

WORLD WAR I NEWSPAPER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

# FirstNews

MORE THAN A MILLION READERS



---5 August 1914---

## WE ARE AT WAR



**THESE** were the scenes in Trafalgar Square yesterday, following the declaration of war on Germany.

The Prime Minister had told Germany to get out of Belgium by midnight on 3 August. After the deadline passed, Britain had no choice but to throw her entire Empire's resources into the struggle against Germany in order to ensure victory in defence of Belgium.

Prime Minister Herbert Asquith will give a speech tomorrow in the Houses of Parliament. He will place great emphasis on the efforts of the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, to secure continued peace in the face of German aggression.

The declaration of war was well received by the British public, as shown by our picture, with

by editor Nicky Cox

crowds cheering in Trafalgar Square yesterday. It was officially stated at the Foreign Office on 3 August that Great Britain declared war against Germany at 11pm. The British Ambassador in Berlin has been handed his passport.

### *The King's message*

The King has addressed the following message to Admiral Sir John Jellicoe: "At this grave moment in our national history I send to you and, through you, to the officers and men

of the fleets... my confidence that under your direction they will revive and renew the old glories of the Royal Navy, and prove once again the sure shield of Britain and of her Empire in the hour of trial."

It has been reported that Germany had taken the first hostile step by destroying a British mine-layer.

Now Germany is in a state of war with Great Britain, Russia, France and Belgium. Germany tried to bribe Britain with peace to desert our friends and duty. But Great Britain has chosen the path of honour. Germany's ambition seems to be to control the destiny of the whole of Europe.



# Join up, join up! War to be “over by Christmas”

9 August 1914

THE widespread belief among political leaders and ordinary Britons alike is that this war will be a short one.

by Eddie de Oliveira

Some think that the conflict will be over by Christmas – just four months away – with a great victory for the armed forces of the Triple Entente (the UK, France and Russia) against the aggressors led by Germany.

Two days ago, the Secretary of War, Lord Kitchener, issued a plea for 100,000 new recruits aged between 19 and 30 to join the British military. His call to arms proved exceptionally popular, with early reports from across the country indicating that scores of eager men have queued at enlisting offices for hours to register their names. Several new offices are being opened to cope with the demand. At the Great Scotland Yard recruiting headquarters, mounted police were called in to hold back the enormous crowds.

The spirit among Britons is upbeat, with many of the young men in villages and towns up and down the country saying they are delighted to be part of the war effort.

Prime Minister Herbert Asquith appointed Lord Kitchener as Secretary of War in recognition of his work as Commander-in-Chief of India and his success in battle in Sudan and the Second Boer War from 1900 to 1902. His experiences in South Africa have given him the necessary expertise to lead the war effort.

Meanwhile, Parliament yesterday passed the Defence of the Realm Act, which is



A recruitment drive in Trafalgar Square, London

designed to aid the war effort. Among other things, the Act allows the Government to make sure that all factories can be used by the Navy or Army if they need them for the production of arms or equipment. The Act also prevents Britons from communicating with the enemy in any way that puts British armed forces at risk.



Crowds gather outside a recruitment office in London

## First British vessel sunk

7 August 1914

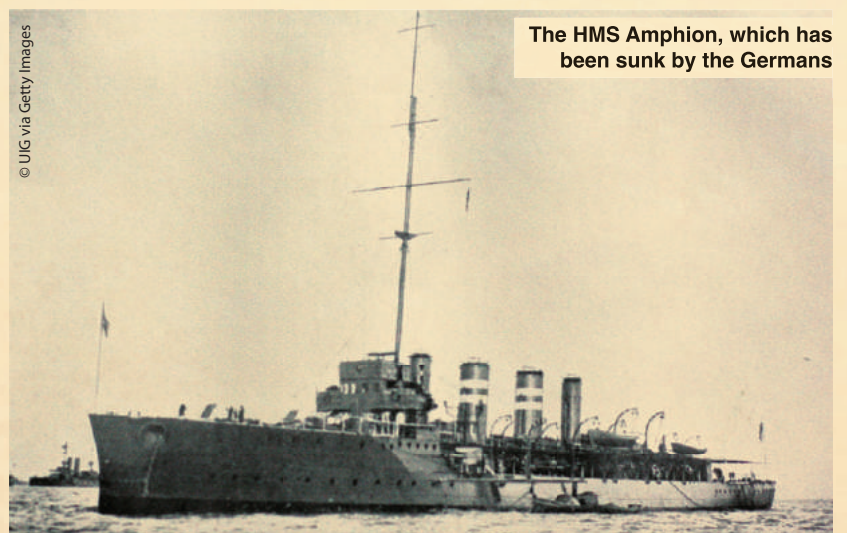
THE Secretary of the Admiralty says that HMS Amphion has become the first British ship to be sunk by the German navy in this war.

Amphion, a Royal Navy Scout cruiser, was patrolling in the North Sea when she struck a mine in the early hours of yesterday morning, killing 150 British sailors and 18 crew members from a German ship who had earlier been taken captive.

There are believed to be lots of survivors who have been seized by German sailors.

In other news, the first members of the British Expeditionary Force are expected to land in France today. Squadrons of the Royal

Flying Corps should follow shortly after, perhaps as soon as next week.



The HMS Amphion, which has been sunk by the Germans

© UIG via Getty Images



## USA to remain neutral

20 August 1914

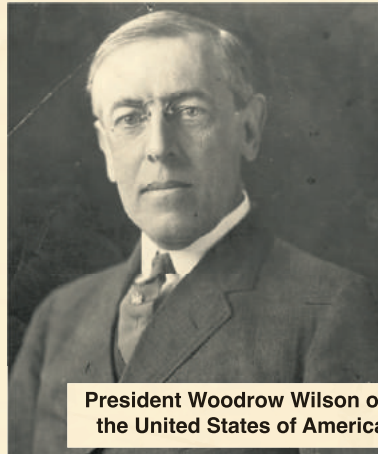
THE American President, Woodrow Wilson, yesterday declared that the USA would not take sides in the war.

Speaking to Congress, Mr Wilson said that "every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned."

The President pointed out that many American citizens and their ancestors come from countries that are currently engaged in conflict, including Britain, Germany and France.

He said: "some will wish one nation, others another, to succeed in the momentous struggle," before going on to call on Americans to think first and foremost of the United States, and not take sides.

President Wilson appears to be concerned that the conflict could affect relations between different communities in America. "The people of the United States," he said, "whose love of their country and whose loyalty to its government should unite them as Americans all, may be divided in camps of hostile opinion. Such divisions amongst us would be fatal to our peace of mind."



President Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America

## Japan declares war

24 August 1914

JAPAN yesterday declared war on Germany.

The Asian power, a British ally since 1902, was approached for support by Britain earlier this month, in order to help out with the destruction of German Empire vessels around China.

Japan, which is keen to gain control over Germany's territories in the Pacific Ocean, sent an ultimatum to Germany on 14 August. It demanded the following:

(1) That the German navy withdraw armed vessels of all kinds immediately from Japanese and Chinese waters, and to disarm at once those which cannot be withdrawn.

(2) To deliver on a date not later than 15 September to the Imperial Japanese authorities, the entire leased territory of Kiao-Chau, with a view to the eventual restoration of the same to China.

The Germans never replied to the ultimatum, so Prime Minister Count Okuma formally declared war yesterday. Kiao-Chau is a territory in Imperial China that has belonged to Germany since 1898. It is the home base of the German Navy's East Asia Squadron.

Japanese soldiers outside the Imperial Palace



## Germans destroy Belgian city

Crowds gather in the rain in the Place Rogier, Brussels, to watch German troops as they march into the Belgian capital on 20 August



30 August 1914

THERE are reports that the German army has destroyed much of the Belgian city of Louvain.

The city fell to the German First Army on 19 August. Germany has continued its invasion of Belgium, despite the country being neutral and worldwide criticism of the actions of the German leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II.

A Belgian force attempted to repel the Germans

on 25 August, but was met with a brutal response. Members of the German army are said to have burnt and looted large sections of Louvain, with libraries containing ancient texts ruined and the university library utterly wrecked. Over 300,000 books at the university are believed to have been destroyed.

Reports also indicate there have been massacres of local people, with mass shootings of men, women and children in the city. The atrocity in Louvain does not appear to have changed the German strategy – their army continues to march through Belgium.



# Allies triumph in first trench battle

**13 September 1914**

THE German army has been stopped in its tracks by a spirited fightback from French and British forces at the Battle of the Marne.

by Eddie de Oliveira

Reports from France suggest that this has been a stunning victory for the Allies in what turned out to be the first trench battle of the conflict so far.

Just a few days ago, it seemed likely that the Germans would conquer Paris following their quick march through Belgium and northeast France. They had got to within 30 miles of Paris on Sunday 6 September. The French and British forces had failed to stop the advance, and the French government had left Paris, expecting the Germans to occupy the capital within hours.

But French general Joseph Joffre led a regrouping of the Allied forces by the Marne River, east of Paris. General Joffre launched a counter-strike, with assistance from British forces led by Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Some 150,000 French soldiers attacked the German First Army on 6 September, which resulted in the Germans opening up a 30-mile wide gap in their lines. The BEF and French Fifth Army took full advantage and went through this break, attacking the German Second Army.

## *Troops in taxi cabs*

The Germans regained the upper hand soon after, but 6,000 French reserve soldiers – who arrived by taxi cab from Paris – made the difference. The German



General Joseph Joffre led the Allied fight

forces began to retreat on 9 September. They travelled some 40 miles before digging trenches and fighting back. The British and French soldiers successfully defeated the Germans at Marne, regaining territory that had fallen to the Germans days before.

