

Lesson #71 U.S. History

The Great War 1917

Eastern Front 1,100 miles

Russia only had 6 double railroad tracks lines and only two single lines running west – this allowed 200 trains per day – yet bridges and rail beds were poor, and failure was common. Signal boxes were at a greater distance than German boxes. The idea was to limit the Germany invasion mobility. Russia had available 214,000 railroad wagons in 1914.

Germany had double this capacity and excellent construction with large platforms for debarking troop at board for an invasion plan.

Russia plan to be at full mobilization by m-15 and like most of the armies of Europe believed that the bayonet and offense way to conduct war in the 20th century. Those that supported offensive war fell into the Darwinist camp that saw inferior enemies overcome with fear at a bayonet charge. Bayonet over bullets if unit had high moral and would destroy enemy moral. Based on Prussian victory at St. Privat in Franco/Prussian War.

Old Guard were slow to learn lesson of past wars. The Russian “old guard” was made up of non-Russian Germans from the Baltic States in Russia and they feared an expansion of the army would lead to more Russian officers diminishing “old guard” power.

German “old guard” who were Prussian Junkers (landowners) who feared an expansion of army would lead to other German states would fill officer ranks.

Old Guard saw cavalry as elite force and ended war games with mass cavalry charge.

All nations saw the war as a short war and artillery was not a major factor:

- * France had 2,000 rounds per day
- * Germany had 3,000 rounds per day
- * Russia had 1,000 rounds per day

Russia paid more for war goods than other armies:

* Twice as much for socks and boots – individual soldiers sold boots and then issued another pair.

Hutier Tactics end of stalemate short artillery attack followed with infantry assault.

*machine gun and artillery in combination with fortification and barbed wire inhibited frontal assaults and ended the value of shock of horse cavalry.

Strom Troopers

Czar Nicholas II wanted to be a priest in his youth and was reluctant Tsar. He left for the front lines to run the war effort. The Russian Army took a beating at Battle of Tannenberg with 300,000 Russians killed, wounded, or missing. Russians troops were 80% illiterate and left few reminiscences of the war.

Battle of Lodz was the high-water mark for Russian Army 1914 December - poor supplies, lack of weapons, organization, coordination of movement, communications, and leadership reason for failure to follow up victory.

1915 573 factories closed down

1916 50% of iron industry shut down

Grigory Rasputin Prince and Conspirators Dec. 30, 1916

*Prophesied that if any harm befalls him that Russia would pass through another time of troubles with rivers of blood and fire.

*He was a member of the khlystry religious sect – sin in the world be reduced by sinning

*He was famous for crassness, bragging and drunken debauchery

*He could control internal bleeding in Prince Alexis the Empress's son who had hemophilia
Empress Alexandra – prudish

*He left a 12-page notebook on lined paper (1911 – 1912) with writing of a child

*Changed last name in 1906 he felt the old name was unpleasant sounding

*Popular opinion was that he was sleeping with Alexandra

*Murder plot by nobles and leaders included Cyanide in chocolate pastries, Gun shot twice, left outside in the Snow then toss into the Moika Canal with chains around body.

War burden on all parties and Peace bid failed in 1916-17 looking for a quick end

Germany returned to Unrestricted Submarine Warfare and U.S.A. reacted

March 28, 1915 *Falaba* 1 American killed

May 1, 1915 *Gulfight* 2 Americans killed

May 7, 1915 *Lusitania*. 128 Americans killed

Bryan resigned his post

Arabic 2 Americans killed

Germany gives -- *Arabic* Pledge – will warn ships

March 24, 1916 *Sussex* 2 Americans injured

Germany gave – *Sussex* Pledge

Germans went back to unrestricted U-boat warfare on February 1, 1917 hoping to knock Great Britain out of the war before the United States could make a difference.

SS Locania Sank 25 February 1917

SS Eagle Point was sunk after surrendering to German U-boat 1917

Germany sent the Zimmerman Note (Telegram) to Mexico and Japan April 27, 1917 – news broke March 1, 1917

Both Germany and Japan had interest in Mexico – Panama canal?

March 20, 1917 President and Cabinet voted for war

April 2, 1917 Wilson asked Congress for Declaration of War

Senate 82 to 6

House 373 to 50

April 6, Declaration of war signed

The army called home in February 1917 from chasing Poncho “Villa” for killing 16 American in New Mexico, Columbus in 1916. John “Blackjack” Pershing (he lead Black troops). The command of the AFE was to go to Maj. General Leonard Woods but he called Wilson a “spineless rabbit” and John Pershing was jumping over 852 senior officers

Southern Front:

Battle at Caporetto Oct./Nov. 1917 German troops came into battle on bicycles and the Italians Retreated with the Italian army execution members not with a unit.

