

The First World War

Long term causes

Militarism - Countries build up their armies, navies and weapons in order to attack others.

Imperialism - Countries try to build large empires by conquering other countries.

Ideology - A set of beliefs about how a country is governed and how its people are allowed to live.

Alliances - Agreements countries make to support each other, especially during war.

Nationalism - Feeling of national pride which makes countries feel superior to others.



Type	France	Britain	Russia	Austria-Hungary	Germany	Italy
Dreadnoughts	14	24	4	3	13	1
Battleships	9	38	7	12	30	17
Battle Cruisers	0	10	1	0	6	0
Cruisers	25	108	13	7	49	11
Destroyers	81	228	106	18	152	33
Submarines	67	76	36	14	30	20

Battle of Jutland - The only big battle at sea happened in 1916. Neither side was a clear winner.

Short term cause – Assassination in Sarajevo. Archduke Ferdinand and his wife, Countess Sophie, were on an official visit to Sarajevo to inspect the Bosnian Army and to celebrate their wedding anniversary. In spite of tight security, a Serbian terrorist, Gavrilo Princip, fired two shots into the Archduke's car killing both the prince and his wife. Princip was soon arrested. He belonged to a Serbian terrorist group called the Black Hand. This group wants Bosnia to be free from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Austria has blamed the Serbian government for the assassination.



When war was declared in 1914, thousands of men volunteered to join the 247,000 regular soldiers in the British army. Recruiting offices were opened in almost every town and city. Men had to be 18 to join up and 19 to fight overseas but, desperate to join up, many lied about their age. In the first year of the war, 1.1 million men enlisted in the British armed forces, but this was not enough. In January 1916, parliament passed an Act that introduced conscription into the British army for the first time: it became compulsory for single men aged between 18 and 41 to join up. Later in the year, this was extended to include married men. Friends joined up together: whole football teams, young men from the same streets, factory floors and offices. They were trained together in 'pals' battalions*, and they fought and died together. Some villages and towns lost almost all their young men on the same day. By the end of the war, in 1918, over 616,000 British servicemen had been killed and over 2million German service men had lost their lives.



By 1916, the First World War had become a stalemate because of the trench systems built by both sides. The conditions for soldiers fighting in the trenches grew worse. The Battle of the Somme was planned to try to bring victory to Britain and its allies (France and Belgium).

The Somme, 1 July 1916 - The British launched an attack in the Somme, an area of northern France. The German trenches were to be bombarded for a week before the battle. It was thought that this would destroy trenches, machine guns and artillery and kill the German soldiers. During the week before, about 7.75 million shells were fired at the German positions in a massive bombardment. However, one-third of the shells were duds and did not explode. At 7.25 am on 1st July 1916, the British guns stopped firing. 100,000 young and inexperienced soldiers waited in their front line trenches for the order to advance. They expected their task to be easy. They believed that all the Germans would be dead. At 7.30 am, the whistle blew, signalling the order to climb out of the trenches and attack the enemy position – to go 'over the top'. The first line of men began to climb through the gaps in the barbed wire into No Man's Land. Suddenly, the Germans opened fire. Many British soldiers were killed even before they got out of their trenches. The advance continued all day. By the end, 57,000 soldiers had been injured and 20,000 killed. Most of these deaths occurred in the first twenty minutes of the battle.

Causes of the Second World War – The Treaty of Versailles



Blame – Germany had to accept full responsibility for starting the First World War – War guilt Clause 231. Reparations - Germany had to pay £6,600 million to the Allies in compensation. Armed Forces - Germany was only allowed 100,000 soldiers, 15,000 sailors, 6 battleships. It wasn't allowed any tanks, submarines or airplanes. Territory - Germany had to give up all of its overseas territories, 10% of its land and 12.5% of its population

Time line of the rise of the Nazis

1919 June: Germany is forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles. Anger at the treaty, and the weight of reparations, will destabilize Germany for years.
1921 July: Hitler is able to become chairman of his party, which is renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or NSDAP.
1929 October: The New York Stock Market begins to crash, causing a great depression in America and round the world.
1933-36: Hitler starts a mass programme of re-arming Germany and introducing conscription, breaking the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
1937: Germany signs an anti-communist agreement with Italy and Japan.
1938: Hitler starts taking back land that had been lost under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
1939 August: Germany and Russia secretly agree not to attack each other and invade Poland.
1939 1 September: Germany invades Poland. The next day Britain and France declare war on Germany.

After the First World War, the French built the Maginot Line which stretched along the French-German border. The French believed it could not be crossed. They also believed that the German army would be unable to move tanks and equipment through the thick forests to the north of the line. The French and the British were very confident of this so they placed most of their troops along the French-Belgian border. They expected the Germans to attack there, as they had done in 1914. At the start of the Second World War, the German army advanced rapidly into France in May 1940. Three weeks later, British troops had been forced out. By 22 June the conquest of France was complete. The Germans had successfully used a new tactic called Blitzkrieg (lightning war). Blitzkrieg relied mainly on the speed and surprise of the attack. Panzer (tank) divisions were created for the purpose. The attacks consisted of planes, tanks, infantry and artillery that worked together to defeat the enemy. This was made possible by the radio, which allowed effective communication from the commander. The Allies were slow to react to the Blitzkrieg. Their counterattacks failed because they were disorganised and because British tanks were slow and poorly armed. British tanks were still being used to support the infantry rather than to lead them like the German tanks. This meant that the Allies had to retreat.

D-Day - in the early hours of 6 June 1944, two American and one British airborne division began landing in Normandy and, in spite of their scattered drops, managed to achieve their critical objectives. Meanwhile, the beach assault troops, packed into their landing craft and supported by a huge number and variety of naval vessels and aircraft, approached the Normandy coast. Main attack - In the battle for Caen, Allied bomber raids reduced the city to rubble. The beaches were attacked at different times due to the tide, beginning at 04.55 hours with an assault in the American sector at what had been code-named 'Utah' beach. The second landing took place on the American 'Omaha' beach, followed by the Anglo-Canadian assaults on 'Gold' and then 'Juno' beaches, before the British hit 'Sword' beach at 07.25 hours. The landings were, in general terms, a great success, although there were heavy casualties on Omaha and the British failed to take Caen as planned. Nevertheless, by the end of the day, 150,000 men had managed to get ashore and a firm foothold had been established for the cost of 2,500 dead. In spite of the considerable success achieved on D-Day, the Allies had to create a beachhead swiftly and then conduct breakout operations if they were to take full advantage of their position. The build-up of adequate supplies was therefore crucial to Allied aspirations. Recognising this, two purpose-built 'Mulberry' harbours were floated across the English Channel and anchored just off Omaha and Gold beaches.



Dresden - The bombing of Dresden was a British-American aerial bombing attack on the city of Dresden, the capital of the German state of Saxony, during World War II. In four raids between 13 and 15 February 1945, 722 heavy bombers of the British Royal Air Force (RAF) and 527 of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) dropped more than 3,900 tons of high-explosive bombs and incendiary devices on the city. The bombing and the resulting firestorm destroyed more than 1,600 acres (6.5 km²) of the city centre. An estimated 22,700 to 25,000 people were killed. Three more USAAF air raids followed, two occurring on 2 March aimed at the city's railway marshalling yard and one smaller raid on 17 April aimed at industrial areas.



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