On Sunday, June 28, 1914, an 18-year-old Serbian student, Gavrilo Princip, shot and killed Archduke Franz (Francis) Ferdinand. The archduke was heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary and nephew of the emperor Franz (Francis) Joseph I. Slain with the archduke was his wife, Duchess Sophie. The double slaying took place in Sarajevo, the ancient capital of Bosnia. Princip, the assassin, belonged to a secret terrorist organization whose members were pledged to free Bosnia from Austrian rule and unite it with Serbia.

The deed that Princip saw as a blow for liberty instead touched off World War I. This terrible conflict lasted more than four years. It involved more than 30 nations and claimed more than 14 million lives, both military and civilian. It cost untold billions of dollars, ravaged Europe, and toppled kings and emperors. And it sowed the seeds of World War II.

Background to the Conflict

Europe was ripe for World War I long before Princip fired the fatal shots. The origins of the war can be traced at least as far back as 1871. In that year Germany, guided by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, crushed France in the brief Franco-Prussian War. Bismarck imposed harsh peace terms on France. The French were stripped of two rich provinces, Alsace and Lorraine. They also had to pay Germany billions of francs in reparations.

The Franco-Prussian War unified Germany. It made it the most powerful nation in Europe. But Bismarck believed that someday the French would strike back to avenge the humiliation of 1871 and regain their lost provinces. To block this, Bismarck in 1882 forged the Triple Alliance. It bound Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy to mutual assistance in case of war.

France, fearing Germany, sought allies, too. In 1893–94 the French negotiated a military alliance with Russia called the Dual Alliance. In 1904 France and England formed the Entente Cordiale; this became the Triple Entente when Russia joined the pact in 1907. Thus Europe was divided into two hostile camps by a complicated system of political alliances.

The Ambitious German Kaiser

Meanwhile, in 1888 a new kaiser (emperor), Wilhelm (William) II, had come to the German throne. In 1890 William took a step that helped open the door to war. He dismissed the old chancellor, Bismarck, and took Germany's future into his own hands.
William was an arrogant, impulsive man with great national ambitions for Germany. He wanted a colonial empire that would equal Great Britain's. He foresaw a day when all middle Africa would be German. He envisioned a Berlin-to-Baghdad railway that would give Germany access to the oil fields of the Middle East and domination of the Balkan countries. William also began to build a large navy. He boasted that soon Germany, not Great Britain, would rule the seas. This antagonized the British. They considered the Royal Navy the main defense of their island and their empire.

The kaiser was no diplomat, and he made enemies easily. In the early 1900's he tried to exert German influence in Morocco, which France claimed. This provoked two incidents that almost led to war. They served to draw France and Great Britain closer together against him.

Austria-Hungary

In 1914, Austrians, Hungarians, and Balkan Slavs, plus a smaller number of Ukrainians, Poles, Italians, and Romanians, lived within the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Many of the Slav Serbs resented their domination by the ruling Austrians and Hungarians and sought to break away from Austria to join Serbia. Independent Serbia supported their separatist aspirations—and reacted sometimes, as in the case of Princip, with violence.

The Outbreak of War

When the news of the archduke's death reached Vienna, Austria blamed the Serbian government for the assassination. The Austrians sent a list of harsh demands to Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. Unless their terms were met, they warned, they would attack Serbia. Actually, the Austrians had purposely made their demands so severe as to be unacceptable. Assured of German support, they were determined to crush Serbia.

Meanwhile, Russia had declared that it would defend Serbia in the event of attack by Austria-Hungary. To the Austrians' surprise, King Peter I of Serbia agreed to almost all their demands. Nevertheless, on July 28, 1914, urged on by Germany, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The next day Austrian gunboats bombarded Belgrade.

Events now moved rapidly. Czar Nicholas II began to mobilize (prepare for war) the huge Russian army. Germany warned Russia to cease mobilizing or face war. The kaiser also called on France to give assurances of its neutrality in case of a conflict between Germany and Russia. France, which had promised Russia its support, began to ready its own army for war. The Russians continued to mobilize their forces. Last minute diplomatic efforts failed. On August 1 Germany declared war on Russia. Two days later Germany announced that it was at war with France.

