rained, the thick woollen uniforms worn by the soldiers got soaked and became very heavy.

Battle of the Somme, 1916

The Battle of the Somme was planned by the British to help achieve total victory over the Germans. It involved an artillery bombardment along 25 km of trenches near the river Somme in France. This would destroy the German trenches and the barbed wire in front of them. Once this was done, on July 1st, thousands of French and British soldiers would be able to stroll through No Man's Land towards the German positions and capture their trenches.

The plan went disastrously wrong. The Somme campaign resulted in the biggest ever British military loss of life in a single day.

On the 24th of June, the planned bombardment started. It lasted a week, during which nearly two million artillery shells were fired at the German lines. The problems began almost immediately. The week-long bombardment made the Germans suspicious that "something was up", The German trenches were dug very deep into the chalky soil and they included bunkers – underground rooms. When the British started bombing, the Germans simply went underground. The barbed wire wasn't damaged by the bombing and finally, when the bombing was over, the Germans simply returned to their trenches from their underground rooms and set up their machine guns pointing at the British.



On July 1st, the bombardment finished and the British soldiers were led by their officers "over the top" of their trenches, carrying their rifles in front, and told to walk, not run, towards the Germans.

Battle of the Somme. Troops head towards the German lines on the 1st of July

To their horror the British were immediately met by intense machine gun fire from the Germans who they thought had all been killed, and they found that instead of being destroyed, the barbed wire was still there in front of the Germans.

By the end of the day, 58,000 British soldiers lay dead. The battle continued until the 18th of November by which time it had cost the lives of one million men.

The Three Battles of Ypres 1914, 1915 and 1917.

On October 18th 1914, German and British troops approached the ancient town of Ypres in Belgium. Many roads led to Ypres, and it overlooked flat land, allowing any army occupying it to see the approach of any attackers. The British army were defending Ypres and, as expected, the Germans sent in their army to take control of the town. 30% of the German attackers were young students aged 18 to 20. The Germans were massacred, and fighting continued here for a month. One year after this, Ypres was attacked again. The Germans used poison gas and flamethrowers for the first time during the Second Battle of Ypres. In July 1917, yet again the Germans attempted to capture Ypres. The British attacked the Germans with an artillery bombardment which lasted for ten days from the 18th of July. Like the Battle of the Somme the previous year, this was supposed to destroy the German army in their trenches. Instead, it again had the effect of warning them that a bigger attack was on the way. Again they retreated to their bunkers, and yet again they came back up with machine guns just as the British and French were attacking.



The German soldier sitting on the right in this group photograph was temporarily blinded fighting in Ypres. Later in the war he was wounded in the leg. He was nursed back to health. His name? Adolf Hitler.

Gallipoli Landings, 1915

On April 25th 1915, Allied troops (British, French, Australian and New Zealand) arrived on the Turkish coast at a place called the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Turkish army was ready and waiting. The Allies used small boats and two old ships to get on to the beaches. The ships were deliberately steered onto the rocks on the beach and the soldiers poured out of the ship doors to try to get on to the beach. Unfortunately, not only were the Turks expecting the Allies' arrival, but in one area they set up their guns on top of cliffs overlooking the beaches. This allowed them to use their rifles and machine guns to shoot down at the Allied soldiers as they ran out of the ships.

Fighting continued in Gallipoli until December with 200,000 Allied and 200,000 Turkish troops killed. It ended in a defeat for the Allies who retreated. The disaster was blamed on Winston Churchill who had planned the invasion. He was later to become Prime Minister of Britain during the Second World War.



British troops landing at Gallipoli 25 April 1915



A soldier of the Royal Irish Fusiliers in Gallipoli uses his helmet to tease a Turkish soldier by making him shoot at his helmet. The helmet (called a Pith Helmet) was issued to soldiers fighting in hot countries.

Ceasefire: The Christmas Truce

One of the most famous incidents during World War 1 was the Christmas Truce (a truce is where soldiers in an area agree to stop fighting).

What made the British, French and Germans give up fighting for Christmas?

Several things came together to make the truce happen:

Britain's Princess Mary had sent a little brass tin to all British soldiers as a Christmas present. It contained a bullet pencil, a Christmas card, cigarettes and chocolate. Mothers and wives of soldiers also sent food and drink to their men and these packages were delivered to them in the trenches.

German soldiers received packages from home containing food and drink, and Kaiser Wilhelm sent the German soldiers pipes and cigars.

