

A Bloody Conflict

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned about the home front. In this section, you will find out about World War I and its end.

Main Idea

- New technologies made World War I the first modern war. (p. 385)
- American soldiers entered the war, boosting morale and fighting courageously. (p. 386)
- The United States rejected Wilson's generous peace plan and the League of Nations. (p. 388)

Content Vocabulary

convoy, armistice, reparations

Academic Vocabulary

network, adequately, resolve

People and Terms to Identify

Vladimir Lenin, Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Fourteen Points, League of Nations, Treaty of Versailles

Reading Objectives

- **Discuss** the fighting techniques used in World War I.
- **Characterize** the American response to the Treaty of Versailles.

Reading Strategy

Organizing As you read about the battles of World War I, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by listing the kinds of warfare and technology used in the fighting.



Preview of Events



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.4 Students trace the rise of the United States to its role as a world power in the twentieth century.

11.4.4 Explain Theodore Roosevelt's Big Stick diplomacy, William Taft's Dollar Diplomacy, and Woodrow Wilson's Moral Diplomacy, drawing on relevant speeches.

The Big Idea

The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events.

World War I changed the nature of combat. Soldiers faced trench warfare, poison gas, and tanks and airplanes in battle. Even before the end of the war, President Wilson had proposed a plan known as the Fourteen Points. The leaders of the victorious countries considered this plan too lenient toward Germany and instead approved the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty stripped Germany of its armed forces and required the country to pay heavy reparations. The treaty also dissolved four empires—Russia, the Ottoman Empire, the German Empire, and Austria-Hungary—and created nine new countries. While the Treaty of Versailles did call for the creation of the League of Nations, the United States never joined, because Congress refused to approve the treaty.

Combat in World War I

Main Idea New technologies made World War I the first modern war.

Reading Connection What new technologies have been developed or proposed in your lifetime? Read on to learn about the weapons that World War I personnel faced.

By the spring of 1917, World War I had devastated Europe. Old-fashioned strategies and new technologies resulted in terrible destruction. Many Americans and Europeans, however, believed American troops would quickly bring the war to an end.

★ An American Story ★

General John J. Pershing, commander of the American forces in World War I, could not help but feel a sense of pride and excitement as he watched the Second Battalion of the First Division's 16th Infantry march through the streets of Paris on July 4, 1917:

“... The battalion was joined by a great crowd, many women forcing their way into the ranks and swinging along arm in arm with the men. With wreaths about their necks and bouquets in their hats and rifles, the column looked like a moving flower garden. With only a semblance of military formation, the animated throng pushed its way through avenues of people to the martial strains of the French band and the still more thrilling music of cheering voices.”

—quoted in
The Yanks Are Coming

While his men marched through Paris, Pershing raced to Picpus Cemetery, the burial place of the Marquis de Lafayette, a French noble who had fought in the American Revolution. One of Pershing's officers, Colonel Charles E. Stanton, raised his hand in salute and acknowledged the continuing American-French relationship by proclaiming, “Lafayette, we are here!”



▲ John J. Pershing

Trench Warfare The American soldiers who went to Europe knew they would face a war different from any war they had seen before. Trench warfare and technological innovations had changed the battlefield. The early offensives of 1914 quickly demonstrated that the nature of warfare had changed. Troops that dug themselves in and relied upon modern rifles and a new weapon—the rapidfire machine gun—could easily hold off the attacking forces. On the Western Front, troops dug a **network** of trenches that stretched from the English Channel to the Swiss border. The space between the opposing trenches was known as “no man's land,” a rough, barren landscape pockmarked with craters from artillery fire. Many soldiers would lose their lives in this no man's land as they attempted to attack enemy trenches.

