

11/16/24

Europe is a small continent. The countries of Europe had nowhere to expand in 1914. Germany especially wanted to make a bigger place for itself in the world. At this time the leader of Germany was Kaiser Wilhelm II. He thought of making Germany the ruler of all Europe.



Wilhelm II of Germany

Russia was the largest nation of Europe. Its ruler was Czar Nicholas II. Nicholas was a weak ruler.



Czar Nicholas II of Russia

## Problems Leading to World War I

France had been beaten by Germany in the War of 1871. France had to give two parts of her nation, Alsace and Lorraine, to Germany. This caused the French to hate the Germans.



Germany thought the French might attack her, so Germany formed an alliance with Italy and Austria-Hungary. In an alliance, one nation helps another in time of war. France knew of this alliance and made an alliance with England and Russia. Soon nation after nation joined one alliance or the other for their protection.



Germany

France

Italy

&

Austria-  
Hungary

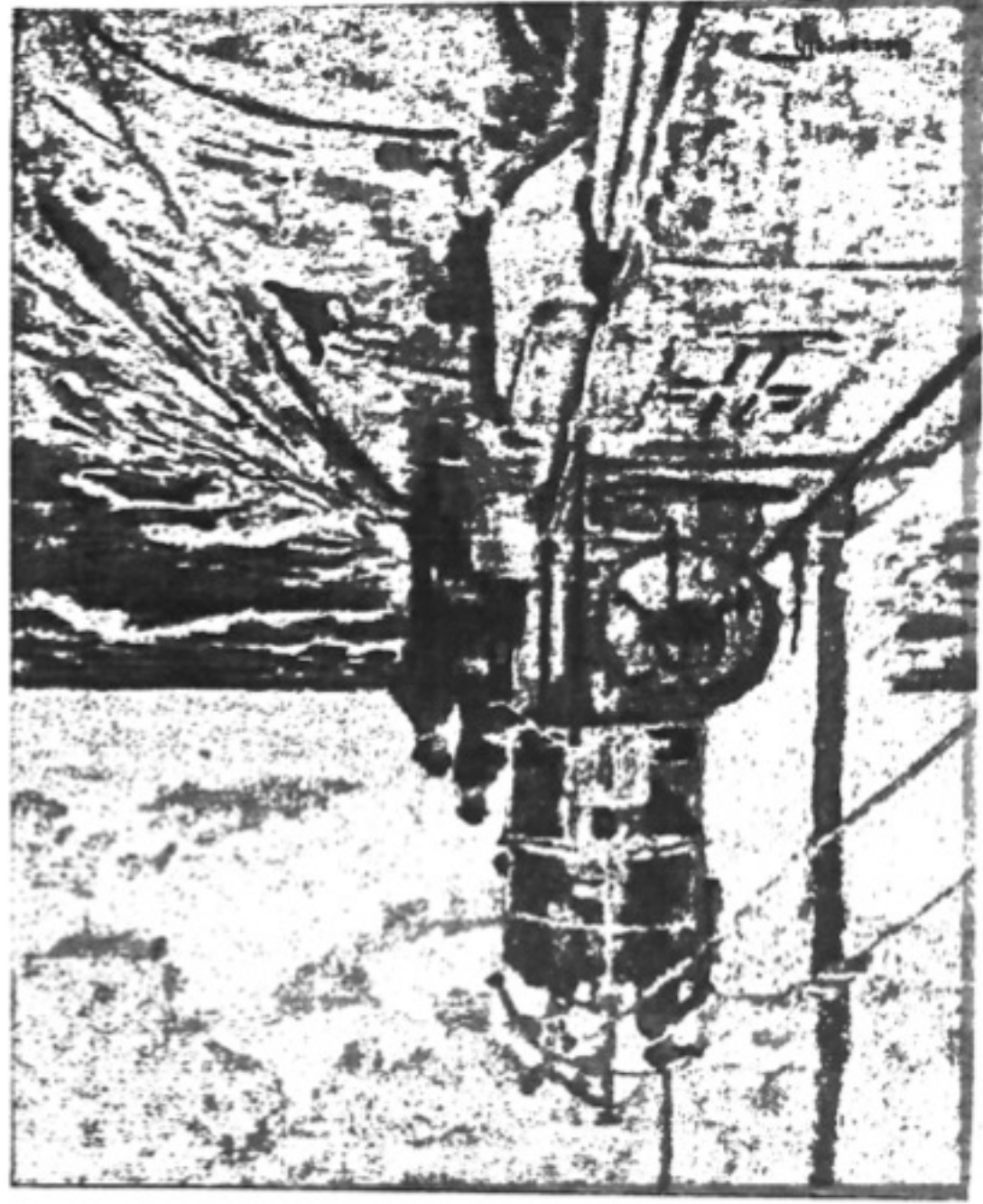
England

&

Russia

President Wilson wanted to keep out of the war. Some Americans did take sides. Early in the war the English navy set up a blockade around the Central Powers. This cut off American trade with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

