

America Joins the Fight: World War I

1917-1918



United States Neutrality



throughout the early days of the war (1914-17), the US continued to trade with both sides

the British imposed a blockade against Germany and expanded contraband lists

the US loaned \$2 billion to the Triple Entente (Allied Powers)

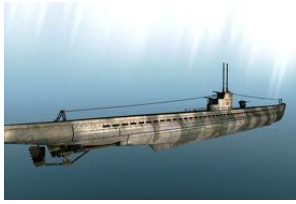
the American public bought \$2 billion in British and French war bonds

Submarine Warfare

the Lusitania

British passenger liner
sunk in 1915 by German U-Boat

nearly 1200 passengers drowned
(128 Americans)



German Unterseeboots
(U-Boats / submarines)
began sinking unarmed US ships

Sussex Pledge

1916: Germans sank French ship *Sussex*

President Woodrow Wilson warned Germany to stop or risk going to war

Germany agreed to stop sinking US ships & to pay the US a fine for the ones they'd already sunk

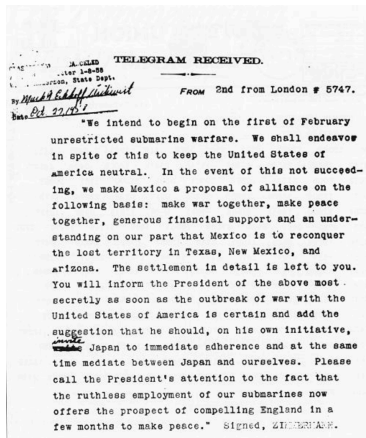
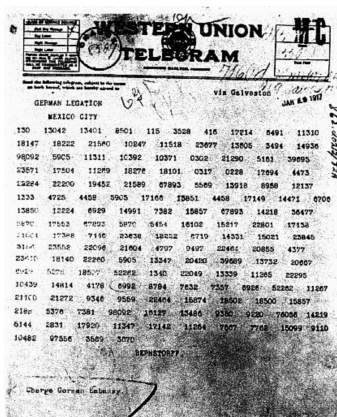
arm President Wilson started to merchant ships



Zimmerman Telegram

German foreign minister Arthur Zimmerman sent a telegram to his ambassador in Mexico
asked Mexico attack the US,
promising to give them Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico

the British intercepted it and US newspapers printed it - Americans VERY upset



Germans sink four more passenger liners

Wilson asks Congress for the US to enter war on April 2, 1917

Congress declares war on
April 6, 1917

Raising an Army

standing US army had only 200,000 troops, 1500 machine guns, 55 planes

Selective Service Act (the draft)

all men 21-30 had to register for military service
10 million signed up for the draft
2.8 million were drafted, 2 million volunteered
first US troops - "**doughboys**" -
arrive in France in June, 1917



WORLD WAR I DRAFT REGISTRATION CARD INDEX



370,000 African Americans drafted, 200,000 served overseas
encountered rampant discrimination and prejudice
not allowed to serve in the Marine Corps, 10,000 in navy
restricted to **support personnel of lower rank**
highly praised and decorated for fighting on Western front



“Over There”

On the morning of April 6, 1917, newspaper headlines across America announced the news that the United States had declared war on Germany, effectively entering WWI. George Cohan was an actor, singer, dancer, songwriter, playwright, and Broadway producer who had composed hundreds of songs, including such famous songs as “You’re a Grand Old Flag,” “Give My Regards to Broadway,” and “I’m a Yankee Doodle Dandy.” Cohan’s reaction to reading the headlines that morning was to hum - and soon to add some lyrics. By the time Cohan arrived at work that morning, he already had the verses, chorus, tune, and title of what became the very popular song, “Over There.”

“Over There” was an instant success, selling over two million copies by the end of the war. The song “Over There” is about the “Yanks” (i.e. Americans) going “over there” (i.e. across the Atlantic) to help fight the “Huns” (i.e. the Germans) during World War I.

In 1936, Cohan was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for writing the song.



“Over There” by George M. Cohan

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get
your gun
Take it on the run, on the run, on the run
Hear them calling you and me
Every son of liberty
Hurry right away, no delay, go today
Make your daddy glad to have had such
a lad
Tell your sweetheart not to pine
To be proud her boy's in line.

CHORUS (repeated twice):
Over there, over there
Send the word, send the word over there
That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are
coming
The drums are rum-tumming everywhere
So prepare, say a prayer
Send the word, send the word to beware
We'll be over there, we're coming over
And we won't come back till it's over over
there.
Over there.

War on the Home Front

needed to gear industry for war machine, raise \$ for war, mobilize Americans' support

War Industries Board

headed by wall street stockbroker Bernard Baruch
handled purchasing of war materials



Fuel Administration

charged w/boosting coal and oil production and encouraging conservation
introduced daylight savings time and shortened workweeks for nonwar-related factories



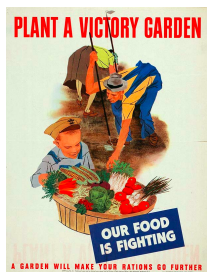
Food Administration

headed by Herbert Hoover
reduced food consumption
asked Americans to "serve just enough"
Wheatless Mondays, Meatless Tuesdays



Victory Gardens

citizens encouraged to grow their own vegetables



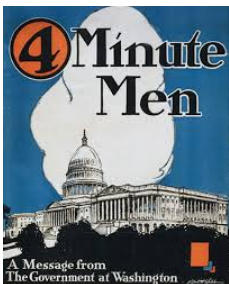
Controlling Public Opinion

Committee of Public Information

headed by journalist and author George Creel

printed millions of pamphlets to distribute
explaining the causes and aims of the war

"four minute men" spoke at theaters and public
gatherings in support of the war



Controlling War Protesters

Alien and Sedition Acts

imposed severe penalties to silence war opposition

Loyalty Leagues

organized by Creel, encouraged Americans to spy on each other

Postmaster General given authority to ban certain newspapers,
magazines, and pamphlets

thousands people imprisoned,
sometimes for private conversations(!)



(persecution of Germans)