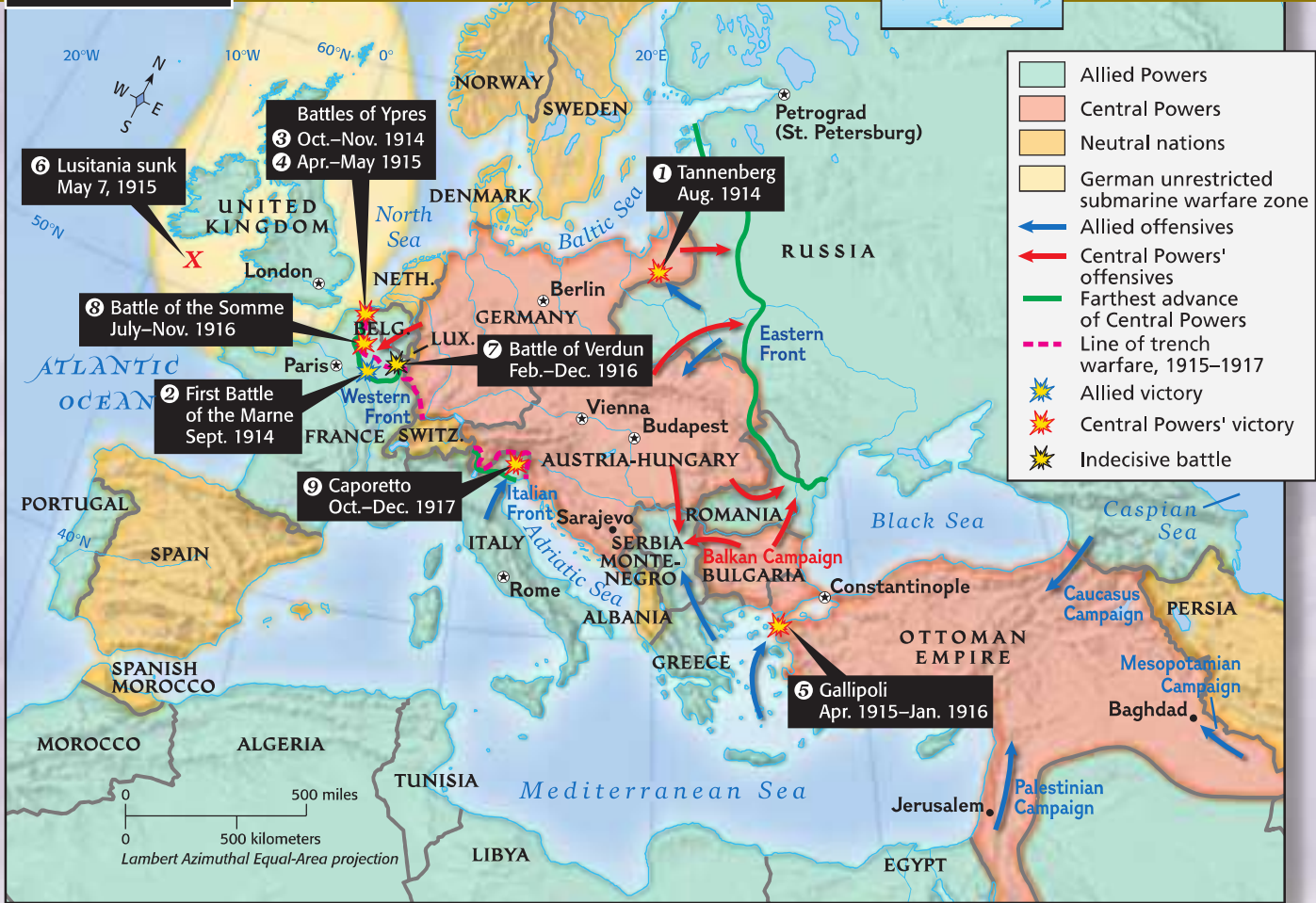
To break through enemy lines, both sides began with massive artillery barrages. Then bayonet-wielding soldiers would scramble out of their trenches, race across no man's land, and hurl grenades into the enemy's trenches. The results were often disastrous. The artillery barrages rarely destroyed the enemy defenses, leaving the enemy with ample artillery to fire at attacking troops. The troops crossing no man's land were easily stopped by enemy machine guns and rifle fire. This kind of assault caused staggeringly high casualties. In major battles, both sides often lost several hundred thousand men.