Early figures suggest around 263,000 Allied soldiers were casualties, including over 12,000 British troops. It is unclear whether the trench warfare strategy will become a feature of this war but, for now, the Allies are rejoicing at their first major victory over the Germans – one which puts the German advance through Europe firmly in check.

# British troops secure oil supplies



**24 November 1914**

THE British Army yesterday tightened its grip in the Middle East by defeating the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Basra.

The victory secured crucial oil supplies for the Royal Navy that will make a huge difference in the war at sea.

The British Indian Expeditionary Force sailed from Bombay to the Persian Gulf on 16 October, in order to defend the region. Some 5,000 Indian soldiers accompanied British troops. The Battle of Basra then started on 11 November and victory was secured on 21 November.

Basra, which is located on the River Euphrates near the Persian Gulf, was under Ottoman control. The Ottomans launched an attack on the British base on the morning of 11 November, but were quickly defeated with heavy losses.

An extra 7,000 troops arrived from India over the next three days, providing the reinforcements required

by General Sir Arthur Barrett, who led the British and Indian troops. Despite horrendous weather conditions, including heavy rain and heat mirages, the British and Indian soldiers triumphed with the help of heavy 18-pounder artillery. The Ottomans retreated, and Indian troops of the 104th Wellesley's Rifles and 117th Mahrattas, under the leadership of General Barrett, took control of Basra on the evening of 21 November.

The British and Indian forces suffered around 500 casualties, while the Ottomans suffered over 1,000. The victory strikes a major blow against the Ottoman-German Alliance, which was signed on 2 August 1914.

This result may also disrupt the construction of the Berlin to Baghdad railway, designed to provide Germany with a direct supply of oil from the Middle East.



# Christmas truces spread



British troops in trenches along the Western Front. War was put on hold while they exchanged gifts with German soldiers

**30 December 1914**

**HUNDREDS of thousands of British and German soldiers in the trenches of the Western Front have spontaneously dropped their weapons and called a series of truces over Christmas.**

The shock move took British and German generals by surprise. Permission didn't come from the Secretary of War, Lord Kitchener.

The Western Front stretches for 400 miles, from the Swiss border with France through to the North Sea coast in northern France. Fortified trenches have been built along the front by both the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire) and Allied forces.

## *Giving gifts*

Soldiers dropped their weapons and exchanged gifts, with several even venturing into the 'no-man's-land' between trenches to shake hands with their enemies. The spontaneous ceasefires have been taking place regularly since Christmas Eve, with up to 100,000 troops thought to have taken part.

The extraordinary show of affection between soldiers was started by German soldiers who held up Christmas trees from one of their trenches. After seeing the trees, some of which were lit up by candles, the British soldiers began shouting across from their trenches. It wasn't long before the men of the British and German forces walked out of their trenches and exchanged small gifts, handshakes and good wishes.

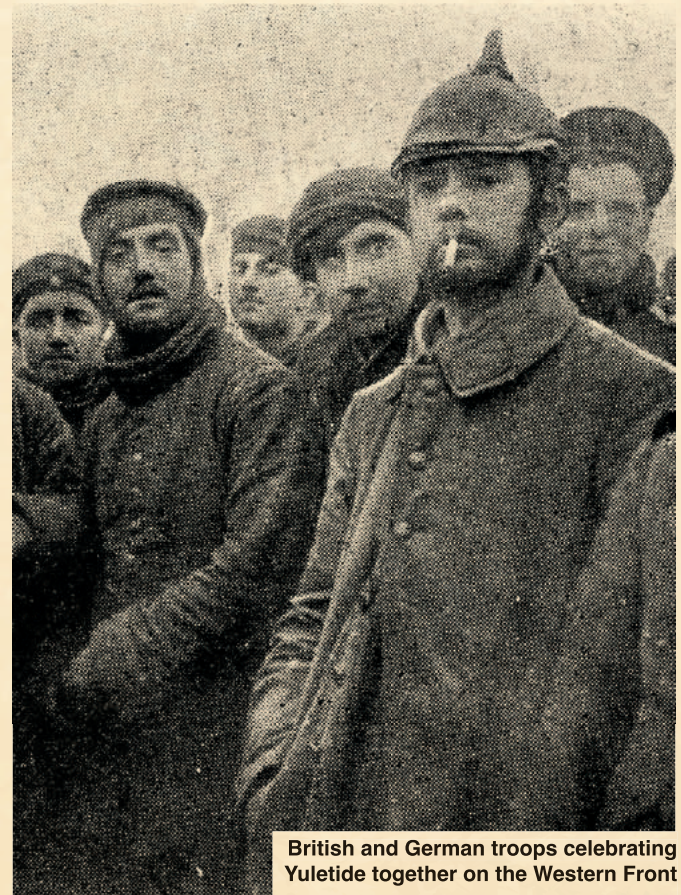
The gifts were anything the troops could get their hands on. Buttons, food, tobacco, and alcohol were all given. It is believed that the commander of the British forces, Sir John French, disapproved of the soldiers' actions, while General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, commander of the British II Corps, issued "strict orders" that friendliness between opposing sides was not allowed. "To finish this war quickly, we must keep up the fighting spirit," he said.

## *Football with the enemy*

As well as celebrating Yuletide with trees and presents, reports indicate that soldiers of both sides sang Christmas carols together and played football matches against each other.

The truce has also allowed for burials of fallen soldiers to take place. British troops killed behind German lines were brought back to the Allied side for a dignified burial, and vice versa. On Christmas Day, German and British troops even held joint funerals.

While some truces along the Western Front are believed to still be in place, the vast majority of soldiers have resumed the fight – against the same men they were exchanging gifts and singing carols with just a few days ago.



British and German troops celebrating Yuletide together on the Western Front

*"When German soldiers came out of their trenches and walked across unarmed... what were our men to do? Shoot? You could not shoot unarmed men" – Brigadier Count Edward Gleichen*



# The key players: who's who?

## Kaiser Wilhelm II - Germany

The ruler of the German Empire and kingdom of Prussia, Kaiser Wilhelm II has long been suspicious of Britain, France and Russia. The Kaiser is the grandson of Queen Victoria of England. He has been emperor of Germany since 1888, and has supported the growth and strengthening of the German armed forces – especially the navy. He supported South Africa against Britain in the Second Boer War and has been very critical of King Edward VII, even describing him as “Satan”.



## Tsar Nicholas II - Russia

The Tsar is a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm II, and husband to Princess Alexandra, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Nicholas II has ruled Russia since 1894, and was totally humiliated by losing the 1904-5 war with Japan. Despite his relation to Wilhelm, Nicholas sees Germany's alliance with Austria-Hungary and Italy as a threat to Russia, and therefore agreed to join forces with Britain and France.



## The Black Hand – Serbia

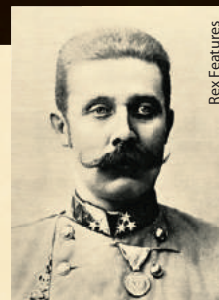
A secret group formed in 1901 by Serb nationalists to campaign for Bosnian Serbs to be able to join Serbia. The group believes that all the countries that contain a majority of Slav people should be united into a nation called Greater Serbia, which would be made up of several territories, including Bosnia and Herzegovina.



The men accused of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand being led to the courtroom. Gavrilo Princip is front centre

## Archduke Franz Ferdinand – Austria-Hungary

The Archduke was heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and keen to strengthen the Austrian army. He was assassinated by 19-year-old Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip (see The Black Hand) on 28 June 1914. In 1908, Ferdinand oversaw the takeover of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This outraged many Serbs, who wanted the land to be part of a giant Serb state rather than part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Austria-Hungary saw the assassination of the Archduke as a direct challenge to their authority by Serbia. On 28 July, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.



Rex Features

## Herbert Asquith – Great Britain

British Prime Minister since 1908, Mr Asquith is a member of the Liberal Party. His Government has strengthened the Navy in response to the expansion of the German navy in recent years. He is a supporter of Home Rule in Ireland, a country that is currently ruled by the British Government. In May of this year, Parliament passed a bill to establish Home Rule and let Irish people govern Ireland, but the outbreak of war has put those plans on hold.



## Map of Europe 1914

### ALLIES

- Great Britain
- France
- Belgium
- Russia

### CENTRAL POWERS

- Germany
- Austria-Hungary
- Ottoman Empire  
(not shown here, see p4 Middle East)

### NEUTRAL

- Sweden
- Spain
- Denmark
- Netherlands
- Portugal



# Life on the front line

AS this war progresses, it is becoming clear that trench warfare is featuring heavily.

It was at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914 that the Germans first 'dug in' to avoid losing ground. The Allies then dug their own trenches to protect themselves. This short-term strategy looks like it is now becoming a key part of most battles. Miles of trenches have now been dug, stretching throughout Belgium and northern France. Here's a glimpse of what life is like in the trenches for the lads on the front line.

With limited ways to wash their clothes, most soldiers suffer lice, which cause them to itch constantly.

