

I. HOW DID IT GET STARTED?

- A. Nations of Europe were competing for colonies around the world
- B. Nations of Europe distrusted one another
  - 1. built-up huge armies and navies
  - 2. formed alliances with other countries
- C. Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary assassinated by a person from Serbia
  - 1. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia
  - 2. Russia, ally of Serbia, came to Serbia's aid
  - 3. France, ally of Russia, mobilized her army
  - 4. Germany, ally of Austria-Hungary, declared war on France and Russia
  - 5. to invade France the German army marched through Belgium, a neutral country
  - 6. angered by Germany's invasion of Belgium, Great Britain declared war on Germany
  - 7. other countries and the colonies of those already mentioned became involved - World War!
- D. the two sides
  - 1. Central Powers
    - a. Germany
    - b. Austria-Hungary
    - c. Bulgaria
    - d. Ottoman Empire (Turkey)
    - e. others
  - 2. Allies
    - a. Great Britain
    - b. France
    - c. Russia
    - d. Italy (late in the war)
    - e. the U.S. (after 1917)
    - f. others

II. HOW DID THE U.S. GET INVOLVED?

- A. soon after the war began President Wilson declared the U.S. to be a neutral country - we would not take sides
- B. we believed it was our right as a neutral to trade with either side, but:
  - 1. British warships stopped American merchant ships and seized cargoes bound for Germany
  - 2. German submarines sank American merchant ships bound for Allied countries
- C. we were more mad at Germany because they sank our ships without warning (unrestricted submarine warfare)
  - 1. 1915 - a German submarine sank the LUSITANIA, a British passenger liner - over 100 Americans were killed

2. for a while after this and similar incidents the Germans held to their promise not to sink ships without warning, but:
  - a. in January, 1917 the German government announced that it would return to the policy of "unrestricted submarine warfare"
  - b. a number of U.S. merchant ships were torpedoed and sunk
3. on top of this came the Zimmermann Telegram
  - a. secret message from German Foreign Secretary to Mexican government
  - b. said that if the US declared war against Germany, then Mexico should declare war on the US - in return, when the Allies were defeated, Germany would see to it that former Mexican territory in the American southwest (Mexican Cession and Texas) would be returned to Mexico
  - c. the message was intercepted by the British and given to the American government - we were mad that Germany was trying to get at us behind our backs!
4. in April, 1917 President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany
5. Congress did so, and the U.S. joined the Allies!!

### III. HOW DID WE HELP?

- A. immediately with food and supplies the Allies badly needed
- B. soon after the U.S. sent hundreds of thousands of troops to Europe under the command of General John J. Pershing (the American Expeditionary Force)
- C. with new supplies and fresh troops the tide of battle was turned against the Germans

### IV. WHAT WAS WORLD WAR I LIKE?

- A. trench warfare - troops of both armies dug into the ground in positions almost impossible to take by storm (frontal infantry charges)
- B. in between the trenches was "no man's land"
  1. covered with barbed wire to slow enemy charges
  2. blasted by artillery until it looked like the surface of the moon
- C. more soldiers on both sides died of disease than were killed by the enemy!
- D. new and terrible weapons
  1. machine guns
  2. airplanes
  3. poison gas
  4. submarines
  5. tanks
  6. "liquid fire" (flame throwers)
- E. throughout most of the war both armies faced each other across the same few miles of land with neither able to gain an advantage

#### V. HOW DID IT END?

- A. November 11, 1918 - officers of the German high command signed the armistice agreement ending World War I
  - 1. actually a surrender - they realized they were beaten
  - 2. wanted to end the war before the Allied armies invaded Germany
- B. actual treaty of peace was negotiated later - the Treaty of Versailles
  - 1. blamed Germany for the whole war
  - 2. virtually destroyed the German military
    - a. no army allowed
    - b. very small navy allowed
  - 3. all German colonies were taken away
  - 4. German government forced to pay reparations - money to pay "for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property"
    - a. an enormous sum
    - b. more than the Germans could possibly pay - it ruined the German economy
  - 5. the Germans were very bitter about the harsh terms of the treaty - would try to get even later (wait 'til section 6 - World War II!)
- C. treaty did establish a League of Nations - an international organization that would work for peace
- D. map of Europe redrawn - new nations created
  - 1. Finland
  - 2. Poland
  - 3. Czechoslovakia
  - 4. Yugoslavia
  - 5. Austria and Hungary separated
  - 6. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

#### VI. HOW DID THE US REACT TO ALL THIS?

- A. Wilson represented the US at the peace talks
  - 1. did not really approve of the European plan for the treaty - thought it was too harsh
  - 2. had his own plan, the Fourteen Points, but it was too easy on Germany for other Allied leaders
  - 3. Wilson went along with the Treaty of Versailles in order to get the other Allied leaders to go along with the League of Nations - the one of Wilson's Fourteen Points he thought was most important
- B. in order to become official, the treaty had to be ratified by the Senate (think back to your study of the Constitution)
  - 1. the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles
    - a. thought it was too harsh
    - b. did not want to be tied-up in European quarrels by membership in the League of Nations - considered it to be the kind of "entangling alliance" that the U.S. had always avoided

2. as a result, the U.S. never did join the League of Nations

3. because the U.S. did not participate the League of Nations never had any real power and was unable to prevent another world war

following World War I the U.S. tried to return to a policy of isolationism, but it was too late - we had proven ourselves a world power and could not escape that role in the future. From this point on, try as we might to avoid it, the U.S. would take on an increasing role in world events