

## Erich Maria Remarque: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970) was wounded five times while serving in the German army during World War I. In 1929, he published *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which is often considered the greatest novel about World War I.

It follows the narrator, Paul Baumer, from eager recruit to disillusioned veteran. In this passage, Paul is trapped for hours in a foxhole with a French soldier he has just killed.

**I**n the afternoon, about three, he is dead.

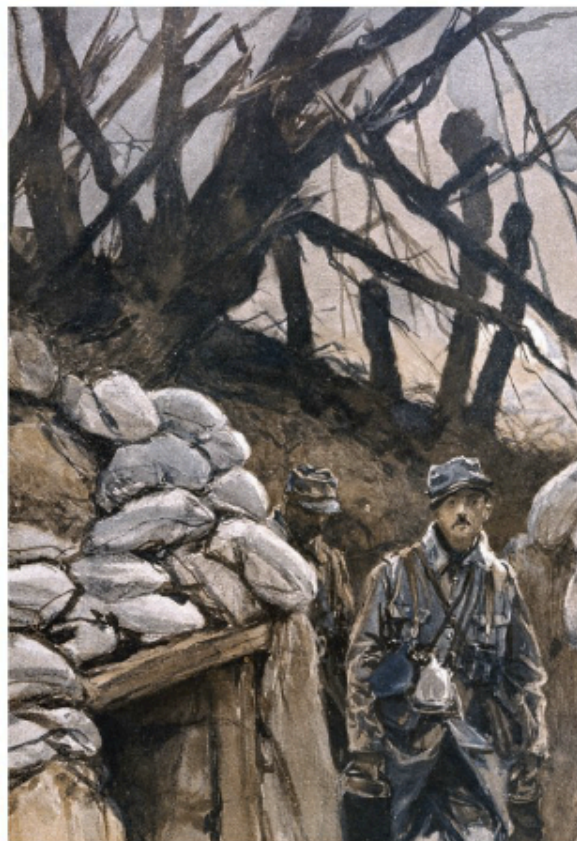
I breathe freely again. But only for a short time. Soon the silence is more unbearable than the groans. I wish the gurgling were there again, gasping hoarse, now whistling softly and again hoarse and loud.

It is mad, what I do. But I must do something. I prop the dead man up again so that he lies comfortably, although he feels nothing any more. I close his eyes. They are brown, his hair is black and a bit curly at the sides. . . .

The silence spreads. I talk and must talk. So I speak to him and say to him: “Comrade, I did not want to kill you. If you jumped in here again, I would not do it, if you would be sensible too. But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction<sup>1</sup> that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response. It was that abstraction I stabbed. But now, for the first time, I see you are a man like me. I thought of your hand-grenades, of your bayonet<sup>2</sup>, of your rifle; now I see your wife and your face and our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the

1. **abstraction** (ab STRAK shun) *n.* an idea or term that is developed from a concrete reality

2. **bayonet** (bay oh NET) *n.* a blade attached to an end of a rifle for stabbing in hand-to-hand combat



▲ This painting is titled *Notre-Dame de Lorette—A Soldier Walks Through the Flooded Trenches*. It was painted by François Flameng, a French artist who was given access to the front lines by the French government.

same agony—Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy? If we threw away these rifles and this uniform you could be my brother just like Kat and Albert. Take twenty years of my life, comrade, and stand up—take more, for I do not know what I can even attempt to do with it now.”

It is quiet, the front is still except for the crackle of rifle fire. The bullets rain over, they are not fired haphazard, but shrewdly aimed from all sides. I cannot get out.

### Thinking Critically

1. **Recognize Point of View** Why does Paul speak to the dead French soldier?
2. **Synthesize Information** What does Paul mean by “We always see it too late”?

SECTION  
**3**



An American soldier bids goodbye to his sweetheart.

**WITNESS HISTORY** AUDIO

### An American War Song

“Over there, over there,  
Send the word, send the word over there,  
That the Yanks are coming,  
The Yanks are coming...  
We’ll be over, we’re coming over,  
And we won’t come back till it’s over  
Over there.”