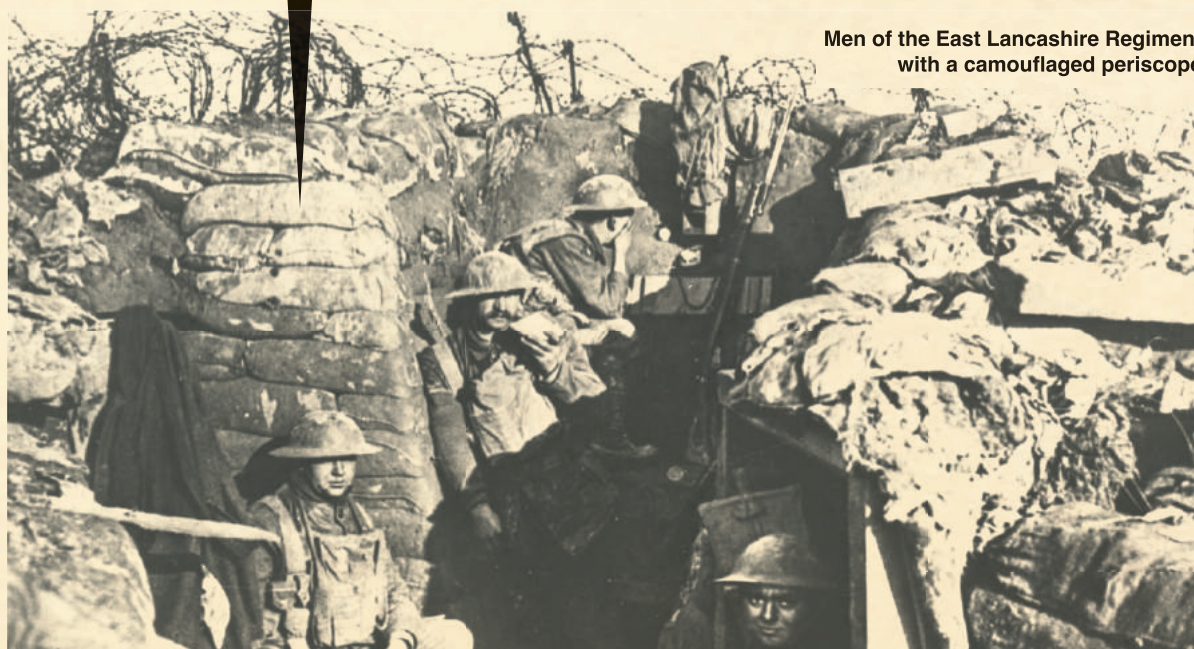
It's been reported that, in many places, there is a breakfast truce between the two sides, so the soldiers can eat their breakfast in peace.

The soldiers have to suffer the constant and terrifying noise of machine gun fire and explosions.

The front wall of a trench is on average around 10ft high and often lined with sandbags.

Rows of trenches are connected by communicating trenches, so that soldiers, supplies and messages can be moved between them.

Soldiers often use periscopes and mirrors to see above the trench wall safely.



Men of the East Lancashire Regiment with a camouflaged periscope



British forces in a narrow trench



A staff officer in a dugout

Trenches are dug in a zigzag pattern, so that if the enemy enters a trench, bullets cannot be fired straight down the trench.

Trenches are often infested with rats. It's said that these rats can grow to the size of cats!

Some trenches have underground rooms, known as dugouts, below the trench floor.

As well as the enemy, soldiers also have to battle against the weather. Heavy rain can make the trenches extremely muddy and even cause the trench walls to collapse.

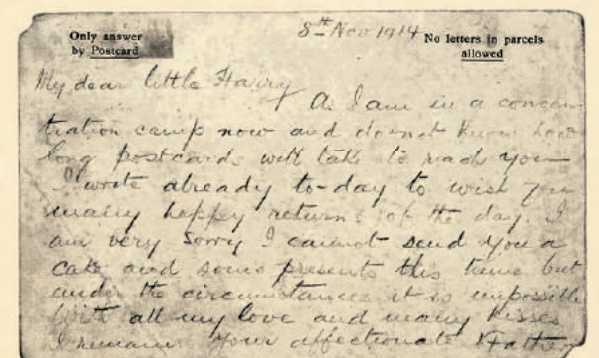
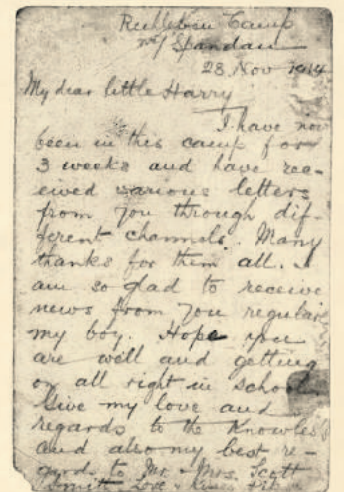
The area between the two sides' trenches has become known as 'no-man's-land' because soldiers do not go there, and those that do are likely to be shot.

## Readers' stories

HERE are two young readers who have shared their wartime experiences with us.

### A letter from dad

Young Harry Manning's dad, Fred Manning, is being held in a German prisoner of war camp. Harry has been writing to his dad and has received replies. Harry's dad tells him: "I am so glad to receive news from you regularly, my boy." On Harry's birthday, a postcard from his dad says: "I am very sorry I cannot send you a cake and some presents, but under the circumstances it is impossible. With all my love and many kisses, I remain your affectionate father."



### A boy and a bear

Christopher Robin Milne has made an unusual new friend – Winnie the bear! Winnie is a tame black bear who is the mascot of a regiment of soldiers from Winnipeg in Canada. Winnie was left at London Zoo by her owner, Lieutenant Harry Colebourn, when his regiment went off to battle in France. She is very affectionate and has been making great friends with the children who have visited. Winnie especially loves golden syrup and condensed milk! Here's a photo of Christopher, who visited the zoo with his dad, the author A. A. Milne... who knows, he may even write about Christopher's adventures with Winnie!



Christopher Robin Milne with Winnie the bear



# U-boats begin British Isles blockade

19 February 1915

**THE German blockade of Britain began yesterday, with all vessels in British waters now considered valid targets for attack.**

U-boats will be used to launch torpedo strikes, and the German navy is believed to have already planted lots of mines. The blockade was announced on 4 February, in the following statement by the German Chief of Marine Staff, Hugo Von Pohl:

"The waters round Great Britain and Ireland, including the English Channel, are hereby proclaimed a war region. On and after 18 February, every enemy merchant vessel found in this region will be destroyed, without it always being possible to warn the crews or passengers of the dangers threatening. Neutral ships will also incur danger in the war region."

The Americans, who conduct much trade with Britain by sea, have strongly protested to the German government. The Allies have been operating a blockade of Germany since August 1914, which is said to be contributing to food shortages among German citizens.

There were no reports of any attacks yesterday, but two vessels were struck earlier in the week in the English Channel outside the French port of Le Havre: a British ship carrying coal was torpedoed on Monday 15 February, and a French steamer was overtaken and destroyed on Tuesday.



German navy sailors on board a surfaced U-boat

## TURN YOUR SILVER INTO BULLETS

AT THE POST OFFICE



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## German army uses poison gas for the first time

25 April 1915

**THERE are reports from the front line that Germany has used deadly poison gas for the first time in this war.**



The Second Battle of Ypres is being fought by troops of the French and British Empires against the Germans, who launched an offensive on 21 April. Intense fighting has continued ever since as both sides fight for control of the strategically crucial town of Ypres. The town was taken by the Allies at the First Battle of Ypres.

The latest battle took a deadly twist at sunrise on the second day, when the Germans unleashed chlorine gas. After a short artillery bombardment, over 5,000 canisters containing 169 tons of the chemical weapon are believed to have been aimed at Allied troops. A greenish-yellow mist was seen drifting over Allied lines.

Thousands of casualties are reported among French troops who inhaled the gas. Many of those died of asphyxiation (lack of oxygen) within just ten minutes. Others were blinded, suffered skin blisters or died slowly as their lungs filled with liquid. Those who escaped death were left panic-stricken, dizzy and sick.

A four-mile stretch of the Western Front has been affected by the poison. When the Germans advanced through the gap in Allied lines caused by the gas poisoning, they rounded up thousands of prisoners, too dazed by the gas to fight back.



# RMS Lusitania torpedoed

**8 May 1915**

**THE British passenger ship RMS Lusitania has been sunk by German torpedoes off the coast of Ireland.**

A German U-boat struck the ocean liner as it was approaching Liverpool after a journey from New York. Over 1,000 passengers and crew are believed to have died, including 128 US citizens and dozens of children. The attack has placed US-German relations in crisis.

The Lusitania entered the Irish Channel yesterday. Its captain slowed the ship to 15 knots because of thick fog, despite orders to travel at full speed in the U-boat war zone around Great Britain.

Details remain sketchy, but at least one torpedo was fired without warning into the starboard side of the ship at around two o'clock yesterday afternoon. The ship's owners,



The ocean liner RMS Lusitania has been torpedoed by a German U-boat

the Cunard Line, has stated that the ship sank 40 minutes after being hit.

Between 500 and 600 people have been saved from the liner and taken to Irish hospitals for urgent treatment. There is speculation that the German

attack on a non-military vessel carrying so many US citizens may be a deliberate attempt to provoke the Americans into the war. President Wilson was informed of the attack immediately, but has made no comment so far.

# Allies land at Gallipoli

**26 April 1915**

**THE Allies have landed on five sites at the Gallipoli peninsula in the Ottoman Empire.**

British, Australian and New Zealand troops landed yesterday, while French troops arrived as a diversionary tactic further south.

The peninsula is to the north of the Dardanelles, a waterway that forms part of the route from the Aegean Sea to the Black Sea. The Dardanelles is currently under Ottoman control. The Allies think that seizing this area is vitally important in order to give them a sea route from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Russia, an important ally of Britain and France, has a stretch of coast along the Black Sea.