Trench warfare meant that the armies were located quite close to each other. On average, the opposing troops were 30 metres apart. This meant that both sides could hear the other's activities.



On Christmas Eve, 1914, British soldiers were amazed to see, across No Man's Land, small Christmas trees and candles being placed all along the German trenches. They heard the German soldiers singing "Silent Night" in German. The British joined in, singing in English.

Princess Mary's Gift Box

Both sides agreed to stop fighting so they could bury the dead that were scattered around No Man's Land. On Christmas Day, after the dead were buried, the British and German troops continued to talk to each other, sharing Christmas presents sent from home, singing songs and showing photographs of their loved ones. There were even reports of Germans and British soldiers playing football.




British and German troops together during the Christmas Truce 1914

The officers in charge didn't quite know what to do. Their men should have been shooting each other and instead they were becoming friends. A group of Welsh soldiers were even given barrels of beer by the Germans. However, after a week, the chatting between both sides became less and less, and the storms and rain returned.

A Captain in the Welsh Regiment described how he witnessed the fighting starting again:

“ At 8.30 I fired three shots in the air and put up a flag with "Merry Christmas" on it, and I climbed on the parapet. A German put up a sheet with "Thank you" on it, and the German Captain appeared at the top of the trench. We both bowed and saluted and got down into our respective trenches. He fired two shots in the air, and the War was on again.

COMFORTS FOR THE TROOPS.



A Special Lot of White Blankets (in singles) 10/9 per pair
 100 Army Grey Blankets, 3½ lbs., 7/6 each.
 Khaki and Dark Grey Flannelette, heavy make, 36 inches wide, 10½d. yd.
 40 dozen Assorted Army Grey and Heather Knit Socks, 9d. per pair, 8/11 per dozen.
 90 „ Khaki Socks, 11d. per pair, 10/6 per dozen
 100 „ Warm Fleece Under Vests and Pants, 2/3 each, 26/- per dozen.
 90 „ Shetland Lambswool Under Vests, 2/6 and 2/9 each.
 20 „ Shetland Lambswool Pants, 3/6 and 4/6 per pair.
 15 „ Heavy Natural Lambswool Pants, 5/6 per pair.
 10 „ Strong Grey Shirts, 3/6 each, 40/- per dozen.
 20 „ Army Grey Shirts, 4/11 each, 57/- per dozen.
 20 „ Khaki Mufflers, 2/6, 2/11, 3/6 each
 10 „ Navy Mufflers, 1/11, 2/6, 2/11 each.
 Fleecy Helmets, 1/6, 2/3, 2/11 each.
 Men's Ringwood and Hand Knit Gloves, 12/- and 14/- per dozen.
 „ Khaki Hand Knit Gloves, 16/- per dozen.
 „ Woollen Cuffs (Navy and Black), 6/11 and 8/11 per dozen.

300 dozen Khaki Wool Mitts (very special), 1/1 per pair, 12/- per dozen.
 150 dozen Natural Wool Cholera Belts, 1/11½ each, 23/- per dozen.

BROWN, THOMAS & CO., LTD.,

GRAFTON ST., DUBLIN.

A newspaper ad for Brown Thomas showing items that could be bought for soldiers away at the front.

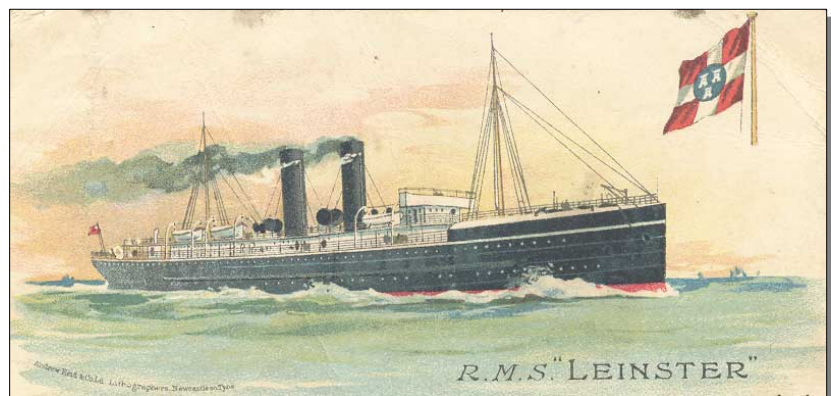
Ireland and the War at Sea – the sinking of the Lusitania and the Leinster

