# History

# Year 11

## Major World Events of the 20th Century

## World War 1



# World War 1

World War I was a major conflict fought between 1914 and 1918. Other names for World War I include the First World War, WWI, the War to End All Wars, and the Great War.

**Who fought in World War I?**

World War I was fought between the Allied Powers and the Central Powers. The main members of the Allied Powers were France, Russia, and Britain. The United States also fought on the side of the Allies after 1917. The main members of the Central Powers were Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria. (The Ottoman Empire was made up of modern-day Turkey, Southeast Europe, West Asia, and North Africa.)

**For you to do:**

1. Find and write the meaning of *allied.*

2. Which countries formed the Allied Powers?

3. Who were the enemies of the Allied Powers?

**Where was most of the fighting?**

The majority of the fighting took place in Europe along two fronts: the western front and the eastern front. The western front was a long line of trenches that ran from the coast of Belgium to Switzerland. A lot of the fighting along this front took place in France and Belgium. The eastern front was between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria on one side and Russia and Romania on the other.

For you to do:

Draw or trace a rough map of Europe, (see the next page), and use two colours to indicate the countries that formed the western front and the eastern front.




**How did it start?**

Although there were a number of causes for the war, the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the main catalyst for starting the war. After the assassination, Austria declared war on Serbia. Then Russia prepared to defend its ally Serbia. Next, Germany declared war on Russia to protect Austria. This caused France to declare war on Germany to protect its ally Russia. Germany invaded Belgium to get to France which caused Britain to declare war on Germany. This all happened in just a few days.

**For you to do:**

Make summary in dot points showing who attacked who, e.g.

- Austria declared war on Serbia.
- Russia joined to protect Serbia …. etc



**Major Battles**

A lot of the war was fought using trench warfare along the western front. The armies hardly moved at all. They just bombed and shot at each other from across the trenches. Some of the major battles during the war included the First Battle of the Marne, Battle of the Somme, Battle of Tannenberg, Battle of Gallipoli, and the Battle of Verdun.

**For you to do:**

1. What kind of warfare methods were used?

2. List two famous battles.

**How did it end?**

The fighting ended on November 11, 1918 when a general armistice was agreed to by both sides. The war officially ended between Germany and the Allies with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

**For you to do:**




1. Find out and write the meaning of ‘armistice’.

2. What was the name of the treaty that was signed to end the war?

3. What is the date of the armistice, which is still commemorated today in many countries including Australia. Poppies are given out as a remembrance of the wild orange poppies that grew in the fields of Europe.

**Interesting Facts about World War I**

- More than 65 million men fought in the war.
- Dogs were used in the trenches to carry messages. A well-trained messenger dog was considered a very fast and reliable way to carry messages.
- It was the first major war where aeroplanes and tanks were used.
- Ninety percent of the 7.8 million soldiers from Austria-Hungary who fought in the war were either injured or killed.
- When the British first invented tanks they called them "landships."
- The terrorist group responsible for assassinating Archduke Ferdinand was called the Black Hand.
- The famous scientist Marie Curie helped to equip vans with x-ray machines that enabled French doctors to see bullets in wounded men. These vans were called "petites Curies", meaning "little Curies."

# WW 1 Allied Powers

World War I was fought between two major alliances of countries: the Allied Powers and the Central Powers. The Allied Powers were largely formed as a defence against the aggression of Germany and the Central Powers. They were also known as the Entente Powers because they began as an alliance between France, Britain, and Russia called the Triple Entente.

**Countries**

**France** - Germany declared war on France on August 3, 1914. France had been preparing for war after Germany and Russia went to war. The majority of the fighting along the Western Front took place inside of France.

**Britain** - Britain entered the war when Germany invaded Belgium. They declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914. British troops joined French troops on the Western Front to stop the advance of Germany across Western Europe.

**Russia** - The Russian Empire was an early entry into the war. Germany declared war on Russia on July 31, 1914. They expected that Russia would defend Serbia against the invasion of Serbia by Germany's ally Austria-Hungary. The Russian Empire also included Poland and Finland. After the Russian Revolution, Russia left the Allied Powers and signed a peace treaty with Germany on March 3, 1918.

**United States** - The United States tried to remain neutral during the war. However, it entered the war on the side of the Allied Powers on April 6, 1917 when it declared war on Germany. Around 4,355,000 American troops were mobilized during the war with around 116,000 losing their lives.