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landing yesterday did not go according to plan. The expected Allied advance beyond the landing sites has not yet been possible. Difficult terrain and narrow beaches gave the waiting Ottomans an advantage, and they launched a large-scale attack on the 17,000 Anzacs. Thousands of casualties have been reported as the Ottomans used rapid machine gun fire from their vantage point overlooking the beaches.

At one of the landing sites, known as 'Y Beach', 1,200 out of a force of 1,500 Allied men were killed or wounded. At 'W Beach', 600 of the 1,000 men were casualties.



Allied troops landing at Ari Burnu in Gallipoli

# Italy joins the war

**24 May 1915**

**ITALY'S Prime Minister, Antonio Salandra, declared war on Austria-Hungary yesterday.**

The Italians had been part of the Triple Alliance, along with Germany and Austria-Hungary, since 1882.

But upon the outbreak of war last year, Italy chose to remain neutral. The decision yesterday to side with the Allies is thought to be a direct result of the Treaty of London, signed last month by the Triple Entente nations – Britain, France and Russia.

The Treaty granted Italy control over several areas of Europe, as well as the German colonies in Asia and Africa. One of the conditions of these territorial gains was that Italy declare war on Austria-Hungary and Germany.



Italian Prime Minister Antonio Salandra

# New UK Government

**26 May 1915**

**THE Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, has invited Conservatives to form a coalition Government.**

It is the first coalition Government in Britain since 1852, and it came about following the collapse of Mr Asquith's Liberal Government. The chronic shortage of artillery shells and the struggles of the Gallipoli campaign contributed to the Liberal collapse. The new cabinet features Liberal, Conservative and Labour MPs.



# U-boats attack UK

17 August 1915

**GERMAN U-boats have fired several shells at three towns on the northwest coast of England.**

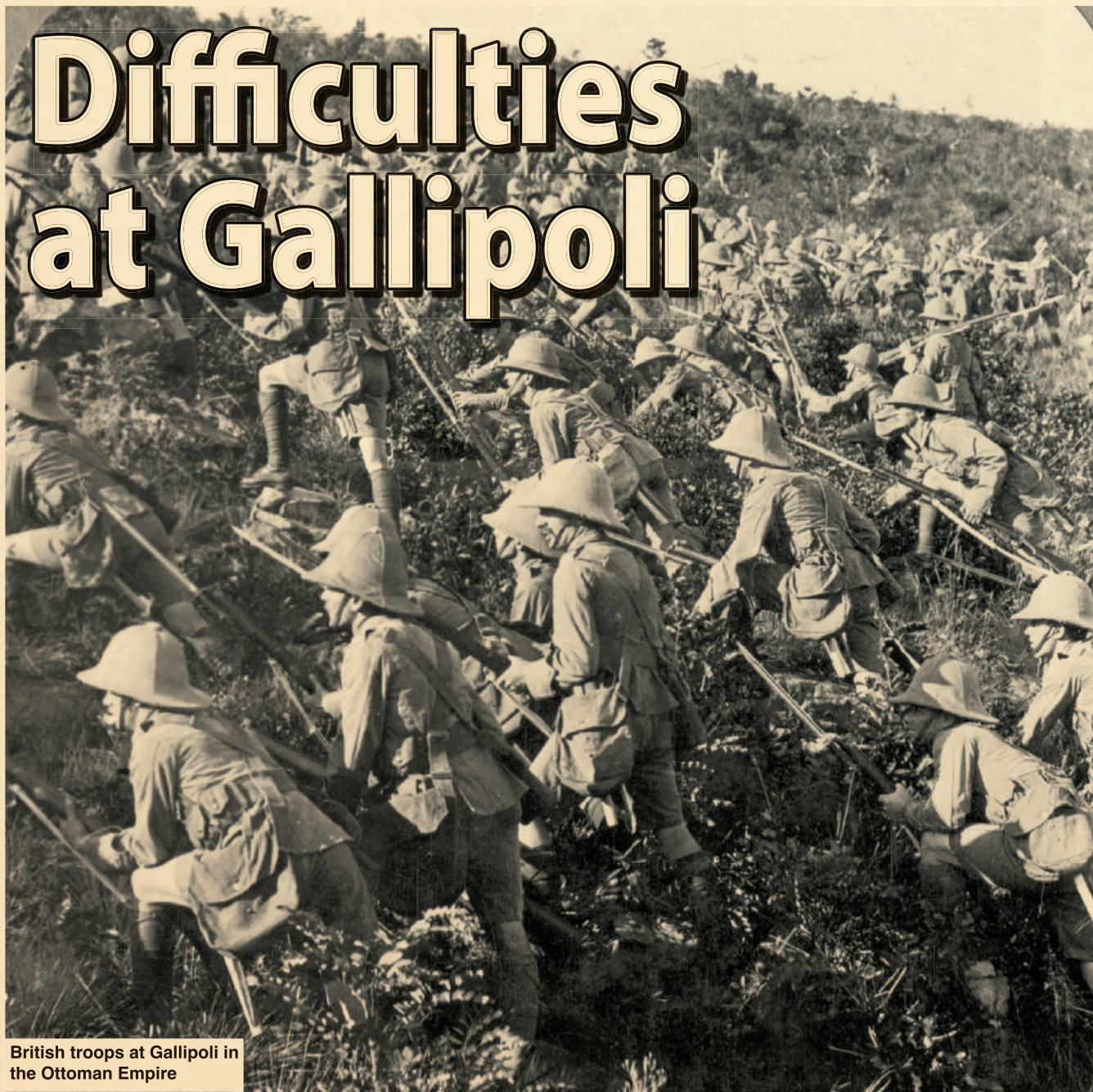
In the early hours of yesterday morning, attacks were reported at Whitehaven, Harrington and Parton, along the Cumberland coast. Shells hit the railway embankment north of Parton, but fortunately this did not cause major disruption to rail services. Fires broke out at Whitehaven and Harrington, but they were quickly brought under control and no casualties have been reported.

Although there are believed to be three U-boats operating in the Irish Sea, this is the first time an attack has been launched on England's west coast. A major concern for military chiefs and the Government will be how best to secure Britain's maritime defences following this surprise strike.



A German U-boat prepares to fire

# Difficulties at Gallipoli



British troops at Gallipoli in the Ottoman Empire

22 August 1915

**THE British campaign on the Gallipoli peninsula is in trouble after the Ottomans won the Battle of Scimitar Hill.**

Over 5,000 casualties have been reported in just one day of fighting. Scimitar Hill is on the southern edge of the Suvla sector in Gallipoli, on the Dardanelles strait.

With three large divisions of troops involved, this was the largest one-day attack mounted by Allied forces at Gallipoli. The chief purpose of the battle was to enable the British to link the territory between the Ari Burnu and Suvla Bay regions.

The battle came after a series of failures in the British attempt to advance and take territory from the Ottomans following the landings on 25 April.

The Battle of Scimitar Hill began with heavy artillery bombardment. In the thick fog it was hard for the British to see where they were firing, whereas the Ottomans had a clear view of their enemy.

The 1st Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers succeeded in capturing the summit of Scimitar Hill, but soon came under fire from Ottomans positioned higher up to the east and the south. The Fusiliers retreated, and one last attempt to retake the hill later in the afternoon ended in failure.

Allied casualties at the Battle of Scimitar Hill number 5,300 – over a third of the total number of troops who fought. Many of these were wounded or killed after British artillery shrapnel caused surrounding bushes to catch fire. The Ottomans suffered 2,600 casualties.



# Heroic British nurse executed

13 October 1915

**A BRITISH nurse serving in Belgium has been executed by the Germans for treason.**

Edith Cavell, 49, nursed soldiers from both sides and is believed to have helped more than 200 Allied soldiers escape German-occupied Belgium since the war began last year.

A nurse since the age of 20, Ms Cavell moved to Belgium in 1907. Upon the outbreak of war, she joined the Red Cross. The medical institute she worked at was turned into a hospital for wounded troops of all nations.

Ms Cavell helped British, French and Belgian troops escape into neutral Netherlands. From there, the soldiers were smuggled into Britain. She was arrested

on 5 August and kept in solitary confinement until she was brought to trial on 7 October, before being found guilty of treason and sentenced to death on 11 October. She accepted her fate and did not protest.

An official from the United States stationed in Brussels tried to persuade the Germans to pardon Ms Cavell. The USA remains neutral and so was thought to be able to put the case for Ms Cavell's release better than Britain.

The American official said that he told his German counterparts that this murder would stir all civilised countries with horror and disgust."



Nurse Edith Cavell

According to the British chaplain who visited Ms Cavell in prison, these were some of her last words: "I am thankful to have had these ten weeks of quiet to get ready. I expected my sentence and I believe it was just."

# Huge British offensive in Loos, France

15 October 1915

**THE Battle of Loos, which began on 25 September, has ended in stalemate. It was the largest British offensive of the year so far.**

Loos is located in the northeast of France, close to the Belgian border. General Sir Douglas Haig led the Allied effort.

It can now be reported that the shortage in shells made available for the British Army was a point of grave concern to General Haig. This shortage meant it wasn't as strong as it might have been. But British troops outnumbered the Germans by up to seven to one, and so the opportunity to launch an attack on the German lines was seen as too good to miss.

Many of the British troops called into action were members of the New Army – volunteers who responded to Lord Kitchener's call for men to sign up to the armed forces.