Germany Invades Belgium

Germany demanded that Belgium allow its troops to cross Belgian territory. The Germans were sure that tiny Belgium would not dare refuse. But they underestimated the courage of Albert I, king of the Belgians. Citing his nation's neutrality, which had been guaranteed in a
treaty signed by all the great powers, Albert ordered his small army to resist any invader. On August 4, 1914, German cavalry crossed the Belgian border near Liège. Belgian soldiers opened fire on them.

The British government informed Germany that unless it withdrew all its troops from Belgium by midnight, August 4, England would go to war in defense of Belgian neutrality. When the German government ignored this ultimatum, King George V signed the order declaring war. British foreign minister Sir Edward Grey sadly noted: "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime."

Grey's somber prediction did not dampen the patriotic enthusiasm that swept Europe. Before the month ended, Japan had entered the war on the side of the Allies (France, Great Britain, and Russia).

But despite all the cheering and enthusiasm, only Germany was prepared to fight a modern war. The Germans had the best-trained, best-equipped, and strongest army in Europe. German divisions were supplied with machine guns and heavy artillery. German soldiers wore inconspicuous gray field uniforms. This was in sharp contrast to the French, who in 1914 still wore their 1871-style red trousers and blue jackets. The bright uniforms of the French offered easy targets for enemy marksmen.

French army officers employed military tactics as old-fashioned as their uniforms. Even the capable French commander in chief, General Joseph Joffre, whose men called him Papa, did not understand that a few men in trenches behind machine guns could wipe out an infantry charge. Joffre and his countrymen had to learn 20th-century methods of warfare through bitter and costly lessons on the battlefield.

The Schlieffen Plan

In 1905 General Alfred von Schlieffen, chief of the German general staff, had drawn up a master plan to be used in case of war with France. The Schlieffen Plan called for powerful German armies to attack France through Belgium, swing wide toward the English Channel and then south toward Paris, trapping the French armies in a huge semicircle. Von Schlieffen predicted that, if his plan was followed exactly, France would be defeated in six weeks. A quick victory was absolutely necessary, for what Germany dreaded most was a long, two-front war, with France in the west and Russia in the east.

Von Schlieffen died before his theories could be tested. His successor as chief of the general staff was General Helmuth von Moltke. General von Moltke altered the Schlieffen Plan slightly. He sent three divisions to guard Germany's eastern frontier against the Russians, thus weakening the force sent against France. This, plus the heroic stand of the Belgians and the stubborn resistance of the French and British, fatally delayed the German advance.

The Western Front, 1914
From the beginning, the plans of the French army, known as Plan 17, called for an offensive to recapture the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. As the Germans struck at Liège and Namur in Belgium, two vital strongholds blocking the road south, General Joffre began an attack on Alsace-Lorraine.

The Belgians fought so stubbornly that the Germans were held up at Liège until August 16 and outside Namur for another week. This ended German hopes for conquering France in six weeks. Meanwhile, French and German troops were engaged in a series of bloody clashes known as the Battle of the Frontiers. The French suffered more than 300,000 casualties as they hurled themselves against German machine guns to win small and short-lived gains in Alsace.

Meanwhile, the Germans had broken through the Belgian defenses at Liège. On August 20 they entered Brussels, the Belgian capital, and swept on toward France's northern border. Not until August 21, however, did General Joffre start rushing troops to check the oncoming enemy. Until then he had failed to see the seriousness of the German drive through Belgium.

Mons

Also marching to meet the Germans was the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) of about 150,000 men, under Field Marshal Sir John French. These men included most of England's small regular (professional) army. On August 23, near Mons, Belgium, 30,000 men of the B.E.F. ran head on into some 90,000 troops of the German First Army. Although greatly outnumbered, the British troops inflicted heavy losses on the Germans. But the British finally were driven back by sheer weight of numbers. And the Germans swept on irresistibly to the Marne River, outside Paris. As the French government fled to the city of Bordeaux, General Joffre ordered a last-ditch stand at the Marne.

The Miracle at the Marne

On September 5 the crucial Battle of the Marne began. It lasted a week, and at one point the situation grew so critical for the French that reinforcements were sped to the front in taxicabs. German scouts could see the spire of the Eiffel Tower, only 14 miles (22.5 kilometers) away. But they came no closer to the French capital. The Germans were beaten back and retreated to the Aisne River. On September 14, General von Moltke was replaced by General Erich von Falkenhayn as chief of the German general staff.