—George M. Cohan, from the song “Over There,” written in 1917

On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany.

**Focus Question** How did the Allies win World War I?



Sheet music for the patriotic song “Over There”

# Winning the War

## Objectives

- Describe how World War I became a total war.
- Explain the effect that years of warfare had on morale.
- Analyze the causes and effects of American entry into the war.
- Summarize events that led to the end of the war.



By 1917, European societies were cracking under the strain of war. Casualties on the fronts and shortages at home sapped morale. The stalemate dragged on, seemingly without end. Soon, however, the departure of one country from the war and the entry of another would tip the balance and end the stalemate.

## Terms, People, and Places

total war	atrocities
conscription	Fourteen Points
contraband	self-determination
Lusitania	armistice
propaganda	

## Note Taking

**Reading Skill: Summarize** As you read, use an outline to summarize the events in this section.

- |  |
|--|
| <p>I. Waging total war</p> <p>A. Economies committed to war production</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conscription</li> <li>2. Rationing</li> <li>3. Price controls</li> </ol> <p>B. Economic warfare</p> |
|--|

## Waging Total War

As the struggle wore on, nations realized that a modern, mechanized war required the channeling of a nation’s entire resources into the war effort, or **total war**. To achieve total war, governments began to take a stronger role in directing the economic and cultural lives of their people.

**Economies Committed to War Production** Early on, both sides set up systems to recruit, arm, transport, and supply armies that numbered in the millions. All of the warring nations except Britain immediately imposed universal military **conscription**, or “the draft,” which required all young men to be ready for military or other service. Britain, too, instituted conscription in 1916. Germany set up a system of forced civilian labor as well.

Governments raised taxes and borrowed huge amounts of money to pay the costs of war. They rationed food and other products, from boots to gasoline. In addition, they introduced other economic controls, such as setting prices and forbidding strikes.

**Economic Warfare** At the start of the war, Britain’s navy formed a blockade in the North Sea to keep ships from carrying supplies in and out of Germany. International law allowed wartime blockades





### A German Submarine Sinks the *Lusitania*

The sinking of the British liner *Lusitania* in 1915, illustrated below, was part of Germany's policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. The incident was featured in propaganda posters as evidence of German brutality. How does the poster below use emotion to encourage men to enlist?



to confiscate **contraband**, or military supplies and raw materials needed to make military supplies, but not items such as food and clothing. In spite of international law, the British blockade stopped both types of goods from reaching Germany. As the war progressed, it became harder and harder to feed the German and Austrian people. In Germany, the winter of 1916 and 1917 was remembered as “the turnip winter,” because the potato crop failed and people ate turnips instead.

To retaliate, Germany used U-boats to create its own blockade. In 1915, Germany declared that it would sink all ships carrying goods to Britain. In May 1915, a German submarine torpedoed the British liner ***Lusitania*** off the coast of Ireland. Almost 1,200 passengers were killed, including 128 Americans. Germany justified the attack, arguing that the *Lusitania* was carrying weapons. When American President Woodrow Wilson threatened to cut off diplomatic relations with Germany, though, Germany agreed to restrict its submarine campaign. Before attacking any ship, U-boats would surface and give warning, allowing neutral passengers to escape to lifeboats. Unrestricted submarine warfare stopped—for the moment.

**Propaganda War** Total war also meant controlling public opinion. Even in democratic countries, special boards censored the press. Their aim was to keep complete casualty figures and other discouraging news from reaching the public. Government censors also restricted popular literature, historical writings, motion pictures, and the arts.

Both sides waged a propaganda war. **Propaganda** is the spreading of ideas to promote a cause or to damage an opposing cause. Governments used propaganda to motivate military mobilization, especially in Britain before conscription started in 1916. In France and Germany, propaganda urged civilians to loan money to the government. Later in the war, Allied propaganda played up the brutality of Germany's invasion of Belgium. The British and French press circulated tales of **atrocities**, horrible acts





committed against innocent people. Although some atrocities did occur, often the stories were distorted by exaggerations or completely made up.