Following the artillery bombardment, the British forces released over 5,000 cylinders (140 tons) of chlorine gas – the first known use of a chemical weapon by the British. Tragically, in some places the wind blew the gas back into the British trenches. Over 2,600 soldiers were injured as a result, and seven are reported to have died.

Overall, the first day of the battle proved successful for General Haig, with the British capturing Loos on their way to the city of Lens.



British troops interrogate a German soldier during the Battle of Loos

However, delays in the arrival of reinforcements slowed progress, allowing the Germans time to send in their own backup soldiers.

The British advance was met with continuous German machine-gun fire over a period of several days, leading to mass casualties. A retreat was ordered by General Haig, and the battle did not start again until 13 October. Further heavy losses of British troops, as well as dreadful weather conditions, led to the offensive being cancelled.

In total, the British and Indian armies suffered almost 60,000 casualties, and the Germans 26,000. Early reports suggest the son of author Rudyard Kipling, John, was among those killed in action.

# Haig takes charge

19 December 1915

**THE War Office has announced that General Sir Douglas Haig has become Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium.**

He will officially begin his new role on 19 December. General Haig takes over from Field Marshal Sir John French. Sir John will now take up a new post commanding British forces stationed in the UK.

Sir Douglas Haig, aged 54, has served his country in several conflicts, including Sudan in 1898, and the Boer War, where he was a cavalry leader. He commanded the 1st Army Corps for much of this war, where his work at the Battle of the Marne in particular received much praise. He was made a general last November, after further success at the Battle of Ypres.



General Sir Douglas Haig



# ON HER THEIR LIVES DEPEND



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MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS

**WOMEN  
MUNITION  
WORKERS**

**Enrol at once**



# Women of Britain: doing their bit

WITH the men of Britain leaving their jobs to serve in the war, women here at home have been stepping up to fill the gaps in the workforce. Jobs that we'd usually think of as being done by men, from police officers to painters, are now being taken on by women. Here's a snapshot from around the country of just some of the jobs women are doing. What a great job they're doing, too!



**POLICE FORCE:** Newly recruited policewomen are reporting for duty across the country.



**TRAIN STATION:** These ladies are taking their share of the load by working as porters at Marylebone station, London.



**HOME REPAIR:** You may be used to seeing men doing painting jobs like this, but these women are more than up to it!



**FARM:** It's an all-female team at this farm in Suffolk.



**FIRE BRIGADE:** Members of this women's fire brigade are preparing for a drill, so they're ready for an emergency.



**FACTORY:** This woman, like many others, has a job in a factory making weapons and other military equipment that's vital to the war effort.



**WINDOW CLEANING:** It's off to work for these women window cleaners in Piccadilly, London.





# SMITHSONIAN





ALFRED  
LEEY

“WANTS  
YOUT”

JOIN YOUR COUNTRY'S ARMY!  
GOD SAVE THE KING

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# New law forces men to join the war

**28 January 1916**

**HUNDREDS of thousands of men will have to join the war effort now, after the Government passed a new law.**

Signing up to fight is now compulsory for every unmarried man who is between the ages 18 and 41 on 15 August last year. All of these men – except those who are unable to take part in battle or have strong views against it – will be expected to serve on the front line. Men who object to fighting will still be expected to fill non-combat roles in the war effort, such as stretcher-bearers or cooks.

Those individuals who object to the call-up have the right to apply to a Military Service Tribunal to request to be let off, but this will usually only be temporary.

The Military Service Act became law yesterday after months of complaints from experts that the British Army simply wasn't big enough. The new act does not apply to married men, those widowed with children or religious ministers.

A volunteer campaign saw posters branded with the phrase "Your Country Needs You" put up across the country, but it failed to reach its target of a million new soldiers. Despite criticism, the Government prepared the new law because it feared there was no other way to strengthen the country's armed forces.

Even though the law has been introduced, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith knows that not everyone agrees with it.

"There was considerable controversy in the early autumn of last year as to whether we could best do our duty in the War by persevering with our Voluntary System," he told Parliament earlier this month.

Between August 1914 and the start of this year, approximately three million men volunteered for military service.



A crowd of young men queue at the Army Recruiting Office

## Allies succeed in epic sea battle

**3 June 1916**

**THE Royal Navy has seen off an attempt by the German High Seas Fleet to seize control of the North Sea during the Battle of Jutland.**

In the first major ocean conflict of the war, 151 ships from Great Britain, Australia and Canada exchanged fire with 99 German vessels. Over 6,000 Allied troops are feared to have died in the battle, which started on 31 May. Early reports indicate that around 2,500 Germans were killed.

Jutland is part of Denmark, a country which has remained neutral in this war. Control of the North Sea is seen as crucial to both sides in this conflict.

British Admiral Sir John Jellicoe's men worked around the clock to keep control of the North Sea, which reaches the English and Scottish coastline and runs between Britain and mainland Europe. With fewer men and ships than Britain, the enemy tried a 'divide and conquer' strategy ahead of full combat.

Much of this battle took place overnight. In the early hours of 1 June, as the Allies took the upper hand during the battle, the German fleet retreated.

Fourteen British vessels were sunk. The Germans lost eleven – but many of their heavy ships suffered significant damage.

Over 100 British troops are thought to have been captured.



HMS Lion (left) is shelled and HMS Queen Mary (right) is blown up by German shells during the Battle of Jutland

## Lord Kitchener killed

**6 June 1916**

**LORD Kitchener and over 640 crewmen died yesterday when HMS Hampshire was sunk by a mine.**

The famous War Secretary, pictured right, was travelling from the Orkney Islands, Scotland to Russia for a meeting. Gale-force winds meant the ship was re-routed through the Pentland Firth, which is between the islands and Caithness in north Scotland.

The terrible weather conditions meant the destroyers that were with HMS Hampshire ended up sailing behind the ship. It is believed that the captain of the Hampshire ordered the destroyers back to base, leaving the Hampshire unprotected.

At around 7.40pm, while sailing about 1.5 miles off the coast of Orkney, the Hampshire struck a mine. Fifteen minutes later, the HMS Hampshire sank and its lifeboats were destroyed.

Telegrams from Orkney suggest just 12 people aboard have survived. Lord Kitchener, the famous face of some army recruitment posters throughout this war, enjoyed huge popularity in Britain. An experienced and successful army man all of his life, Horatio Kitchener became Commander-in-Chief in India in 1902.

He was appointed Secretary of State for War in 1914 and went on to be held partially responsible for the shells crisis in 1915. As a result, he lost responsibility for munitions, and David Lloyd George was awarded the new post of Munitions Minister in the coalition Government.



Kitchener on an army recruitment poster



# Thousands die at Battle of the Somme



Allied soldiers going 'over the top'

**19 November 1916**

**THE ALLIES** have suffered enormous losses in the Battle of the Somme, the main Allied offensive of the year.

More than a million men on both sides have been killed or wounded in the bloodiest battle of the war so far. Fighting began on 1 July and ended yesterday.

The four-and-a-half month conflict in the French region of Somme saw troops from Britain, the Empire and France take on the Germans in trench-to-trench fighting. It was called off after torrential rain and snowstorms made the conflict virtually impossible.

The French worked out the tactics to damage German reserve forces and gain territory. But many French troops were engaged at the Battle of Verdun,

reducing the size of the Allied forces.

British army chief General Sir Douglas Haig has been heavily criticised for sending soldiers into battle with very few instructions, other than to walk out into 'no-man's-land' – the space between British and German trenches – and charge towards the enemy. Weighed down by heavy equipment, many of these men were easy targets for German machine gunners.

Some 750,000 soldiers were despatched along a 25-mile front. An estimated 60,000 British casualties were suffered on the first day of the conflict alone.

General Haig carried on with the tactic of sending British troops out of their trenches and 'over the top' to charge at the Germans. The first line of German trenches was finally secured on 11 July – the same day the German forces were doubled when men were sent over from Verdun.

British and German generals were sure that each side was severely exhausted and that a breakthrough would come at any time. This explains why the Battle of the Somme went on so long, why so many perished, and why the Allied victory is not clear-cut.



British troops wearing gas masks fire at German troops



Troops in a trench preparing to enter no-man's-land

## Grinding down

**THE Battle of the Somme was made up of 13 individual key battles.**

It has been described as a "war of attrition". This is where one side, in this case the Allies, tries to grind down the enemy over a period of time, rather than launch a short, sharp attack. The Battle of Verdun is also being described in the same way.

Questions are now being asked about this strategy and whether it was worth the cost of so many lives. Winston Churchill, former First Lord of the Admiralty, is said to have raised his objections about the battle with members of the Cabinet in London.

The British and French were fighting along a front of 21 miles north of the Somme River. When the British sent tanks in September, 15 divisions of men went there too, yet less than a mile of ground was gained. Heavy rain made the muddy battlefield impossible to cross.

Early estimates suggest more than 400,000 British and 200,000 French casualties. The number of German dead and wounded is thought to be much higher. In the end, the Allies advanced just five miles.



"The Charm of Youth, and the Joy of Age."



# Lloyd George becomes PM

7 December 1916

BRITAIN has a new Prime Minister, after David Lloyd George of the Liberal Party took over from Herbert Asquith yesterday.