Other Allied countries included Japan, Italy, Belgium, Brazil, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia.

**Interesting Facts about the Allied Powers**

- Belgium declared itself as neutral at the start of the war, but joined the Allies after they were invaded by Germany.
- It is estimated that around 42 million military personnel were mobilized by the Allies during the war. Around 5,541,000 were killed in action and another 12,925,000 were wounded.
- The two Allied countries with the most soldiers killed were Russia with 1,800,000 and France with around 1,400,000.
- Vladimir Lenin became the leader of Soviet Russia after Tsar Nicholas II was overthrown during the Russian Revolution. Lenin wanted Russia out of the war, so he made peace with Germany.
- The United States was never an official member of the Allies, but called itself an "Associated Power."

**Questions**

1) What alliance was the enemy of the Allied Powers during World War I?

2) Which of the following countries was not an Allied Power?

- England
- Russia
- France
- Germany

3) In what country did the majority of the fighting along the western front occur?

4) What event forced Britain to enter the war on the side of the Allied Powers?

5) What event caused Russia to make peace with Germany and leave the Allied Powers?

6) What major nation entered the war on the side of the Allied Powers almost three years after the war began?

**Check your answers:**

1. Central Powers

2. Germany

3. France

4. Russian Revolution

5. Germany invaded Belgium

6. United States



# Trench Warfare

Trench warfare is a type of fighting where both sides build deep trenches as a defence against the enemy. These trenches can stretch for many miles and make it nearly impossible for one side to advance.

During World War I, the western front in France was fought using trench warfare. By the end of 1914, both sides had built a series of trenches that went from the North Sea and through Belgium and France. As a result, neither side gained much ground for three and a half years from October 1914 to March of 1918.

**How were the trenches built?**

The trenches were dug by soldiers. Sometimes the soldiers just dug the trenches straight into the ground. This method was called entrenching. It was fast, but left the soldiers open to enemy fire while they were digging. Sometimes they would build the trenches by extending a trench on one end. This method was called sapping. It was safer, but took longer. The most secret way to build a trench was to make a tunnel and then remove the roof when the tunnel was complete. Tunnelling was the safest method, but also the most difficult.

**No Man's Land**

The land between the two enemy trench lines was called "No Man's Land." This land was sometimes covered with barbed wire and land mines. The enemy trenches were generally around 50 to 250 metres apart.

**What were the trenches like?**

The typical trench was dug around twelve feet, (3.6 metres) deep into the ground. There was often an embankment at the top of the trench and a barbed wire fence. Some trenches were reinforced with wood beams or sandbags. The bottom of the trench was usually covered with wooden boards called duckboards. The duckboards were meant to keep the soldiers' feet above the water that would collect at the bottom of the trench.

The trenches weren't dug in one long straight line, but were built as more of a system of trenches. They were dug in a zigzag pattern and there were many levels of trenches along the lines with paths dug so soldiers could travel between the levels.

**Life in the Trenches**

Soldiers generally rotated through three stages of the front. They would spend some time in the front-line trenches, some time in the support trenches, and some time resting. They almost always had some sort of job to do whether it was repairing the trenches, guard duty, moving supplies, undergoing inspections, or cleaning their weapons.

**German Trench**

German trenches like this were generally better built than those of the Allies

**Conditions in the Trenches**

The trenches were not nice, clean places. They were actually quite disgusting. There were all sorts of pests living in the trenches including rats, lice, and frogs. The rats were everywhere and got into the soldiers' food and ate just about everything, including sleeping soldiers. The lice were also a major problem. They made the soldiers' itch horribly and caused a disease called Trench Fever.

The weather also contributed to rough conditions in the trenches. Rain caused the trenches to flood and get muddy. Mud could clog up weapons and make it hard to move in battle. Also, the constant moisture could cause an infection called Trench Foot that, if untreated, could become so bad that a soldier's feet would have to be amputated. Cold weather was dangerous, too. Soldiers often lost fingers or toes to frostbite and some died from exposure in the cold.