Although their hopes for a swift victory in France were shattered, the Germans captured the Belgian port of Antwerp on October 9, after a long siege. When the city fell, the Belgian army escaped. It fought on in the region of Flanders until the end of the war.

Ypres

In October and November, British and German troops fought a series of brutal battles around the Belgian town of Ypres (pronounced EEP-re). Ypres was vital to the Allies, for if the Germans succeeded in breaking through, they would be able to capture the French channel.
ports—Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne. But the British held firm, and the ports remained in Allied hands.

As 1914 drew to a close, the fighting in the West had reached a stalemate, with neither side able to dislodge the other. The Western Front was a maze of deep trenches and barbed wire that stretched 475 miles (765 kilometers). Casualties were staggering. The French had suffered approximately 854,000 men killed, wounded, and missing; the Germans about 677,000. Of the 150,000 men of the B.E.F., only half remained in action.

The Eastern Front, 1914–15

On August 17, 1914, while the Germans were advancing through Belgium, 200,000 Russian troops invaded East Prussia. At the Battle of Tannenberg, a German force under generals Erich Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg completely routed the Russians. At the Battle of the Masurian Lakes, in early September, the Germans won a second stunning victory against the Russians. In little more than a month, more than 150,000 of the original Russian soldiers who had invaded East Prussia had been killed, wounded, or captured.

But the Russians had greater success against the Austro-Hungarian army. Many of the soldiers fighting for Emperor Francis Joseph were Slavs. They deserted to join the Russians by the thousands. The Serbs also inflicted heavy losses on the Austrians in the early days of the war.

The Ottoman Empire

In October 1914, the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire entered the war on the side of the Central Powers, headed by Germany and Austria-Hungary. This shut the Dardanelles–Black Sea shipping route to the Allies and virtually cut off Russia from important sources of supplies. To aid the Russians and at the same time to bring pressure against Turkey, Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill conceived a daring plan: a combined French and British naval attack to force a passage through the Turkish-held Dardanelles Strait. This would enable the Allies to capture Constantinople (now Istanbul), the capital of Turkey, and open the way to the Russian Black Sea port of Odessa. The first plan failed, however, when a number of Allied warships were sunk by mines, and the attack was halted.

Gallipoli

A second attempt by the Allies to win control of the vital strait was made in the spring of 1915. Hundreds of thousands of troops made up mostly of British and ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) were landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula of Turkey. But because of Allied mismanagement and strong Turkish resistance, the campaign proved a total failure. It cost the British alone more than 200,000 casualties.

Elsewhere in the Middle East
In 1914, the Turks ruled a large area of the Middle East, including Palestine, Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), and Syria. The British, aided by Arabs seeking independence from the Ottoman Turks, launched a number of campaigns in the Middle East between 1914 and 1917, especially in Mesopotamia and Palestine. In 1917 British troops captured Baghdad and Jerusalem.

The Balkans and Italy

In 1915 Bulgaria and Italy entered the war. The Bulgarians joined the Central Powers. Italy, in spite of its earlier treaty with Germany and Austria-Hungary, sided with the Allies. The Italians engaged the Austrians in many bloody, indecisive battles on the mountain frontier between northern Italy and Austria. German and Austrian troops, assisted by the Bulgarians, finally defeated Serbia in 1915.

In 1916 Romania entered the war on the side of the Allies. But the Romanian army was quickly demolished by the Germans, who occupied Bucharest in December 1916. Greece also joined the Allies in 1916.

The War in the Colonies

As soon as the fighting began in Europe, the Allies launched attacks against Germany’s overseas possessions. In Africa, Allied troops took over the German colonies of Togoland (now part of Ghana and Togo), Cameroons (now part of Nigeria and Cameroon), German South West Africa (now Namibia), and German East Africa (now part of Tanzania). In China, Japanese and British soldiers captured the German colony of Kiaochow. And in the Pacific, Japanese, Australian, and New Zealand forces occupied the German-held islands of Western Samoa and the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianas.