These battles produced horrific scenes of death and destruction, as one American soldier noted in his diary:

“Many dead Germans along the road. One heap on a manure pile... Devastation everywhere. Our barrage has rooted up the entire territory like a ploughed field. Dead horses galore, many of them have a hind quarter cut off—the Huns [Germans] need food. Dead men here and there.”

—quoted in
The American Spirit

New Technology As it became clear that charging enemy trenches could bring only limited success at great cost, both sides began to develop new technologies to help them break through enemy lines. In April 1915, the Germans first used poison gas in the



Second Battle of Ypres. The fumes caused vomiting, blindness, and suffocation. Soon afterward the Allies also began using poison gas, and gas masks became a necessary part of a soldier's equipment.

In 1916 the British introduced the tank into battle. The first tanks were very slow and cumbersome, mechanically unreliable, and fairly easy to destroy. They could roll over barbed wire and trenches, but there were usually not enough of them to make a difference. While tanks did help troops, they did not revolutionize warfare in World War I.

World War I also saw the first use of airplanes in combat. At first, planes were used mainly to observe enemy activities. Soon, the Allies and Central Powers used them to drop small bombs. As technology advanced, they also attached machine guns to aircraft to engage in deadly air battles known as dogfights.

Reading Check **Describing** What new technologies were introduced in World War I?

The Americans and Victory

Key Idea American soldiers entered the war, boosting morale and fighting courageously.

Personal Connection Do you recall a time in your life when you had to boost someone's morale or be courageous? Read on to learn about Americans who helped the Allies win World War I.

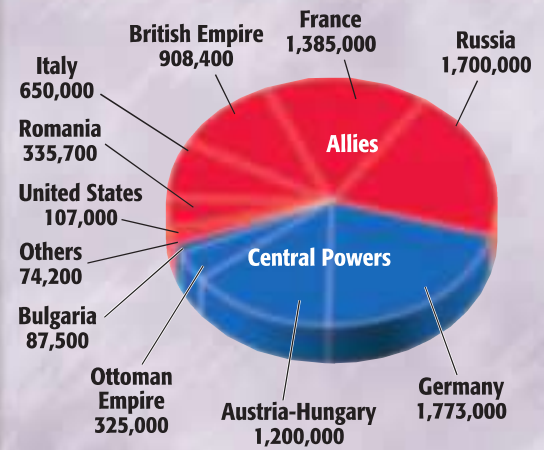
Wave upon wave of American troops marched into this bloody stalemate—nearly 2 million before the war's end. These "doughboys," a nickname for American soldiers, were largely inexperienced, but they were fresh, so their presence immediately boosted the morale of Allied forces.

Winning the War at Sea No American troopships were sunk on their way to Europe—an accomplishment due largely to the efforts of American

Western Front, 1914–1918



World War I Military Deaths*



* Figures are approximate



Geography Skills

- Interpreting Maps** Where did the majority of World War I battles occur?
- Interpreting Charts** Which nation suffered the largest number of military deaths during World War I?

Admiral William S. Sims. For most of the war, the British preferred to fight German submarines by sending warships to find them. Meanwhile, merchant ships would race across the Atlantic individually. The British approach had not worked well, and submarines had inflicted heavy losses on British shipping.

Sims proposed that merchant ships and troop transports be gathered into groups, called **convoy**s, and escorted across the Atlantic by warships. If submarines wanted to attack a convoy, they would have to get past the warships protecting it. The convoy system greatly reduced shipping losses and ensured that American troops arrived safely in Europe. They arrived during a pivotal time in late 1917.