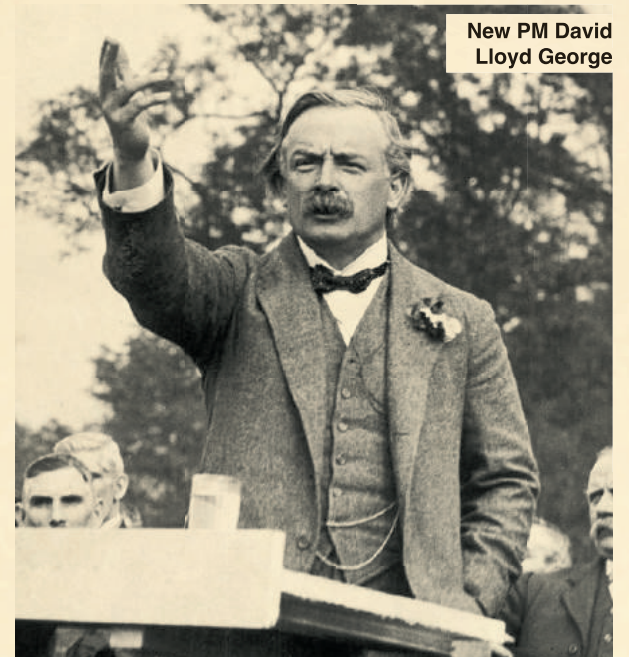
After Mr Asquith resigned from the job, David Lloyd George will now lead the nation's war effort.

Following eight years of Asquith's leadership, the country's new Prime Minister will lead a coalition government of three parties – the Liberals, Conservatives and Labour – as the country takes on the enemy.

Lloyd George and Asquith have been battling for the keys to 10 Downing Street over the past few days. Both

men believed they were best to run the country at this time. "Asquith won't fight the Germans but he will fight for office," Lloyd George said, accusing the man he has replaced of bad wartime leadership.

Having taken a number of Government jobs over the past 11 years, Britain's new leader is the first ever Welshman to become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He is expected to shake up the UK's war effort, after criticising the high number of casualties.



New PM David Lloyd George

## Longest battle comes to an end

***"What a bloodbath, what horrid images, what a slaughter. Hell cannot be this dreadful" – French soldier at Verdun***



19 December 1916

THE Battle of Verdun, the longest and costliest battle on the Western Front so far, has ended with a victory for the French.

The battle began on 21 February with a German offensive on Verdun, a city in northeast France. Ten months on, it is thought that around one million men died in the fighting.

The French victory will be embarrassing for the Germans, who believed a victory here would have changed the entire course of the war, possibly leading to surrender.

The ancient fortress town of Verdun, close to the German border, was the main target of the German

5th and 2nd Armies' assault. The plan was to gain control of eastern France.

From early morning on 21 February until night, over 100,000 German shells piled into Verdun every hour. That was the beginning of a long and devastating battle in four parts.

Attacks and counter-attacks were launched across vast, open ground. The battlefield was exposed to enemy fire, making it impossible to recover many dead soldiers.

German troops almost succeeded in breaking through the French line at the end of June, the third phase of the battle. They fired over 116,000 diphosgene gas shells at French artillery positions – the first known use of this horrendous chemical weapon.

A major Russian attack on the Eastern Front led to 15 German divisions being withdrawn from the area and sent east. This cost the Germans the Battle of Verdun.



# Animals take the lead

## Circus animals to the rescue

24 February 1916

**AN elephant called Lizzie has become a regular sight on the streets of Sheffield.**

With the war raging, the military has bought most of England's horses and sent them to the Western Front. So farmers and other workers are having to find other animals to help them.

Lizzie's job is to cart equipment, machines and scrap metal around Sheffield, a job that used to be done by three horses taken off to war.

Before the war began, Lizzie used to perform tricks as part of a travelling circus. She is said to be quite a character, with a story going round about her putting her trunk into somebody's window and stealing their dinner.

Elephants from another circus are also filling in for missing horses by ploughing fields and transporting hay in Surrey.

Hundreds of thousands of horses and mules are being used

by Britain in the war. Most of our heavy horses have already gone to the front, with many being killed or injured. The Blue Cross charity is raising funds for their treatment.

**WOW!**

Glow worms look like they could become the most unusual heroes of the war. Their light is being used by soldiers to read maps during trench warfare!



## Earning their wings

20 October 1917

**CAUGHT up in the Battle of Passchendaele last week, British troops needed to get an urgent signal back to their headquarters from the front line.**

A messenger was sent but, shortly after setting off, he came under fire.

Even though his leg was broken by a bullet, the messenger carried on and delivered the message. Sadly, he died the next day.

This heroic mission wasn't carried out by a soldier but by a pigeon, known only as 2709, one of thousands trained to fly back to base from the front line.

The birds are helping to save the lives of thousands of soldiers, with more than 95% getting their messages through. They are also shaping many key decisions in the war.

The king, George V, is even sending his own pigeons from the royal loft at Sandringham so that he can be updated on the progress of the war.

Anyone interfering with a homing pigeon during the war faces a £100 fine or six months in jail.



Pic from Alan Reid, from the Horley History Society

Elephants from Sangar's Circus are being used to plough fields in Horley, Surrey



A horse is landed from a British military transport ship at Boulogne, France

## The soldier dog

3 August 1918

**A STRAY dog has become a soldier and looks set to be remembered as one of the heroes of the war when it is over.**

The bull terrier cross wandered through an American army training session at Yale Field in Connecticut. One soldier, Corporal Robert Conroy, took a shine to the dog and named him Stubby, because of his short and stubby tail.

Conroy smuggled the dog onto his ship bound for France. Stubby was allowed to stay, even though animals are forbidden, because he learned a kind of dog salute, putting his right paw on his right eyebrow.

On 5 February 1918, Stubby reached the front line as part of the 102nd Infantry. He was an official mascot because he helped to keep up the spirits of the troops.

Stubby has already survived a number of injuries from shrapnel and gas attacks. He has become so well-known and admired that he has been treated in Red Cross hospitals alongside human soldiers.

Having survived gas attacks, Stubby has

become very sensitive to the smell of gas and, with his sensitive dog nose, is able to detect gas much earlier than his human comrades and can alert them to danger in time. His sensitive hearing also means he is often the first to hear the advancing enemy and can alert his comrades.

A report has reached *First News* that, two nights ago, Stubby heard a German spy who tried to sneak into Conroy's camp during the dead of night. Stubby grabbed the intruder's leg and held him until Conroy and other troops came to capture the German.

Stubby has also been useful as a 'mercy' dog, scanning the battlefields for injured soldiers and bringing doctors to the wounded.

When Stubby returns home at the end of the war, he will probably get more medals than any other soldier dog and may even outrank his owner!





# Tsar forced to abdicate



Bolshevik soldiers and students in Petrograd, where the trouble began

16 March 1917

**NICHOLAS II, the Tsar of Russia, has abdicated, as the country becomes gripped by revolution.**

Recent weeks have seen a series of revolutions led by the Bolsheviks, a Communist group founded by Vladimir Lenin. Strikes, riots and demonstrations over poverty and lack of food began in the capital city of Petrograd, a port city on the Baltic Sea.

The Tsar called on the army to fight back against the protestors, but the soldiers rebelled. It became clear that he had lost control of his armed forces.

It is understood that Nicholas II was persuaded to quit by members of the Russian military high command. A temporary government has taken charge and Russia remains in the war, for now.

The future of Russia's part in this war is now in serious doubt. Most Bolsheviks favour peace, which may mean that the Eastern Front campaign will be suspended. This could allow the German army to shift to the Western Front, piling pressure on the Allied forces fighting there.

## A new army

20 March 1917

**THE Women's Land Army has started running farms, putting thousands of women into the war effort.**

The organisation gives every British woman the opportunity to contribute directly to the country's survival in these difficult times.

The director of the Women's Land Army, Meriel Talbot, hopes that over 100,000 women will sign up and make an essential contribution to the British war effort.

By January 1915, over 100,000 British men who worked on the land had gone to war. Since then, imports of food from overseas have been severely hit by the German naval blockade of Britain. This has had a serious impact on food stocks in the country.

Although there has been talk of introducing rationing of food supplies, for now the Government has no plans to do so.

It is hoped that the creation of a women's unit to work on farms will boost British agriculture and increase vital supplies of food.

Known informally as Land Girls, the members of the Women's Land Army will be milking, taking care of livestock and doing other general farm work. Their pay will be 18-20 shillings per week.





# USA joins the war



American troops marching through New York after the country's entry into the war

**7 April 1917**

**THE United States declared war on Germany yesterday.**

The US Senate and House of Representatives, the nation's parliament (also known as Congress), voted overwhelmingly in favour of declaring war on Germany.

President Woodrow Wilson originally wanted to keep his country neutral. He changed his position after Germany went back on its promise not to use submarines to sink merchant ships and began sinking all ships on sight, including those that belonged to the US.

The Americans were particularly furious with Germany for their U-boat activity around the coast of Britain, including the sinking of the Lusitania ocean liner and the blockade which has damaged trade with Britain.

by Eddie de Oliveira

Their patience snapped when a total of seven US merchant ships were sunk by German U-boats.

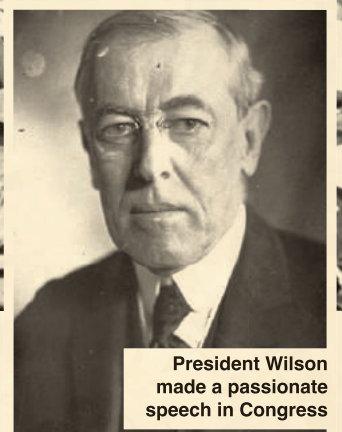
The final straw came with the news that the Germans had been secretly trying to convince Mexico to join the war as their ally, promising them money and support in order to recover the territories of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. These US states were lost by Mexico to the US during the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848.