The War at Sea

From the outset of the war the British Royal Navy played a key role in the Allied strategy. The powerful British fleet blockaded the ports of the Central Powers. It swept Germany’s merchant shipping from the seas. But the Germans set up a counterblockade of the British Isles. German U-boats (submarines) prowled beneath the seas, inflicting heavy losses on Allied shipping. Besides submarines, the Germans relied on raiders. They were fast, heavily armed cruisers that roved the seas and preyed on merchant ships. Since Great Britain depended on its merchant marine to transport much of its food, the Germans hoped to thus starve the British into submission.

In May 1915, a German U-boat torpedoed the British passenger liner *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland. Among the 1,198 passengers killed were 124 Americans. The sinking of the *Lusitania* caused an outcry in the United States. President Woodrow Wilson, who had denounced both the British and German blockades as violations of international law, sent strong notes of protest to the German government. The Germans argued that the British ship had been carrying arms and ammunition. But, anxious to keep the United States neutral, they agreed not to sink passenger ships without warning.
Since the beginning of the war, the entire world had waited for the inevitable clash between the German and British navies. Near the end of 1914 two sea battles were fought off the coast of South America. Near Coronel, Chile, a German squadron of five cruisers defeated a British squadron of four ships, sinking two of them. A second British squadron avenged this defeat by destroying most of the German force in a battle at the Falkland Islands, off Argentina.

But it was not until 1916 that the expected clash between the main German and British fleets finally took place.

The Battle of Jutland

On May 31, 1916, the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet met in battle near Jutland, off the coast of Denmark. A total of 252 warships, including 64 battleships and battle cruisers, took part in this greatest naval battle in history. The fight raged for hours, until the following morning. The result, however, was indecisive with both sides claiming victory. The larger British fleet had lost more men and heavier ships. But the German fleet fled to its North Sea bases. It never again challenged Great Britain’s mastery of the oceans. Instead, Germany later resumed a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare.

The War in the Air

While battles were raging on land and sea, a new kind of war was being waged in the air. The airplane played an increasingly important role in World War I. From the crude and flimsy aircraft of 1914 they developed into the fast, well-built pursuit planes and bombers of 1918, which were forerunners of modern airpower. With the fighting on land bogged down in mud and the war at sea more often than not confined to submarines, what was left of the glamour of war was reserved for the aviators. Such fliers as Baron Manfred von Richthofen and Max Immelman of Germany, Georges Guynemer and René Fonck of France, William A. (Billy) Bishop of Canada, Albert Ball of England, and Eddie Rickenbacker of the United States became legends.

Meanwhile, far from the front lines, civilians felt the horror of air warfare as heavy German bombers and giant zeppelins (airships) bombed both Paris and London.

The Western Front, 1915–16

The fighting in the West during 1915 was marked by futile offensives by both sides and by the first use of poison gas. On April 22, 1915, during the Second Battle of Ypres, observers reported clouds of yellowish-green fog drifting toward the French and British lines. The Germans had released thousands of cylinders of deadly chlorine gas. The gas attack left gaping holes in the Allied defenses as soldiers fled choking and gasping from the fumes. But the Germans themselves were so wary of the deadly gas that they hesitated to occupy the undefended Allied positions. Meanwhile, British troops quickly plugged the gap. A few days later gas masks were issued to the frontline troops.
Through the spring and summer of 1915 the Allies launched one attack after another against the German positions at a terrible cost of life. But despite all the fighting, the front lines did not move as much as 3 miles (5 kilometers) in any direction.

**Verdun**

On February 21, 1916, the Germans opened a devastating attack against the French fortress city of Verdun. Verdun's defenders were commanded by General Henri-Philippe Pétain. They fought stubbornly for every piece of ground. The German attacks continued without letup until mid-July. When the German troops had spent their strength, the French counterattacked, and the enemy was driven back. The defense of Verdun became a symbol of French resistance. But it had cost France approximately 500,000 casualties to hold the city. The Germans lost almost as many men.

After Verdun the top leadership in the French and German armies was shaken up. General Joffre was removed from command and replaced by General Robert Nivelle. General von Falkenhayn was succeeded by General Paul von Hindenburg.