Russia Leaves the War In March 1917, riots broke out in Russia over the government's handling of the war and over the scarcity of food and fuel. On March 15, Czar Nicholas II, the leader of the Russian Empire, abdicated his throne. Political leadership in

Russia passed into the hands of a provisional, or temporary, government, consisting largely of moderate representatives who supported Russia's continued participation in World War I. The government, however, was unable to **adequately** deal with the major problems, such as food shortages, that were afflicting the nation.

The Bolsheviks, a group of Communists, soon competed for power in Russia. In November 1917, **Vladimir Lenin**, the leader of the Bolshevik Party, overthrew the Russian government and established a Communist government.

Germany's military fortunes improved with the Bolshevik takeover of Russia. Lenin's first act after seizing power was to pull Russia out of the war and concentrate on establishing a Communist state. He accomplished this by agreeing to the **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** with Germany on March 3, 1918. Under this treaty, Russia lost substantial territory, giving up Ukraine, its Polish and Baltic territories, and Finland. However, the treaty also removed the German army

from the remaining Russian lands. With the Eastern Front settled, Germany was now free to concentrate its forces in the west.

The German Offensive Falters On March 21, 1918, the Germans launched a massive attack along the Western Front. German forces, reinforced with troops from the Russian front, pushed deeply into Allied lines. By early June, they were less than 40 miles (64 km) from Paris.

American troops played an important role in containing the German offensive. In late May, as the German offensive continued, the Americans launched their first major attack, quickly capturing the village of Cantigny. On June 1, American and French troops blocked the German drive on Paris at the town of Château-Thierry. On July 15, the Germans launched one last massive attack in a determined attempt to take Paris, but American and French troops held their ground.

The Battle of the Argonne Forest With the German drive stalled, French Marshal Ferdinand Foch, supreme commander of the Allied forces, ordered massive counterattacks all along the front. In mid-September, American troops drove back German forces at the battle of Saint-Mihiel. The attack was a prelude to a massive American offensive in the region between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest. General Pershing assembled over 600,000 American troops, some 40,000 tons of supplies, and roughly 4,000 artillery pieces for the most massive attack in American history.

The attack began on September 26, 1918. Slowly, the German positions fell to the advancing American troops. The Germans inflicted heavy casualties on the American forces, but by early November, the Americans had shattered the German defenses and openhjlo



Alvin York After taking command of his patrol in the Battle of Argonne Forest, York received the Medal of Honor and French Croix de Guerre. Upon returning home, the war hero founded a school for underprivileged children.

The War Ends While fighting raged along the Western Front, a revolution engulfed Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Turks surrendered. Faced with the surrender of their allies and a naval mutiny at Kiel in early November, the people of Berlin rose in rebellion on November 9 and forced the German emperor to step down. At the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month, 1918, the fighting stopped. Germany had finally signed an **armistice**, or cease-fire, that ended the war.

Reading Check **Explaining** What was Vladimir Lenin's first goal after controlling Russia in 1917?

A Flawed Peace

Main Idea **The United States rejected Wilson's generous peace plan and the League of Nations.**

Reading Connection How might your feelings toward a peace plan differ if you were a citizen of a defeated country compared to a victorious country? Read on to learn why the U.S. Senate would not ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

In January 1919, a peace conference began in Paris to try to **resolve** the complicated issues arising from World War I. The principal figures in the negotiations were the "Big Four," the leaders of the victorious Allied nations: President Wilson of the United States, British prime minister David Lloyd George, French premier Georges Clemenceau, and Italian prime minister Vittorio Orlando. Germany was not invited to participate.

Wilson had presented his plan, known as the **Fourteen Points**, to Congress in January 1918. The Fourteen Points were based on "the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities." In the first five points, the president proposed to eliminate the general causes of the war through free trade, disarmament, freedom of the seas, impartial adjustment of colonial claims, and open diplomacy instead of secret agreements. The next eight points addressed the right of self-determination. They also required the Central Powers to evacuate all of the countries invaded during the war, including France, Belgium, and Russia. The fourteenth point, perhaps the most important one to Wilson, called for the creation of a "general association of nations" known as the **League of Nations**. The League's member nations would help preserve peace and prevent future wars by pledging to respect and protect each other's territory and political independence. (See page 998 for the text of the Fourteen Points.)