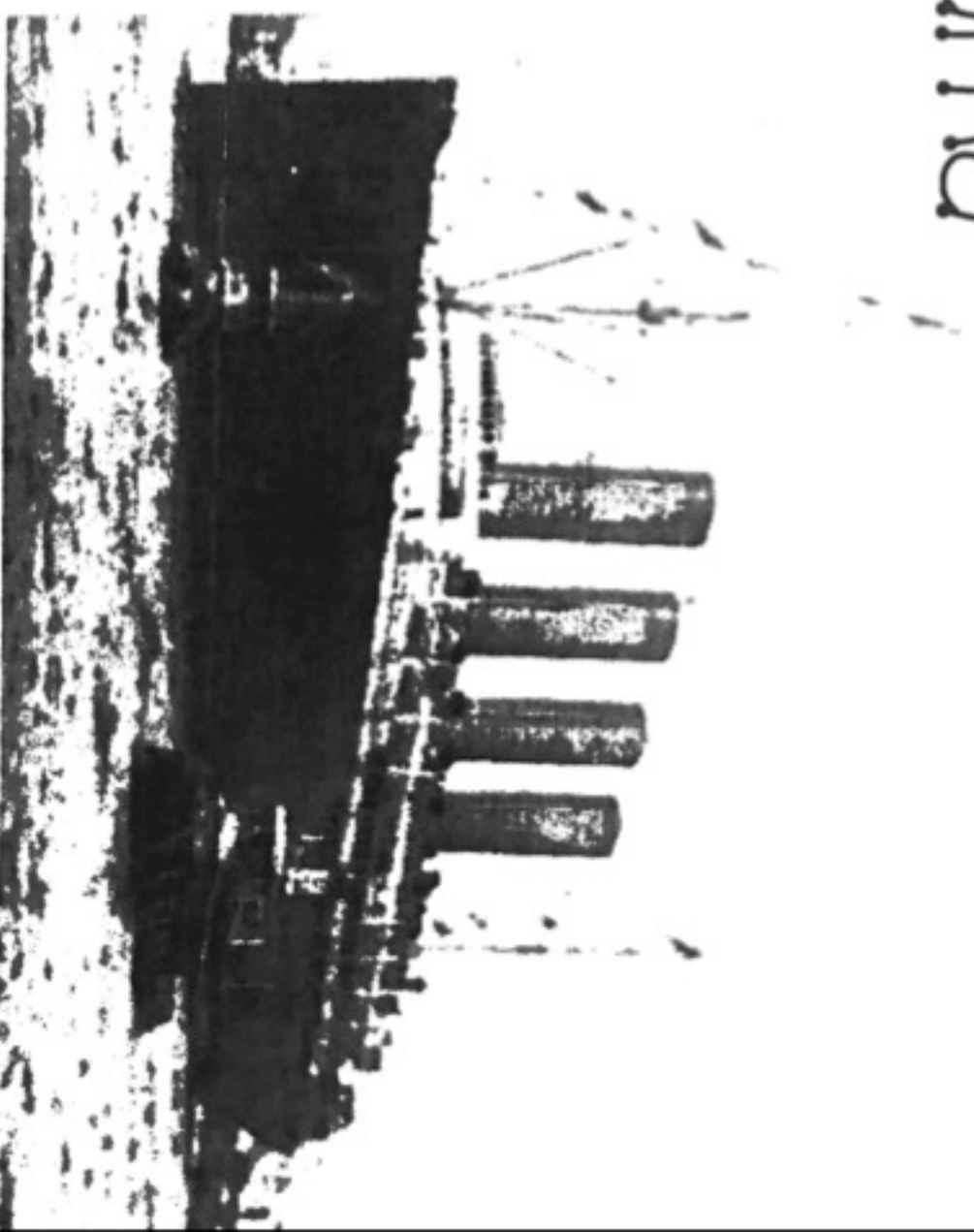
The Germans decided to use submarines called U-boats to break the blockade. The plan was to starve England by cutting off supplies. For their plan to work, the U-boats had to sink unarmed merchant ships without warning and without seeing to the safety of the crew and passengers to do this.