**The Somme**

During the fighting at Verdun, the British, hoping to draw German pressure away from the French, opened a drive along the Somme River. General Sir Douglas Haig, who had replaced Field Marshal French as commander of the B.E.F., directed the attack, which lasted from July 1 until November 1916. The Somme Offensive cost the British hundreds of thousands of casualties (in one day alone they lost 60,000 men) but accomplished little.

At the height of the battle, the British uncovered a weapon that revolutionized ground warfare—the armored tank. On September 15, 1916, 49 of the crude, clumsy machines lumbered toward the German trenches, tearing through barbed wire, climbing obstacles, and crushing trenches. The Germans fled in terror, opening a wide gap in their lines. But there were too few tanks and not enough reserves to achieve a breakthrough.

By mid-October, rains made further fighting on the Somme impossible, as both armies were bogged down in mud. In the words of an English journalist, "The terrain was...a wasteland pockmarked with ditches and holes...a desolate stretch of truncated trees and wrecked villages where no dog barked, no bird sang, and the breeze was tainted by death...."

**The Eastern Front, 1916**

In June 1916, the Russians, under General Aleksei Brusilov, unleashed a grand offensive against the Austrian province of Galicia. The Austrians, taken by surprise, fell back. As the Russians rolled on toward the heart of Austria, German reinforcements were quickly rushed east. The Brusilov Offensive finally was stopped, as much by lack of supplies as by the enemy. By September 1916, the Russians had suffered more than 1 million casualties. The failure of this last great offensive left the Russian army and people gravely disheartened.
The Western Front, 1917

The year 1917 was a dark one for the Allies. Repeated attempts to break through the German positions in northern France failed. The only success was the capture of the strategically important crest of Vimy Ridge by Canadian troops under the command of General J.H.G. Byng. At the Second Battle of the Aisne, parts of the French army, unable to bear the slaughter, mutinied. General Pétain, the hero of Verdun, replaced General Nivelle. The French soldiers trusted and respected Pétain, and he was able to end the mutiny.

The British, meanwhile, had unsuccessfully attempted a breakthrough at Arras. Then, in July, they attacked through knee-deep mud in the Third Battle of Ypres (also known as the Battle of Passchendaele). The fighting, which raged for months, proved completely futile and cost the British approximately 300,000 casualties.

The British were more successful at the Battle of Cambrai, in which they used some 400 tanks to push the Germans back several miles. But the exhausted troops could not follow up their advantage.

The Russian Revolution

In March 1917, the Russians overthrew Czar Nicholas II and set up a democratic government under Alexander Kerensky. But the Kerensky government itself was overthrown in November 1917, by the Bolshevik Communists, led by Vladimir Ilich Lenin. The Czar and his entire family later were executed by the Bolsheviks. In December 1917, Lenin took Russia out of the war. The Soviets signed the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk the following March. For more information, see the article Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (History).

The United States Enters the War

On April 2, 1917, after months of unavailing protest against Germany's unrestricted U-boat warfare, President Wilson called upon Congress for a declaration of war against the Central Powers. War was declared against Germany on April 6 and against Austria-Hungary eight months later on December 7.

In June 1917, units of the United States 1st Division, plus Marine brigades, landed in France. This was the vanguard of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), led by General John J. Pershing. The AEF eventually numbered more than 2 million men.

Wilson's Fourteen Points

In January 1918, President Wilson set forth his famous Fourteen Points peace program. These included self-determination for the multiethnic peoples ruled by Austria-Hungary and Turkey, and independence for Poland—then divided between Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. Wilson also called for the formation of an association, or league, of nations to prevent future wars.
By 1918 both the Allies and the Central Powers were in a critical situation. The French and British armies had been drained by more than three years of bitter fighting. In addition, several Allied divisions had to be sent to bolster the faltering Italian army, which had suffered a disastrous defeat in the Battle of Caporetto late in 1917. The position of the Central Powers was equally serious. Germany no longer could expect aid from its allies. Bulgaria and Turkey were almost defeated. Austria was weakening rapidly. If the Central Powers were to win, Germany would have to do it alone.

With Russia out of the war, the Germans were able to transfer more than 1 million seasoned troops from the Eastern Front for a great spring offensive in the West. General Erich Ludendorff was chosen to lead the offensive. Ludendorff had to act quickly, before the arrival of more American troops increased the odds against Germany.