The Treaty of Versailles As the peace talks progressed in the Palace of Versailles (vehr·SY), it became clear that Wilson’s ideas did not coincide with the interests of the other Allied governments. They criticized his plan as too lenient toward Germany.

The **Treaty of Versailles**, signed by Germany on June 28, 1919, had weakened or discarded many of Wilson’s proposals. Under the treaty, Germany was stripped of its armed forces. It also had to pay **reparations**, or war damages, to the Allies in the amount of \$33 billion, a sum far beyond its financial means. Perhaps most humiliating, Germany had to acknowledge guilt for the outbreak and devastation of World War I.

The war itself resulted in the dissolution of four empires: the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, which lost territory in the war and fell to revolution in 1922, the German Empire after the abdication of the emperor and loss of territory in the treaty, and Austria-Hungary, which was split into separate countries. Furthermore, nine new countries were established in Europe, including Yugoslavia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

While Wilson expressed disappointment in the treaty, he found consolation in its call for the creation of his cherished League of Nations. He returned home to win approval for the treaty.

The U.S. Senate Rejects the Treaty The Treaty of Versailles, especially the League of Nations, faced immediate opposition from numerous U.S. lawmakers. A key group of senators, nicknamed “the Irreconcilables” in the press because they were unwilling to compromise, assailed the League as the kind of “entangling alliance” that Washington,


Jefferson, and Monroe had warned against. These critics feared that the League might supersede the power of Congress to declare war and thus force the United States to fight in numerous foreign conflicts.

A larger group of senators, known as the “Reservationists,” was led by the powerful chairman of the Foreign Relations committee, Henry Cabot Lodge. This group supported the League but would ratify the treaty only with amendments that would preserve the nation’s freedom to act independently.

Convinced that he could defeat his opposition by winning public support, Wilson took his case directly to the American people. Starting in Ohio in September 1919, he traveled 8,000 miles and made over 30 major speeches in three weeks. The physical strain of his tour, however, proved too great. Wilson collapsed in Colorado on September 25 and returned to the White House. There, he suffered a stroke and was bedridden for months, isolated from even his closest advisers but determined not to compromise with the Senate.

The Senate voted in November 1919 and again in March 1920, but it refused to ratify the treaty. After Wilson left office in 1921, the United States negotiated separate peace treaties with each of the Central Powers. The League of Nations, the foundation of President Wilson’s plan for lasting world peace, took shape without the United States.

 **Reading Check** **Examining** What major issues did Wilson’s Fourteen Points address?

HISTORY  **Study Central**
Online

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

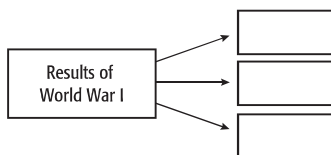
1. **Vocabulary** Define: network, convoy, adequately, armistice, resolve, reparations.
2. **People and Terms** Identify: Vladimir Lenin, Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Fourteen Points, League of Nations, Treaty of Versailles.
3. **List** the four nations that dominated the Paris peace conference in 1919.

Reviewing Big Ideas

4. **Recalling** Why did President Wilson propose his Fourteen Points?

Critical Thinking

5. **Analyzing** What impact did John J. Pershing and the Battle of the Argonne Forest have on World War I?
6. **Organizing** Use a graphic organizer to list the results of World War I.



Analyzing Visuals

7. **Analyzing Maps and Charts** Examine the map and chart on page 387. Prepare a quiz with questions based on information from both. Give the quiz to some of your classmates.

Writing About History

8. **Descriptive Writing** Imagine that you are an American soldier fighting in Europe during World War I. Write a letter home describing your situation, and explain why you are there. **CA 11WS1.2; 11WA2.1c**