In his speech to Congress on 2 April, President Wilson pointed out the ruthless nature of German navy

operations. He mentioned the fact that "even hospital ships and ships carrying relief to the sorely bereaved and stricken people of Belgium" had been sunk.

"It is a war against all nations," he said. "American ships have been sunk, American lives taken. The challenge is to all mankind. Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved."

In February, the American Congress passed a bill allowing \$250 million to be spent on weaponry to prepare the United States for possible entry into the war. The first US troops are set to arrive in France in June.



President Wilson made a passionate speech in Congress

# Royal family changes its name

**18 July 1917**

**KING George V has announced that the royal family is changing its surname to Windsor.**

Royals have always been known by the house, or dynasty, they belong to. In the case of the British royal family, this has been the German-sounding name Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (the family name of Prince Albert) since 1901. Before this, the British royals were from the House of Hanover.

Due to the wave of strong and negative feelings towards Germany in this country since the war began in 1914, the King has decided on a big change. He has adopted the name Windsor, after the castle. This will not only be the name of the house but also the surname for

all members of the family.

Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany has been particularly critical of the British royal family – despite being King George V's cousin. He described Edward VII (who was king before George V) as "Satan" and, in a 1908 newspaper interview, he said: "You English are mad, mad, mad as March hares."

The King announced the name change to the Privy Council on 17 July and declared that all descendants in the male line of Queen Victoria shall, from now on, bear the name of Windsor.



An anti-German protest in England last year



King George V

© Popperfoto/Getty Images





British troops carry a wounded soldier through the mud at Ypres

# Passchendaele victory

11 November 1917

**THE third Battle of Ypres has ended with an Allied victory – but at the cost of 310,000 casualties.**

The first two Ypres battles were started by the Germans in 1914 and 1915, but this one was launched by General Sir Douglas Haig, in an attempt to break through Flanders. It ended with the taking of Passchendaele village yesterday.

Like the Battle of the Somme, the third Battle of Ypres turned into a 'war of attrition' (see p17). General Haig's plan was to sweep through Flanders to the Belgian coast and destroy German U-boat bases there.

Following a ten-day barrage of heavy artillery, during which 3,000 guns fired over four million

shells, the battle proper began on 31 July. Just like at Somme, the Germans were fully prepared. So when the attack was launched across an 11-mile front, the Allies could only gain five miles of territory.

Further setbacks arrived in August, when the battle area was hit by the heaviest rain the region had seen in 30 years. Flanders became a thick, muddy swamp – the conditions were so horrendous that even the tanks got stuck in the mud.

Following several small battles within Flanders, the British forces had the advantage, so General Haig

ordered an attack on Passchendaele Ridge.

However, German forces had already massed there and used mustard gas to keep the Allied attacks at bay.

On 6 November, Passchendaele village was taken by British and Canadian troops. General Haig said the battle was a success, though total Allied and German casualties exceeded 850,000, including the deaths of 325,000 British soldiers. The gains in territory were small, but defence chiefs hope that this battle will have severely worn down the Germans.

# British seize Gaza and Jerusalem

13 December 1917

**THE British army has made further progress in the Middle East, with a series of decisive victories over the Ottomans.**

Most significantly, over 670 years of Ottoman rule in Jerusalem have come to an end with the British victory in Palestine.

The British Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, Sir Edmund Allenby, led the victorious troops. Both the Allies and Ottomans respected the holy city of Jerusalem and avoided fighting directly there.

The city fell after just one day of fighting. Morale among the Ottoman forces is thought to have collapsed following many British successes.

Occasional outbreaks of fighting in the hills around Jerusalem have continued in the days following the city's fall.

The success at Jerusalem follows a number of important victories for British forces in the region. On 31 October, the Empire armies defeated the Ottomans at the Battle of Beersheba in southern Palestine, capturing almost 2,000 Ottoman troops in the process. This crucial victory paved the way for the advance on Jerusalem.

Then on 7 November, the British finally captured

Gaza, the fortress in Palestine which the Ottomans had twice successfully defended at the first two Battles of Gaza in March and April of this year.

Back in March, the British captured Baghdad, the capital of Mesopotamia. Almost 10,000 Ottoman soldiers were taken prisoner by British forces.

This year's triumphs follow the failures at Gallipoli from 1915-1916, and the April 1916 humiliation at Kut, Mesopotamia. In that battle, an Ottoman siege led to almost 30,000 British casualties and thousands of troops being taken prisoner.



Sir Edmund Allenby enters Jerusalem after the British captured the city from the Ottomans



**EAT**



**BREAD**



# Russia quits the war

**4 March 1918**

**RUSSIA has ended its role in the war, after the new Bolshevik rulers made a deal with Germany.**

by Eddie de Oliveira

The new Communist government in Russia yesterday signed the Treaty of Brest-Litvosk with the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The retreat of the army has already begun, and all Russian warships are returning to base.

As part of the treaty, Russia has granted Germany control over the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), and promised to remove all troops from Finland. Russia will also now recognise Ukraine as an independent state under German military occupation. Russian and German prisoners of war will be returned to their home countries. The Russian government will also pay six billion marks in compensation to the Germans.

Finally, all the territory that Russia took from the Ottoman Empire in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 will be returned.

A Russian withdrawal from this war looked likely ever since rioting and revolution broke out last year in Russia. It was caused by the weak economy and the government's handling of food and fuel supplies.



Russian and German officials sign the treaty that ends Russia's war

The provisional government that ruled from February 1917 continued with the war, but the October revolution last year brought the Bolsheviks to power. This group of Communists follow the teachings of Vladimir Lenin and Karl Marx. Last October, Lenin signed the Decree on Peace, which proposed a Russian withdrawal from the war.

## Riots in Vienna

**17 January 1918**

**SERIOUS riots broke out yesterday in Vienna and Budapest, the two main cities in Austria-Hungary.**

Citizens of the country are showing their anger towards the ongoing war, food shortages and financial difficulties.

The Austro-Hungarian economy is thought to be struggling due to the four-year conflict, and a number of strikes have been reported throughout the country in recent weeks. There have also been various incidents of rebellion within the army.

Similar protests in Russia last year led to revolution, causing the Tsar to step down from the throne and allowing the rise of the Bolsheviks. Russian Communists are thought to be observing events in Austria-Hungary very carefully – they hope that worker revolutions similar to those in Russia will be copied all over Europe.

## London attacked

**21 May 1918**

**THE Germans have launched their largest air raid so far over the English capital.**

On the evening of 19 May, 38 Gotha and three Giant aircraft raided London in a devastating attack which resulted in 49 people being killed and 177 injured. Six of the bombers were shot down by British fighter aircraft.

The first major heavy bomber raid over London was almost a year ago, on 13 June 1917. In a daylight attack, bombs dropped from 18 Gotha planes killed 162, including 18 children in a primary school in Poplar, East London, and injured 432.

Air raids by Gotha bombers began on 25 May 1917. Between May and August of last year, eight daylight raids were carried out over England, including three on London.



An air raid shelter on The Strand in central London



# Germans launch spring offensive

6 April 1918

**BOOSTED** by extra soldiers from the Eastern Front, the German Army has carried out a huge attack across the fields of the Somme on the Western Front.



A British Mark IV tank passing through Péronne, France during the German offensive

In the first large offensive against Allied positions in over a year, the German mission, known as Operation Michael, attacked a poorly prepared British 5th Army near Cambrai, France. It is thought that this is a major push by the Germans to try and win the war. With Russia's exit from the war, German defence chiefs have more soldiers in position along the Western Front, and believe they can now make a breakthrough.

The original aim of the operation was to seize the ports along the English Channel and force the British out of the region in the process. The Germans decided to change the plan and struck the British front at the Somme instead.

German soldiers fired an estimated one million

artillery shells at British lines then sent in a new, elite unit known as 'stormtroopers' to destroy British positions.

Some 16,000 British soldiers were taken prisoner by the end of 21 March, the first day of the attack. Overwhelmed British troops were ordered to withdraw. The Germans then began to push towards Paris, showering the French capital with shells from 80 miles away using their new invention, a giant cannon known as 'Big Bertha'.

By 25 March, they had crossed the Somme and broke through Allied lines, forcing a British and French retreat. But the speedy German advance came at a cost: in order to be able to move quickly and easily,

troops carried virtually nothing except their weapons. Vital supplies soon started to run out, and their advance slowed.

On 4 April, the Germans launched one last attack – this time, on the town of Amiens. It marked the first time in this war that both sides used tanks at the same time. The Allies held their line and, by yesterday morning, the Germans were forced back.

The enemy is estimated to have advanced some 40 miles, and over 70,000 British soldiers are believed to have been taken prisoner. But although the Germans won the battle, they haven't made the decisive breakthrough they were hoping for and have lost a lot of soldiers.

## Allies strike back



Allied soldiers with captured German prisoners at Amiens

14 August 1918

**THE** Allied forces have completed a devastating assault against a weakening German army.

The British 4th Army began the Amiens Offensive on 8 August with a surprise attack against German positions on the Western Front.

Allied troops outnumbered the German soldiers by six to one and used 435 tanks, 2,000 artillery pieces and 800 aircraft in the attack. The Allies concentrated on destroying German lines of communication.

By the end of the first day, the British had pushed the Germans back by about seven miles – one of the biggest Allied advances of this war so far.

At the end of the second day of the offensive, an incredible 30,000 German prisoners had been captured.

On 10 August, the French 3rd Army launched more attacks. The Germans were weakened so much that the British managed to advance 12 miles into German territory by yesterday evening.