**Interesting Facts about Trench Warfare**

- It is estimated that if all the trenches built along the western front were laid end-to-end they would total over 40,000 km long.
- The trenches needed constant repair or they would erode from the weather and from enemy bombs.
- The British said it took 450 men 6 hours to build about 250 meters of a trench system.
- Most of the raids took place at night when soldiers could sneak across the "No Mans Land" in the dark.
- Each morning the soldiers would all "stand to." This meant that they would stand up and prepare for an attack as most attacks took place first thing in the morning.
- The typical soldier in the trenches was armed with a rifle, bayonet, and a hand grenade.

**Questions**

1) In what war was trench warfare the primary method of fighting?

2) Which of the following describes the 'sapping' method of building a trench?

3) What was the land between two enemy trenches called?

4) Around how deep was the typical trench?

5) True or false? Trenches were generally dug in a long straight line.

6) When not fighting, what would soldiers do in the trenches?

7) What animal pest that lived in the trenches caused the disease Trench Fever?

8) What disease did many soldiers get from the constant moisture in the trenches?

9) What were 'duckboards' in the trenches?

10) True or False: General living conditions in the trenches were dirty, full of pests, and dangerous.

**Check your answers**

1. World War I

2. Building a new trench by extending one end of an existing trench

3. No man's land

4. 12 feet (3.6 metres)

5. FALSE

6. They would be repairing the trenches, guard duty, moving supplies, undergoing inspections, or cleaning their weapons.

7. Lice

8. Trench Foot

9. Wooden boards meant to keep the soldier's feet above the water

10. TRUE



# Cher Ami - A carrier pigeon that saved lives during WW1

Cher Ami is arguably the most famous pigeon in the world, made famous after World War I, for service with the U.S. Army Signal Corps' Pigeon Service. Books, films and poetry have been inspired by Cher Ami's heroism. The bird is currently on display in the World War I section of "The Price of Freedom: Americans at War" exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. In French the name means – Cher (dear) Ami (Friend)

As wired communications and human messengers proved vulnerable to disruptions due to artillery fire, pigeons became a reliable means of communication between the front and command posts. In July 1917, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established a Pigeon Service, the first members of which joined the American Expeditionary Forces in France in November that year. In May 1918, the British Home Forces Pigeon Service donated 600 young British pigeons to the American forces. One of these birds would later be known as Cher Ami. The bird was first identified by the band on its left leg marked NURP 18 EAD 615, which translates as "National Union Racing Pigeon," born in 1918, bred at the loft registered to "EAD," bird number 615. "EAD" is believed to be E.A. Davidson of St. James's House, King's Lynn, Norfolk, England.

In October 1918, a composite battalion of U.S. soldiers of the 77th Division advanced rapidly in France's Argonne Forest ahead of the forces on its flanks and found itself surrounded by German forces. Known as the Lost Battalion, this group of men were trapped and cut off in the forest with limited resources for almost a week. Forced to rely on homing pigeons for communication, the commanding officer, Maj. Charles W. Whittlesey, sent seven messages over Oct. 3 and 4 to seek help for his force which was in deep trouble.

His last pigeon, released at 3 p.m. Oct. 4, arrived back at its loft an hour and 15 minutes later. Upon examination, the bird was found to have been struck by either a bullet or shell fragment, which severed the right leg and cut across the breast, leaving the message capsule hanging off the tendons of the severed leg. The message provided Americans with the exact location of the surrounded men to aid in their relief. The Lost Battalion was ultimately rescued on the evening of Oct. 7, incurring almost 70% causalities during their gallant stand.

The official U.S. Army record for Cher Ami from February 1919 states that the bird was a Black Check Hen having "Delivered 12 important messages from the Verdun Front to loft at Rampont. Average distance 30 kilometers. Average time 24 minutes. Returned on last occasion with leg shot away, message tube containing important document hanging by tendon. Missile which carried away leg, also passed through breast. Wonderful vitality of bird enabled it to recover quickly. In this seriously wounded condition number 615 flew 40 kilometers in 25 minutes, being liberated at 2:35 P.M., arriving loft at 3 o'clock. Point of liberation Grand Pre."

After the war ended, Cher Ami was taken across the Atlantic. Despite medical care, the pigeon did not fully recover from its war injuries and died June 13, 1919. Rather than bury the bird, the Signal Corps opted to preserve Cher Ami and to donate the remains of the

heroic WWI pigeon to the Smithsonian Institution, so the bird's story and achievement could be told.

The body was turned over to Nelson R. Wood, a *taxidermist* in the biology department of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History for mounting.