By 1915, Germany's fleet of submarines (known as U-Boats) were patrolling the seas around Britain and Ireland, attacking ships carrying food, supplies and even innocent passengers. Their hope was that this action would starve Britain into ending the war. The luxury ship R.M.S. *Lusitania* left New York for Liverpool on the 1st of May 1915. On May 7th she was sunk by a German U-boat 18km off the coast of Ireland near Cork. 1,201 lives were lost including 128 Americans. The Cork lifeboat rowed (in those days there were no engines in lifeboats) for three hours – over 18 kilometres to the scene of the disaster to recover survivors and bodies. The reason the Germans gave for the attack was that they believed the ship was carrying weapons on board and was therefore a target. They even placed an advertisement in American newspapers warning people not to travel on the *Lusitania*.

The incident was used in Ireland to encourage Irishmen to join the army.



In October 1918, the Great War would approach Irish shores again. On the morning of the 10th of October, at 9 a.m., the R.M.S. (Royal Mail Ship) *Leinster* set sail with a full crew, postal workers, ordinary passengers and 300 British Army troops, travelling across the Irish Sea. 700 people were aboard in total. Unknown to anyone on board, a



U Boat was lying in wait, ready to ambush. The captain of the German submarine ordered two torpedoes to be fired at the *Leinster*. Within eight minutes she sank and 501 people lost their lives. This was the highest-ever loss of life in the Irish Sea.

Ten days after the sinking of the *Leinster*, Germany agreed to stop attacks on non-military ships.

Britain's difficulty, Ireland's Opportunity: The Easter Rising

At the time of the First World War, Ireland was ruled by Britain as it had been for hundreds of years. A large number of people wanted independence for Ireland. They wanted Ireland to be able to elect its own government and be free of British rule. The British were about to give Ireland a form of self-government called "Home Rule" (Britain would allow Ireland more say in how it was governed – freeing Ireland from the rule of London), but when the First World War broke out, Home Rule was put on hold.

In Ulster, in 1913, a private army called the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was formed and bought rifles in order to make sure Home Rule would never happen – they wanted to remain part of Britain.

Seeing an armed force in Ulster made the rest of Ireland believe that they needed a private army too. This army, the Irish Volunteers, was formed in November 1913, and later in 1914 they also bought thousands of rifles – from the Germans!

By 1916, the Irish Volunteers, led by Patrick Pearse, had an ideal opportunity to try and get rid of British Rule. The British army was bogged down in a war in Europe and, as the saying went, "Britain's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity".

On the 24th of April, the Irish Volunteers took over many buildings in Dublin City. The headquarters were in the G.P.O. on O'Connell Street. Patrick Pearse read out a proclamation declaring the formation of the "Irish Republic". The Rebellion resulted in open warfare on the streets of Dublin. The British sent a gunboat up the River Liffey to bomb O'Connell Street which afterwards lay in ruins. You can still see bullet holes today in Daniel O'Connell's statue in O'Connell Street.



The GPO after the Rising

The Rising was very unpopular at the time. Many Irish women's husbands were with the British Army in Europe and they were able to collect their husbands' wages in the Post Office. The leaders of the Rising were mostly seen at the time as troublemakers.

This was all to change however. Five days after the start of the Rising, Patrick Pearse ordered a surrender "to prevent any further slaughter of innocent civilians".

The leaders were found guilty of treason (attempting to overthrow the British government) and they were sentenced to be shot by a British Army firing squad.

The Irish public were shocked at this and they turned against the British, thinking the sentence was too harsh. Relations between Ireland and Britain would never be the same again.

1917-1918 The Beginning of the End ...Defeat?

The war at sea escalates: Unrestricted Submarine Warfare

In January 1917, the war was not going well for Germany. Months of slaughter in France and Belgium forced them to consider increasing the pressure on Britain by removing certain “rules” of war that had been put in place after the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915. As a result, more American ships were being sunk by U-Boats

The British got hold of a message from the German government to the Mexican government stating that if America entered the war against Germany because of unrestricted submarine warfare, Germany would support Mexico in a war against the U.S. Luckily this never happened.

By March 21st, seven American merchant ships had been sunk by the Germans, leaving America with no choice but to ally with Britain. On April 6th 1917, America declared war on Germany.