# Allies break through Hindenburg Line

**3 October 1918**

ALLIED forces have broken through the Germans' crucial wall of defence, the Hindenburg Line.

by Eddie de Oliveira

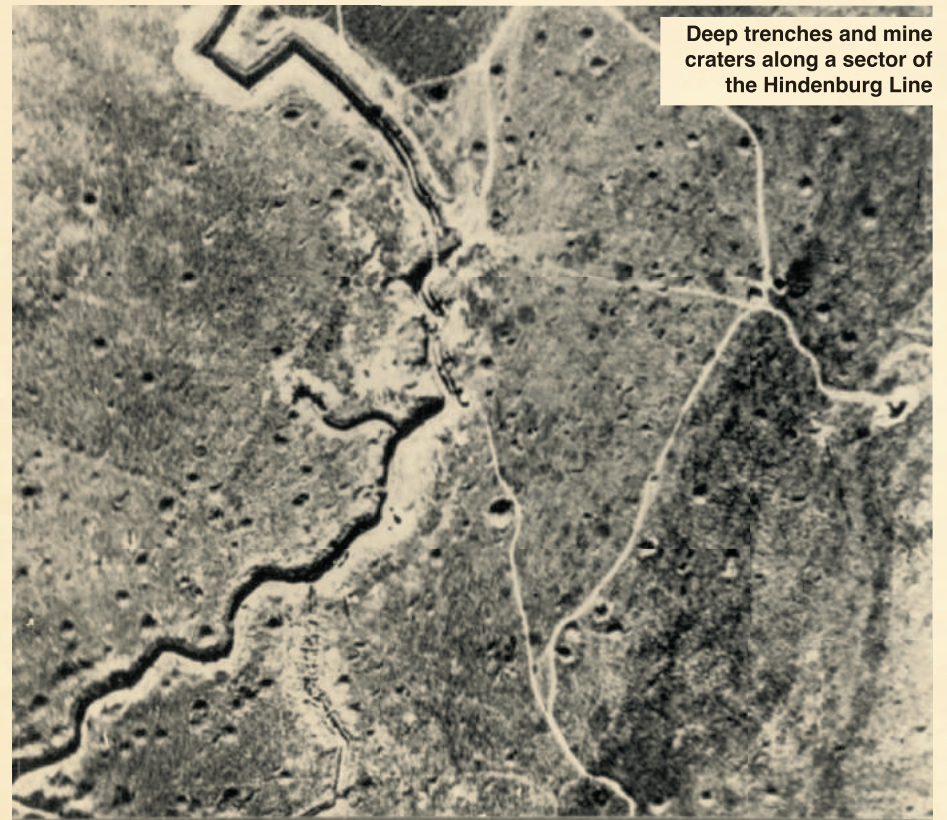
After four days of brutal bombardment, the Germans have been forced to retreat from the Line, a defensive barrier they set up on the Western Front in 1916. It is a protected zone running several miles behind the main front, located between the north coast of France and Verdun, near the Belgian border. British defence chiefs named it after the German Commander-in-Chief, Paul von Hindenburg.

Australian, British, French and American forces saw that the southern part of the Line was the best place to attack. Some 1,637 guns took part in almost 60 hours of bombardment along a 10,000-yard-long front before the full offensive was launched.

This heavy attack was a great success, leading directly to the seizure of lots of German trenches in a short space of time.

On 29 September, American and Australian troops attacked the town of Bellicourt, northern France, backed up by tanks and aircraft fire.

Four days of fighting followed, with heavy casualties on both sides. The line was finally broken on 2 October and the German forces had no choice but to retreat. This forced retreat has been widely seen as a significant blow to the German war effort.



Deep trenches and mine craters along a sector of the Hindenburg Line



French tanks on their way to the front line



French troops take cover from a German attack

## Make or break battle?

**27 October 1918**

THE British and American armies have succeeded in an offensive at the Selle River, outside Amiens, France.

The Battle of the Selle began on 17 October and focused on a nine-mile front. Following the usual artillery bombardment before a major push, the British Fourth Army attacked in foggy conditions on foot and in tanks.

By the evening of day one, German defences had been broken. Severe fighting continued over the next two days, and the British and French forces managed to advance five miles.

In a surprise joint night attack in the early morning of 20 October, Third Army formations secured the high ground east of the Selle. After a two-day break, which gave the Allies the chance to roll in some heavy artillery, the attack continued on 23 October with a major combined assault by three divisions. By the following day, the Allies had taken more ground – a total of six miles in just two days. Exhausted and demoralised, the Germans retreated.

This advance means the British are now 20 miles behind the rear of the Hindenburg Line.

Over 20,000 German prisoners are in Allied hands. This success comes weeks after the Allies successfully took Cambrai and Le Cateau, capturing 10,000 Germans and three miles of territory.



German radio operators in a damaged dugout near Amiens



# Ottomans surrender

1 November 1918

**THE Ottoman Minister of Marine Affairs has signed an Armistice, which ends their war with Britain.**

Following the Ottomans' defeat in Mesopotamia, the Armistice of Mudros was signed on 30 October, and all fighting ended at noon yesterday.

The conditions of the Armistice include the Ottomans surrendering their remaining bases and giving the Allies full control of forts along the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits. The Allies also now have a right to occupy any Ottoman land if they consider a threat to stability is possible.

In addition to the Ottoman surrender, the conditions of the Armistice include the full break-up of the Ottoman air force.

One major factor which has contributed to the defeat of the Ottomans has been the Arab Revolt, which started in 1916. Thousands of Arab troops, with the support of the British, have been fighting for independence from the Ottoman Empire and the creation of a single Arab state. T. E. Lawrence, a British researcher and military planner, has been one of the main leaders of the Arab fight against the Ottomans.

The end of fighting in the Middle East comes as a welcome relief to the soldiers of Britain and the Empire, who have fought there since 1914. The future of the Ottoman Empire itself is now deeply uncertain.



**T. E. Lawrence fought with the Arabs against the Ottomans**

# The Kaiser abdicates

10 November 1918

**KAISER Wilhelm II of Germany has stepped down from the throne.**

It is believed that Wilhelm didn't want to step down as German Emperor. But his popularity has fallen dramatically in recent months, both among German citizens and members of the armed forces. Many soldiers now refuse to take orders from him.

There are rumours that the abdication, announced yesterday by German

Chancellor Max von Baden, went ahead without the Kaiser's approval.

Wilhelm II is believed to have fled to the Netherlands, which has remained neutral throughout the war. His exact location in the country is unknown.

The news comes amid reports of protests, riots and general unrest in Germany over the past few weeks. One week ago, a mutiny by sailors of the German High Seas Fleet in Kiel, northern Germany, left the Kaiser and defence chiefs stunned. On 24 October, the sailors refused to obey orders to launch a major naval conflict against the British Royal Navy. The leaders of the rebellion were arrested.

This led to other sailors and workers throughout Germany protesting against the arrest, and taking responsibility for civil and military powers in various cities, including Munich, Hanover and Frankfurt.



**The Kaiser (centre) visiting troops a few months ago**

# Austro-Hungarian empire collapses

5 November 1918

**IN a major blow for the Germans, Austria-Hungary has quit the war with its empire in tatters.**

The Armistice of Villa Giusti, signed on 3 November, marks the end of the war between Austria-Hungary and Italy. It came into force yesterday.

The deal was signed after the Italians secured a huge victory against the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, which ran from 24 October – 3 November. On 28 October, Czechoslovakia declared independence from Austria-Hungary. The following day, the South Slavs (Serbs, Bosnians and Croats) followed, and on 31 October Hungary withdrew from the union. This meant the end of the Austro-Hungarian state – a humiliating collapse for Germany's main ally.

Another of its allies, Bulgaria, withdrew from the war a little over a month ago. The Armistice with Bulgaria was signed by the Allied nations on 29 September.

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With thanks to the Imperial War Museum for the following posters:

Page 8: Turn Your Silver into Bullets

Pages 14–15: Britons. Join Your Country's Army!

Page 23: Eat Less Bread

Posters are from the book *Posters of the First World War* (Price £9.99, from [iwmshop.org.uk](http://iwmshop.org.uk))

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Page 7, letters from Fred Manning to his son, Harry: use of this collection is with thanks to Mr Richard Pitcairn Knowles and Imperial War Museums

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# Armistice signals end of war

**12 November 1918**

**THIS brutal four-year war is finally over, after the Germans and Allies signed an Armistice yesterday.**

At 5am yesterday morning, both sides signed a deal that demands the end of fighting on the Western Front and the immediate German withdrawal from invaded countries within two weeks. The Armistice came into effect six hours later, at 11am.

The Germans have also agreed to hand over much of their weaponry and military aircraft, and to remove troops from the territories that previously belonged to Austria-Hungary, Romania and the Ottomans.

With German armed forces severely weakened, morale low and revolutions springing up across

the nation, German officials met with Allied Supreme Commander Ferdinand Foch on 8 November. Negotiations were held in a forest northeast of Paris. The armistice was then signed in Marshal Foch's railway carriage.

President Wilson of the US was heavily involved in negotiations. His demand that Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicate as part of the terms of the Armistice was rejected by Germany, and nearly wrecked the deal. The deal was rescued when the German Chancellor, Max von Baden, forced Wilhelm to abdicate on 9 November.

Britons were quick to take to the streets in celebration



The Armistice was greeted with joy in the USA



Enormous crowds outside Buckingham Palace celebrate the news



The defeated German army heading home