> *Taxidermy is a way of preparing, stuffing and/or mounting an animal for display or study. It usually involves arranging an animal's real skin over a fake body to make the animal look alive! It is a way of preserving the body so that scientists or Museum visitors can see what the animal was like when it was alive.*

In 1921 Cher Ami first went on public display in the museum. The beloved patriot pigeon continues to function as a memorial to all the military homing pigeons who served without choice, and as reminder of the sacrifices made in WWI.

https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/fact-sheets/cher-ami-fact-sheet-century-myth-and-public-memory

Questions

1. Why were carrier pigeons a safer way to communicate messages during World War 1?

2. Why were soldiers of the 77th Division in trouble?

3. Describe the seriousness of the pigeon's wounds before it's last flight.

4. How far did the pigeon fly in this wounded condition?

5. If this pigeon was a person, what character attributes would you use to describe it?

6. How was the pigeon honoured after it's death?

7. Carrier pigeons and also called' homing pigeons'. What does this tell us about what they do?



# The Angels of Mons

During World War I, the armies of Britain, France and other allies were confronted by the armed forces of Germany, supported by its allies. On a battle front that extended across south-east Belgium and northern France, the German armies were advancing towards the west. They had broken through the allied lines and the British situation was desperate, due to the heavy casualties they had sustained and the lack of reserves.

The German breakthrough had occurred at Bethune, near Mons, in Belgium, and they concentrated their attack at the point with high explosive and machine gunfire, preparatory to a bayonet attack in mass formation.

Suddenly the enemy shell fire lifted and concentrated on a slight rise beyond the town. The ground here was absolutely bare, yet the enemy machine guns and shells raked it from end to end with a hail of lead. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, the enemy's fire ceased. The dense line of German troops, which had started to move forward to victory in mass formation, suddenly halted. As the British watched, they saw that line break! The Germans threw down everything they had and fled in frantic panic.

What had caused this retreat by an army that appeared to be a step away from victory?

A senior German officer who was taken prisoner immediately after this incident gave this account to the staff captain of the 1st Corp intelligence, 1st British Army Headquarters.

The German officer stated, "The order was given to advance in mass formation and our troops were marching behind us singing their way to victory when Fritz, my lieutenant here, said, "Herr Kapitan, just look at that open ground behind Bethune. There is a brigade of cavalry coming up through the smoke drifting across it. They must be mad to advance against such a force as ours in the open. I suppose they must be the cavalry of one of their colonial forces, for, see, they are all in white uniform and they're mounted on white horses!"

"Strange," I replied, "I've never heard of the English having any white-uniformed cavalry, whether colonial or not. They have all been fighting on foot for some years, and anyway, their men all wear khaki, not white."

"Well, they're plain enough," he replied. "Look, our guns have got their range now. They'll be blown to pieces in no time."
The German officer continued his description of the event. "We saw shells bursting among the horse and their riders. Yet not one horse or rider fell. They advanced at a quiet walk-trot, in parade ground formation, each man and horse in his exact place."

"Shortly afterwards our machine guns opened heavy fire, raking the advancing cavalry with a hail of lead; but on they came, and not one single man or horse fell. Steadily they advanced, clear in the shining sunlight, and a few paces in front of them rode their leader,

fine figure of man, whose hair, like spun gold, shone in an aura around his head. By his side was a great sword, but his hands lay quietly holding the reins, as his huge white charger carried him proudly forward."

"The heavy shell fire and concentrated machine gunfire continued, but the white cavalry advanced, unyielding, untouched by the attack, like the incoming tide surging over a sandy beach. Then a great fear came upon me and I turned to flee. Yes, I, an officer of the Prussian Guard, fled, panic-stricken, and around me were hundreds of terrified men, whimpering like children, throwing away their weapons in order that their movements should not be impeded…. all running. Their one desire was to escape from that advancing white cavalry; above all, from their awe-inspiring leader whose hair shone like a golden halo."

"That is all I have to tell you," the German concluded. "We are beaten. The German army is broken. They may be fighting, but we have lost the war; we are beaten by the White Cavalry…. I cannot understand… I cannot understand."

A number of German prisoners were questioned in the days following and, although their accounts differed in some details, this story was substantially the same. Thus, it was that the British Expeditionary Force was given sufficient time to withdraw to safer positions and prepare the counter attack that was to finally leading to victory on November 11th 1918.