**Women Join the War Effort** Women played a critical role in total war. As millions of men left to fight, women took over their jobs and kept national economies going. Many women worked in war industries, manufacturing weapons and supplies. Others joined women's branches of the armed forces. When food shortages threatened Britain, volunteers in the Women's Land Army went to the fields to grow their nation's food.

Nurses shared the dangers of the men whose wounds they tended. At aid stations close to the front lines, nurses often worked around the clock, especially after a big "push" brought a flood of casualties. In her diary, English nurse Vera Brittain describes sweating through 90-degree days in France, "stopping hemorrhages, replacing intestines, and draining and reinserting innumerable rubber tubes" with "gruesome human remnants heaped on the floor."

War work gave women a new sense of pride and confidence. After the war, most women had to give up their jobs to men returning home. Still, they had challenged the idea that women could not handle demanding and dangerous jobs. In many countries, including Britain, Germany, and the United States, women's support for the war effort helped them finally win the right to vote, after decades of struggle.

**✓ Checkpoint** Why was it important for both sides to keep civilian morale high during the war?

## Morale Collapses

Despite inspiring propaganda, by 1917 the morale of troops and civilians had plunged. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy.

**War Fatigue** Long casualty lists, food shortages, and the failure of generals to win promised victories led to calls for peace. Instead of praising the glorious deeds of heroes, war poets began denouncing the leaders whose errors wasted so many lives. British poet and soldier Siegfried Sassoon captured the bitter mood:

### Primary Source

“You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye  
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,  
Sneak home and pray you'll never know  
The hell where youth and laughter go.”  
—Siegfried Sassoon, “Suicide in the Trenches”

As morale collapsed, troops in some French units mutinied. In Italy, many soldiers deserted during the retreat at Caporetto. In Russia, soldiers left the front to join in a full-scale revolution back home.

**Revolution in Russia** Three years of war had hit Russia especially hard. Stories of incompetent generals and corruption eroded public confidence. In March 1917, bread riots in St. Petersburg erupted into a revolution that brought down the Russian monarchy. (You'll read more about the causes and effects of the Russian Revolution in Section 5.)

At first, the Allies welcomed the overthrow of the tsar. They hoped Russia would institute a democratic government and become a stronger

## BIOGRAPHY

### Edith Cavell

Like most ordinary people caught up in war, Edith Cavell (1865–1915) did not plan on becoming a hero. An English nurse, she was in charge of a hospital in Belgium. After the German invasion, Cavell cared for wounded soldiers on both sides. She also helped Allied soldiers escape to the Netherlands.

In 1915, the Germans arrested Cavell for spying. As she faced a firing squad, her last reported words were, “Standing as I do in view of God and Eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness toward anyone.” **Why do you think the British government spread the story of Edith Cavell?**



### Vocabulary Builder

eroded (ee ROHD id)—*vt.* ate into or wore away






### American Troops “Over There”

The arrival of fresh American troops in Europe throughout 1918 helped turn the tide of the war in favor of the Allies. Recruitment posters, like the one above, inspired soldiers to enlist. *How was the experience of American soldiers different from that of other Allied soldiers?*

ally. But later that year V. I. Lenin came to power with a promise to pull Russian troops out of the war. Early in 1918, Lenin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (brest lih TAWFSK) with Germany. The treaty ended Russian participation in World War I.

Russia’s withdrawal had an immediate impact on the war. With Russia out of the struggle, Germany could concentrate its forces on the Western Front. In the spring of 1918, the Central Powers stood ready to achieve the great breakthrough they had sought for so long.

 **Checkpoint** How did Russia’s loss of morale affect the strategic position of the Allies in World War I?

## The United States Declares War

Soon after the Russian Revolution began, however, another event altered the balance of forces. The United States declared war on Germany. Many factors contributed to the decision of the United States to exchange neutrality for war in 1917.