March 3rd 1918: Russian Truce

The Russians made a truce with the Germans, ending the Russian involvement in the First World War. They would no longer fight against Germany. The allies were against this truce because now they had fewer soldiers to defeat Germany.

March 21st: Germany’s “Spring Offensive”



Germany moved three million troops which were previously fighting Russia, back into France to launch a fresh attack on the British army. The timing was important. American forces and equipment hadn't yet arrived to help the British so the Germans had to move fast. This was initially seen as a major German victory with 80,000 British prisoners taken. This attack was not launched from German trenches, but used mobile troops called Stormtroopers who were able to attack by running across open fields.

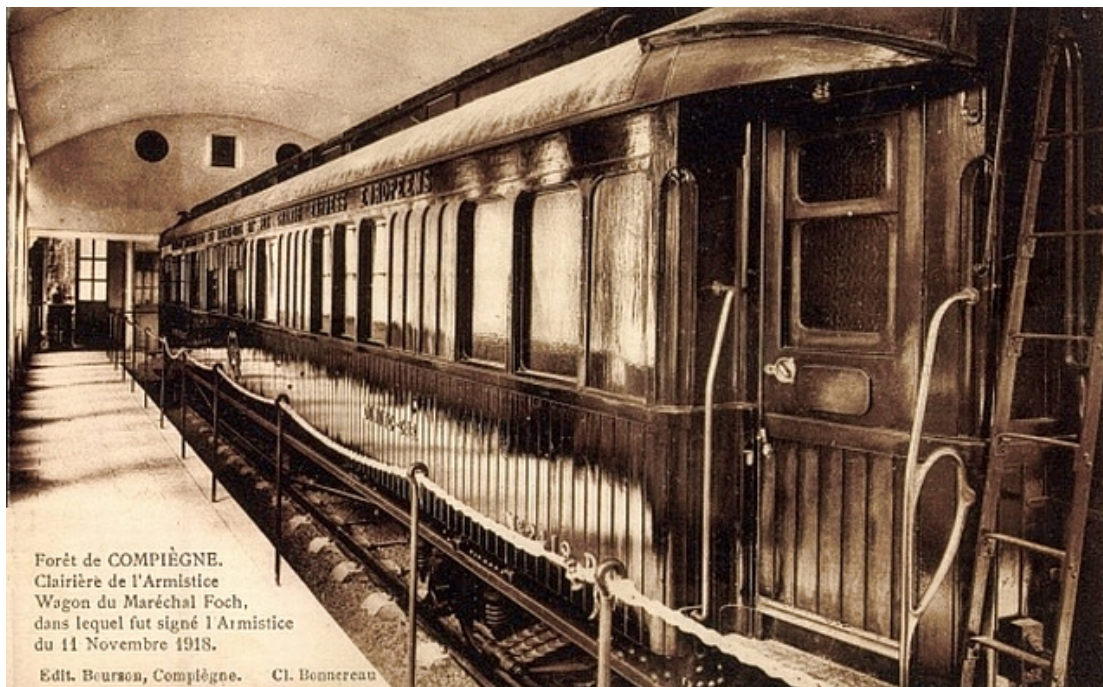
U.S. Troops arrive in the French port of Le Havre, July 1918

By July 1918, the Germans seemed to be winning, but now the American army was arriving in France at the rate of 300,000 men a month. In August 1918, British, American, Canadian, Australian and French troops used tanks and planes to attack the German Army from behind, not from the front as they had done before. This attack forced the Germans back to the same place as they were fighting 5 months previously. German soldiers surrendered in huge numbers. They had become fed up with fighting. 17,000 German prisoners and 330 pieces of German artillery were captured.

On October 4th, Germany sent a message to the American President Woodrow Wilson, asking for an armistice between Germany and the Allied powers. Bulgaria, Austria and Turkey had just quit the war, leaving Germany to fight or surrender alone.

November 8, 1918: Germany negotiates Armistice Terms

The German leaders met with French General Ferdinand Foch in a railway carriage in woods in Compiègne, France to negotiate the terms of the armistice.



The Armistice Railway Carriage

November 11th, The Armistice.

The Allies insisted that Germany disarm itself, along with other severe terms and conditions. The Germans agreed to sign the armistice, but were very unhappy with the terms of the treaty. It was signed at 5 a.m. on the 11th of November 1918, but came into effect at 11 o'clock (the 11th hour of 11th day of the 11th month) - the official date and time of the end of World War One.