The Last German Offensive

On March 21, 1918, Ludendorff began the Second Battle of the Somme. The larger German forces overwhelmed the British and drove them back 14 miles (22.5 kilometers) in four days—the largest single gain of the war since 1914. The brutal fighting lasted until April 5, when the Germans were stopped just short of their goal, the city of Amiens.

Ludendorff did not pause long. On April 9 he launched an attack on the French channel ports. The action—known as the Lys Offensive—raged furiously for several weeks. Once again the Germans were halted within sight of their goal, but at a terrible price. The British suffered more than 350,000 casualties, and the Germans almost as many.

For a time, all was quiet. But on May 27, Ludendorff opened another attack, against the French on the Aisne River. Within a week, the Germans had reached the Marne at Château-Thierry—only 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Paris. Marshal Ferdinand Foch, newly appointed commander in chief of the Allied armies, searched desperately for reinforcements. The only troops available were inexperienced Americans. Foch had no choice. With Pershing’s cooperation, Foch ordered the Americans up to the front. The Americans not only checked the Germans but also chased them back across the Marne in desperate fighting around Château-Thierry and Belleau Wood.

Ludendorff tried once again. On July 15 he opened the Second Battle of the Marne. But heavy losses had taken their toll of the once-invincible German army, and the drive was quickly smothered. Soon the Germans were in full retreat.

Still the fighting remained desperate. In some places, such as the Argonne Forest in France, it matched the fiercest of the war. But German strength was waning. Every day the number of captured German soldiers grew larger.

The Collapse of the Central Powers

The battered Central Powers could not expect to hold out much longer. On September 30,
1918, Bulgaria surrendered. Turkey signed an armistice on October 30, 1918, after Allied forces captured Damascus and Beirut. Following uprisings by Czechs, Hungarians, and Yugoslavs within the empire, Austria signed an armistice on November 3. Germany was now alone.

But within a week of the Austrian surrender, the iron German discipline finally broke. A mutiny broke out in the navy. Mobs rioted against the kaiser in Berlin and other cities. In Munich a Communist revolution flared. The kaiser held out stubbornly until November 9, when he abdicated. The following day he fled to Holland. Germany was declared a republic, with socialist Friedrich Ebert as president. Representatives of the new German government met with Allied leaders in a railroad car at Compiègne. There, on November 11, 1918, an armistice was signed. The war was over.

The Paris Peace Conference

In January 1919, the Allied Powers held a conference in Paris to arrange peace terms. Part of President Wilson's peace program already had been accomplished. Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) had declared their independence, and a new state of Poland had been created. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—once part of the Russian Empire—also became independent.

The Treaty of Versailles

On June 28, 1919, the Allies signed the Treaty of Versailles with Germany. Separate peace treaties later were signed with Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. All the treaties together are known as the Peace of Paris.

The Versailles Treaty established the League of Nations—the kind of international organization President Wilson had envisioned. To Wilson's great disappointment, however, the United States Senate later refused to ratify the treaty, thus preventing American participation in the League.

Under the terms of the peace treaty, Germany was forced to accept sole responsibility for the war. Germany lost all its colonies and some of its own territory. Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France, and part of the Rhineland was placed under Allied occupation. The German army was limited to 100,000 men and the German navy to a small number of warships. Germany was required to pay reparations of billions of dollars, and much of the country's economic resources were turned over to the Allies.

Other Treaties

World War I destroyed the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1919, Austria signed the Treaty of Saint-Germain, recognizing the independence of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. Other portions of the empire went to Italy and Romania. Among the other Central Powers, Hungary signed the Treaty of Trianon (1919); Bulgaria the Treaty of Neuilly (1919); and Turkey the Treaty of Sèvres (1920).
The Results of the War

World War I left the nations of Europe, both victors and vanquished, exhausted and impoverished. France and Great Britain in particular owed tremendous war debts. The United States turned away from participation in European affairs and adopted a policy of isolationism. Germany, already close to economic collapse, was burdened with war reparations that it could not pay. In desperation, the Germans would turn to a man who promised to save Germany and avenge its defeat—Adolf Hitler. Within twenty years, a new and more terrible world war would darken Europe.

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1914–1918: World War I

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The First World War

See also: League of Nations

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