1917 Russian Revolution started by Baltic Fleet

Alexander Kerensky March 15, 1917

Germany transports Lenin across Germany to Russia with money for revolution

Civil unrest with Peasant killed 3,000 landlords in October

Bolsheviks – October Revolution slogan **Peace, Land and Bread**

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky then asked Germans for terms:

Treaty of Brest – Litovsk signed on Dec. 17, 1917 between Soviets and Germany
Germany took Poland, Finland, Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), Ukraine and Transcaucasia plus:

26% of population of Russian

27% of farmland of Russia

75% of steel production of Russia

Air War

French aviator spotted gap in German lines and allowed French victory at the Marne

Baron Manfred von Richthofen (Red Baron) 80 kills

* 5 kills Ace (Flying Circus) 75 kills

Rene Fonck 75 kills

Billy Bishop 72 kills

Edward Mannock 72 kills

Eddie Rickenbacker 22 kills and 4 balloons

Zeppelins 1st used to bomb Antwerp Aug, 25, 1914 – 12 killed

80 built and 23 shot down – 31 in accidents and storms

French had the best plane at time

“Escadrille Americaine” protested by Congress and changed to
“Escadrille Lafayette”

First action on April 16, 1916 – Kiffin Rockwell shot down first enemy plane on May 18, 1916.
The group had 38 members – 9 killed and unit had 150 kills- all members were declared unfit for service in U.S. military when U.S. joined the war.

July 14, 1916 saw the first use of tanks – 48 used and only 11 made it to German lines the High Command was not impressed

Tank 1st major used at Battle of Cambrai Nov. 20, 1917 (381)

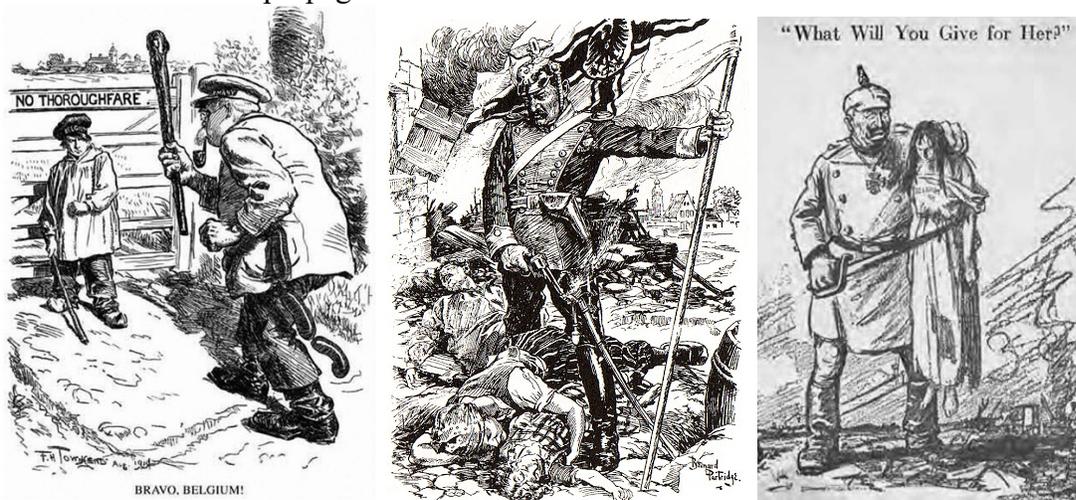
French Medical Service – Triage how to get men back into action fast

1. Those that will die – let die
2. Those that will live but not return to duty – patch
3. Those that will return to duty – treat first

Shell Shock was the collapse of the mind from combat.

British developed the “Talking Cure” for “Shell Shock” with officers. Enlisted men were treated as individuals that lost their manhood. They were treated with weaving classes then farming to guns once more.

The British won the propaganda war



Recruitment



Armenian Problem for Ottoman's

Turks did not trust non-Muslims and allowed them to pay a tax to avoid military service. By spring of 1915 Armenians were seen as enemies of the state and government used force to relocation of Armenians to Greece in February 1915 and the kills started. Kurds were used to move the Armenians and replace Muslim in the vacated homes and Armenian children taken as servants. The government issued verbal orders to kill all males over 12 years old. July 31, 1915 was the Great retreat to Russia Armenia by Armenians and Assyrian Christians. Many died in the desert that escaped the murder in the villages.

Second Lieutenant Armin T. Wegner a Medic in the German Army in the Ottoman theater of war took photos of the Genocide and exposed the killing to the world against High Command Orders not to take photos. He would later defend the Jews in Germany in the 1930's.

The Turkish government to this day refuse to acknowledge the mass killings.