The last British soldier to be killed in WWI was George Edwin Ellison who was killed at 9.30am – 4 ½ hours after the war had officially ended. He was 40 years of age and had fought all through the war from the very start. He is buried in St Symphorien cemetery near Mons – coincidentally directly opposite the FIRST British soldier to be killed in the war, Private John Parr.

1919-The Fallout

January 4th 1919: A Peace conference was held at Paris. This was a meeting of 27 countries, brought together to agree what punishment should be given out to Germany and the Central Powers for their actions in the Great War.

One of the documents created during the Peace Conference became the Treaty of Versailles. This document was given to the German leaders to agree and sign, and created rules about what Germany would and would not be allowed to do in future. It dealt with the future size of Germany's army, navy and air force, and listed the land that Germany would have to give away as compensation.

Germany protested, but had to sign the Treaty of Versailles or face a continuation of the war.

The terms that were agreed would cause huge problems for Germany. Here are some of the terms:

- Parts of Germany were to be given away to the Allies.
- Germany's colonies had to be given away.
- Germany's army was reduced to 100,000 men.
- The army was not allowed to have tanks, and Germany was not allowed an air force.
- Germany's navy was allowed only 6 ships, and submarines were forbidden.
- Germany had to admit full responsibility for starting the war.
- Germany had to pay compensation for the damage done by the war.

The Germans were not told at the time how much they had to pay, but the figure would eventually be set at 132 billion gold marks. This enormous sum of money continued to be paid over the years, on and off, until the last instalment which was only repaid in 2010!

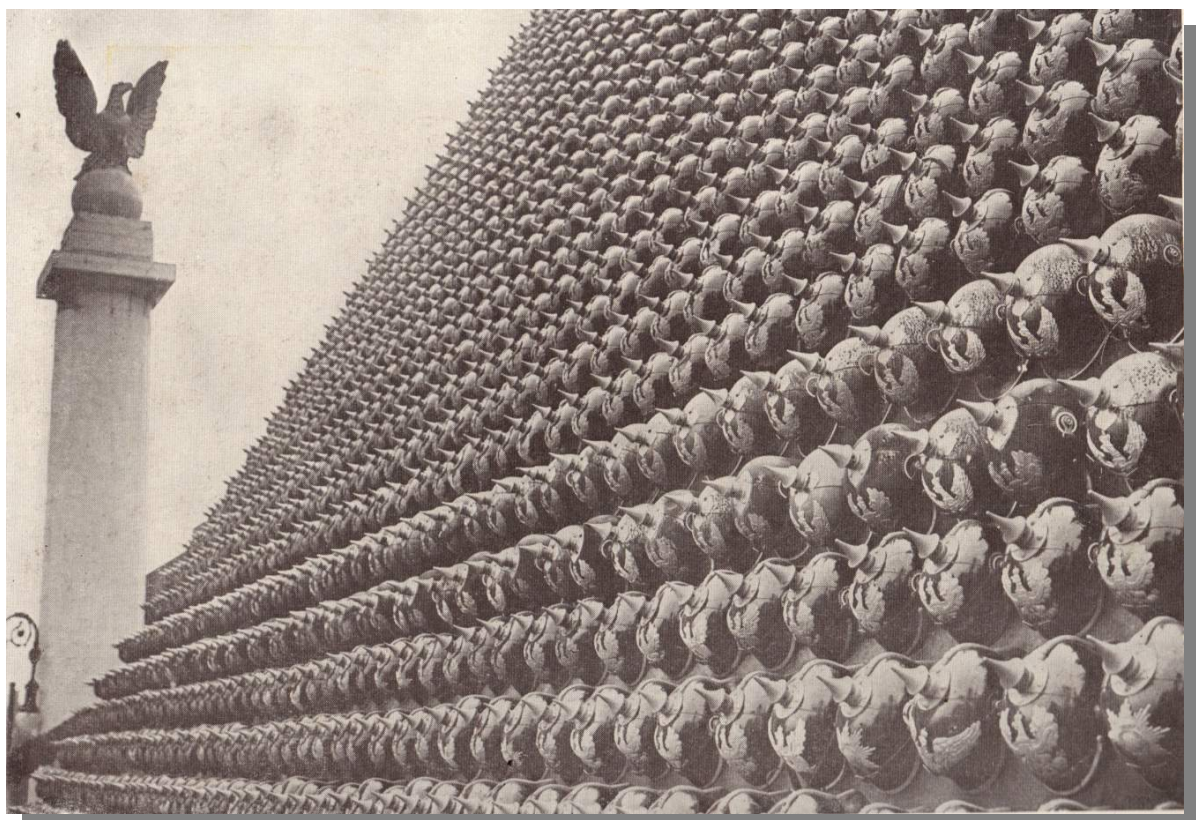
Consequences of the Treaty of Versailles