# Lusitania

From 1914 to 1917 more than 250 Americans lost their lives on Allied ships that were sunk. The British ship *Lusitania* was sunk in 1915. The *Lusitania* could cross the Atlantic Ocean in less than 5 days. It was the fastest passenger ship of its time. The *Lusitania* left New York on May 1, 1915 with 1500 people. Later it was discovered that guns and ammunition for the English army were on board.

On May 7, a torpedo struck the ship. One thousand two hundred people were killed including 128 Americans.



Other ships were sunk as well. President Wilson sent notes to Germany demanding that they stop sinking ships or they would risk a war with the United States. The Germans stopped for a short while.

On January 31, 1917 Germany announced they would sink any ships sailing into the war zone. In February the British got hold of a letter from a German named Arthur Zimmermann to the Mexican government that said the Germans were planning to sink American ships. The letter asked Mexico to join the Germans. In return Mexico would get Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona after the war. This letter was later referred to as the Zimmermann Telegram.



# Peace

One hundred thousand Americans died fighting in Europe. Many others were permanently harmed by poison gas and other modern weapons.

Woodrow Wilson sailed to Europe to help write the peace treaty.

Congress rejected the Versailles Peace Treaty and would not let the Americans join the League of Nations. Many Congressmen felt America should stay out of foreign affairs with other nations. Later the U. S. signed a separate peace treaty with Germany.

Wilson's plan for the League of Nations was agreed on. His idea was that nations settle their arguments before war could start. The headquarters would be in Geneva, Switzerland.

Wilson asked for Fourteen points. that he wanted in the peace treaty. Some were:

- no more secret alliances
- freedom on the seas
- all land taken from one nation by another would be returned
- a world body of nations would be formed, so the war could never happen again.

Other allied leaders did not agree with Wilson. Most wanted to punish the Germans. The leaders met many days in Versailles, France. They finally worked out peace treaties with the Central Powers.

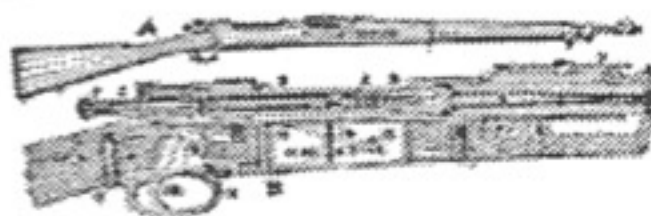
Austria-Hungary was broken up into Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Poland was made from Austrian, German, and Russian land. Yugoslavia was formed. The Germans had to break up industry, the army and navy, and pay all other nations for their war costs.

# Name \_\_\_\_\_

## First World War Weapons

During World War One, a wide variety of weapons were used:

The main weapon used by British soldiers in the trenches was the **bolt-action rifle**. 15 rounds could be fired in a minute and a person 1,400 metres away could be killed.



**Machine guns** needed 4-6 men to work them and had to be on a flat surface. They had the fire-power of 100 guns.

Large field guns (**artillery**) had a long range and could deliver devastating blows to the enemy but needed up to 12 men to work them. They fired **shells** which exploded on impact

The German army were the first to use **chlorine gas** at the battle of Ypres in 1915. Chlorine gas causes a burning sensation in the throat and chest pains. Death is painful – you suffocate! The problem with chlorine gas is that the weather must be right.

**Mustard gas** was the most deadly weapon used. It was fired into the trenches in shells. It is colourless and takes 12 hours to take effect. Effects include – blistering skin, vomiting, sore eyes, internal and external bleeding. Death can take up to 5 weeks.

The **Zeppelin**, also known as blimp, was an airship that was used during the early part of the war in bombing raids by the Germans. They carried machine guns and bombs. However, they were abandoned because they were easy to shoot out of the sky.



**Tanks** were used for the first time in the First World War. They were developed to cope with the conditions on the Western Front. The first tank was called 'Little Willie' and needed a crew of 3. Its maximum speed was 3mph and it could not cross trenches.

The more modern tank was not developed until just before the end of the war. It could carry 10 men, had a revolving turret and could reach 4mph.

**Planes** were also used for the first time. At first they were used to deliver bombs and for spying work but became fighter aircraft armed with machine guns, bombs and some times canons. Fights between two planes in the sky became known as 'dogfights'



**Torpedoes** were used by submarines. The Germans used torpedoes to blow up ships carrying supplies from America to Britain.

The Germans torpedoed the passenger liner Lusitania on May 1st 1915 which sank with a loss of 1,195 lives. Americans were outraged and joined the war in 1917 on the side of the allies.