**Why Join the Allies?** Many Americans supported the Allies because of cultural ties. The United States shared a cultural history and language with Britain and sympathized with France as another democracy. On the other hand, some German Americans favored the Central Powers. So did many Irish Americans, who resented British rule of Ireland, and Russian Jewish immigrants, who did not want to be allied with the tsar.

Germany had ceased submarine attacks in 1915 after pressure from President Wilson. However, in early 1917, Germany was desperate to break the stalemate. On February 1, the German government announced that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare. Wilson angrily denounced Germany.

Also, in early 1917, the British intercepted a message from the German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, to his ambassador in Mexico. In the note, Zimmermann authorized his ambassador to propose that Germany would help Mexico “to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona” in return for Mexican support against the United States. Britain revealed the Zimmermann note to the American government. When the note became public, anti-German feeling intensified in the United States.

**Declaring War** In April 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. “We have no selfish ends to serve,” he stated. Instead, he painted the conflict idealistically as a war “to make the world safe for democracy” and later as a “war to end war.”

The United States needed months to recruit, train, supply, and transport a modern army across the Atlantic. But by 1918, about two million American soldiers had joined the war-weary Allied troops fighting on the Western Front. Although relatively few American troops engaged in combat, their arrival gave Allied troops a much-needed morale boost. Just as important to the debt-ridden Allies was American financial aid.



**The Fourteen Points** Though he had failed to maintain American neutrality, Wilson still hoped to be a peacemaker. In January 1918, he issued the **Fourteen Points**, a list of his terms for resolving this and future wars. He called for freedom of the seas, free trade, large-scale reductions of arms, and an end to secret treaties. For Eastern Europe, Wilson favored **self-determination**, the right of people to choose their own form of government. Finally, Wilson urged the creation of a “general association of nations” to keep the peace in the future.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** What are three factors that led the United States to enter the war?

## Victory at Last

A final showdown on the Western Front began in early 1918. The Germans badly wanted to achieve a major victory before eager American troops arrived in Europe. In March, the Germans launched a huge offensive that by July had pushed the Allies back 40 miles. These efforts exhausted the Germans, however, and by then American troops were arriving by the thousands. The Allies then launched a counterattack, slowly driving German forces back across France and Belgium. In September, German generals told the kaiser that the war could not be won.

Uprisings exploded among hungry city dwellers across Germany. German commanders advised the kaiser to step down. William II did so in early November, fleeing into exile in the Netherlands.

By autumn, Austria-Hungary was also reeling toward collapse. As the government in Vienna tottered, the subject nationalities revolted, splintering the empire of the Hapsburgs. Bulgaria and the Ottoman empire also asked for peace.

The new German government sought an **armistice**, or agreement to end fighting, with the Allies. At 11 A.M. on November 11, 1918, the Great War at last came to an end.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** Why did Germany ask the Allies for an armistice in November 1918?

### Celebrating the Armistice

Around the globe, crowds celebrated the end of the war. Here, British and American soldiers and civilians wave the American and French flags in relief and jubilation.



## SECTION 3 Assessment

### Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice  
Web Code: naa-2631

#### Terms, People, and Places

- For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

#### Note Taking

- Reading Skill: Summarize** Use your completed outline to answer the Focus Question: How did the Allies win World War I?

#### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- Summarize** What measures did wartime governments take to control national economies and public opinion?
- Recognize Effects** What impact did wartime failures have on Russia?
- Draw Conclusions** Describe how the entry of United States into the war was a turning point.
- Analyze Information** Reread the poem by Siegfried Sassoon. What does it suggest about the effects of trench warfare?

#### Writing About History

- Quick Write: Gather Evidence to Support Thesis Statement** Suppose you are writing an essay with the following thesis statement “Women played a critical role in World War I.” Write three questions like the two below that would help you gather evidence to support this thesis.
- What types of things did women do during the war?
  - Why was this work important?