Having to pay compensation in the recession after the war made Germany bankrupt. The German currency, the Mark, became practically worthless, causing massive inflation (price rises). There was poverty and unemployment. The rise in popularity of Adolf Hitler in the 1930s, and the establishment of the Nazi Party was a reaction to the Treaty. Hitler was determined to wipe the Treaty of Versailles from history and make Germany a major power again. He managed to convince

the German people (wrongly) that the Jews were responsible for Germany's defeat and humiliation in World War I.



After the war was over, a pyramid was built near Grand Central Station New York. It was made entirely of captured German helmets



British Medals of World War 1

Most British soldiers in WWI were awarded three medals for serving in the war: the 1914/1915 Star, War Medal and Victory Medal. The War Medal was solid silver. They were also known as “Pip, Squeak and Wilfred” and they had the soldier’s name printed on the edge. If a soldier was killed, the medals were sent to his family.



Memorial Plaque – given to families when a soldier was killed. It also had the soldier’s name inscribed:



Facts and Myths of the First World War

Myth: Officers had it easy. They were miles away from the fighting

Fact: Officers, especially junior officers like lieutenants and captains, lived in the trenches with their men. They were expected to lead them in attacks, putting themselves in extreme danger. German snipers would attempt to kill officers first.

Myth: The Allies won the First World War.

Fact: The First World War, technically, wasn't won by anyone. There was agreement (Armistice) between the Allies and Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey) to call an end to the fighting. This meant that soldiers returning to Germany were welcomed as an undefeated army.

Myth: Thousands of men were sent to their death for no reason.

Fact: The reasons for the outbreak of First World War are not as obvious as those for the Second World War. In 1914, when Germany insisted on invading France, invading neutral Belgium at the same time, it would have been a mistake if nothing was done by other countries to stop the invasion.

Myth: Nothing positive came about because of the First World War.

Fact: Although there were many more negative outcomes of the war than positive ones, the Great War actually wasn't all bad.

- A woman's role before the war was seen mostly as a homemaker, rearing the children and cooking. With so many men away at war, women had to take over skilled factory jobs that were previously done by men. This helped women become more independent. For instance, the making of artillery shells and ammunition was mostly done by women. Here are some pictures of the Dublin Artillery Shell Factory, near the Phoenix Park:



- Another positive outcome was that medicine benefited greatly, especially plastic surgery. Thousands of men returned from war with injuries to the face caused by bomb blasts when they stood in trenches. When an explosion happened, the face suffered most damage because it was near ground level. Doctors were able to repair injuries to the face using skin from other parts of the body, a technique still used today.

Myth: Most of the Irishmen fighting in the British Army in WWI were of the Protestant religion.

Fact: The Irish Times in October 1916 gave all-Ireland figures of 92,405 Catholics and 62,392 Protestants who had joined the British Army.

Myth: Most of the male population of Britain and Ireland were killed in battle

Fact: Just over 11% of the British and Irish participants was killed. Still an incredible figure, but most did survive and returned to live successful lives after the war despite, in some cases, serious mental and physical injury.

Myth: Men spent weeks in the trenches.

Fact: A week was the usual amount of time spent in trenches, with the fighting taking place for an average of three days or so. Soldiers could be granted home leave too in order to visit family and friends.

The Aftermath

Britain: 750,000 soldiers killed, 1,500,000 wounded

France: 1,400,000 soldiers killed, 2,500,000 wounded

Belgium: 50,000 soldiers killed

Italy: 600,000 soldiers killed

Russia: 1,700,000 soldiers killed

America: 116,000 soldiers killed

Germany: 2,000,000 soldiers killed

Austria-Hungary: 1,200,000 soldiers killed

Turkey: 325,000 soldiers killed

Bulgaria: 100,000 soldiers killed

*The total of military dead of all nations: 8.5 million
with 21 million wounded.*

*Civilian deaths in World War I have been estimated at
over 6 million worldwide.*