1. The following terms are all related to warfare. Find the exact meaning of each and write it: allies, reserves, bayonet attack, mass formation, cavalry, casualty, shell fire, machine gun fire and counter attack.

2. Read the story of Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6:8-19. In what ways is this story similar to the story of the Angels of Mons? In what ways is it different?

3. Make a sketch map of Western Europe, showing the borders of the countries mentioned in the story.

Adapted from *The Trumpet Sounds for Britain,* Vol 2, by David Gardner, Christian Foundation Publication, Great Britain



# Simpson and his Donkey

During the First World War, Private Simpson, a British soldier, served with the Australian Ambulance Corps. The Ambulance Corps was responsible for giving first aid to the wounded and for bringing them to safety as quickly as possible. Wherever the bullets rained thickest, there Simpson was to be found, bandaging the wounded, or holding a water flask to the lips of a dying soldier.

On the second day after landing, about one hundred donkeys were brought ashore to carry tins of water to the soldiers. 'Murphy' was among them. From the moment of their first meeting, Simpson and Murphy became fast friends, and were afterwards always to be seen together. Day after day the two did their noble work, setting out with a tin of water and bringing back the wounded. The animal seemed to know that he must tread carefully to avoid the bumps and jolts over a long and tiresome road. Had he not done so, the journey may have meant death to a badly injured soldier. Often a man would be lying wounded, and no one else would know until Simpson found him or the donkey scented him out.

For some time this life-saving work went on, but one day the animal was struck by a bullet, and had to be left behind. Then Simpson and some of his comrades half dragged and half carried the poor beast back to the lines. A few days later, Murphy, although slightly lame, was again at his work and as keen as ever.

One day, however, he came down the gully carrying a wounded man on his back, but his master was not there. As soon as he had delivered his burden, he trotted back up the gully. Not long afterwards he was seen sniffing at a form lying quite still on the ground. It was Simpson, who had been shot through the heart while returning slowly with a wounded comrade. The story of Simpson and his donkey will long be remembered among the bravest deeds of Anzac.

**Questions**

1. Describe the work of the Australian Ambulance Corps during the First World War.
2. What work did the donkeys carry out?
3. How do we know that Murphy had a special love for Simpson?
4. Who made a sacrifice in this story?
5. What sacrifice was made?
6. What is the greatest sacrifice anyone can make?
   ( John 15:13)
7. Who made the greatest sacrifice for us?



# Use of Horses in World War 1

Horses played a crucial role in World War I, serving primarily in transportation, logistics, and cavalry operations, with over 368,000 horses employed on the Western Front alone.

## Roles and Contributions

Transportation and Logistics: Horses were essential for moving supplies, ammunition, and artillery across the battlefield. They were often more reliable than motor vehicles, especially in the muddy and rough terrains of the Western Front. A single artillery piece could require a team of six to twelve horses for transport.

**Cavalry Charges:** Initially, cavalry units were considered vital for offensive operations. However, as the war progressed and trench warfare became prevalent, the effectiveness of cavalry charges diminished due to the rise of machine guns and barbed wire. Despite this, horses were still used for reconnaissance and carrying messages.

**Medical Support:** Horses also played a role in medical logistics, transporting wounded soldiers from the battlefield to medical facilities. They were used to pull ambulances and carry stretchers, contributing significantly to the evacuation process.

**Diverse Types of Horses:** Various types of horses were utilized, including riding horses for officers, cavalry horses for mounted combat, and draft horses for heavy lifting. Ponies were also employed for transporting supplies over difficult terrain.

## Challenges Faced

**Casualties and Care:** The war took a heavy toll on horses, with estimates suggesting that over eight million horses died during the conflict. The armies faced challenges in caring for these animals, requiring significant resources for food, water, and veterinary care.

**Logistical Issues:** Maintaining a large number of horses presented logistical challenges, including the need for special transport for moving horses to the front lines and ensuring they received adequate care and nutrition.

## Conclusion

Horses were indispensable to military operations during World War I, providing vital support in logistics and transportation. Their contributions, while often overshadowed by mechanized warfare, were crucial to the functioning of armies on all fronts. The bond between soldiers and their horses also highlighted the emotional and psychological aspects of warfare, as many soldiers formed deep connections with these animals.

**For you to do:**

Draw a chart or diagram showing the different uses of horses during World War 1