

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



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

President Wilson started to **arm merchant ships**

the **Lusitania**

British passenger liner
sunk in 1915 by German U-Boat

nearly **1200** passengers drowned
(128 Americans)



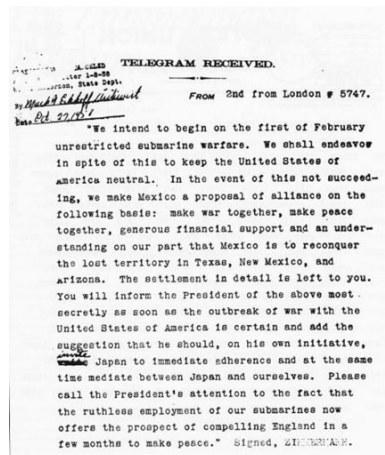
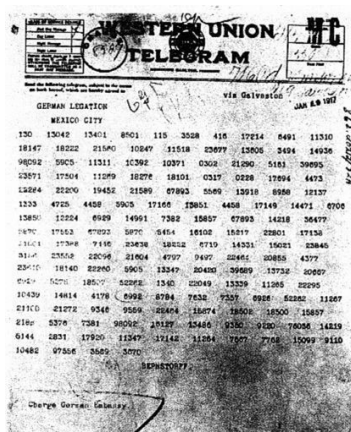
Zimmerman

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

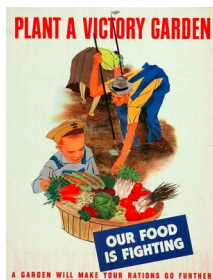


Fuel Administration

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



Sedition Act of 1918

imposed severe penalties to silence war opposition

Loyalty Leagues

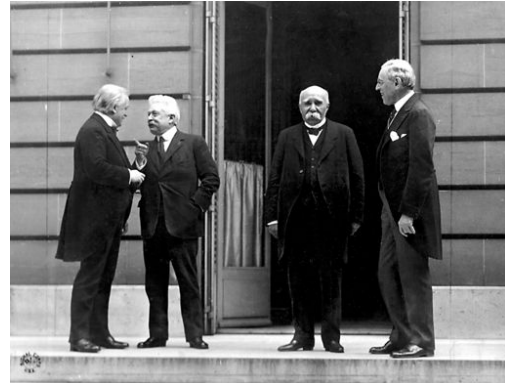
organized by Creel, encouraged Americans to spy on each other
Postmaster General given authority to ban certain newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets
thousands people imprisoned, sometimes for private conversations(!)

(persecution of Germans)



The War Ends

Germans sign armistice (cease-fire) on 11/11/18
the “ **Big Four** ”
leaders of the US, Great Britain, France, and
Italy met in Paris



The Fourteen Points

1. No more secret agreements
2. Free navigation of all seas.
3. An end to all economic barriers between countries.
4. Countries to reduce weapon numbers.
5. All decisions regarding the colonies should be impartial
6. The German Army is to be removed from Russia. Russia should be left to develop her own political set-up.
7. Belgium should be independent like before the war.
8. France should be fully liberated and allowed to recover Alsace-Lorraine
9. All Italians are to be allowed to live in Italy.
10. Self-determination should be allowed for all those living in Austria-Hungary.
11. Self-determination and guarantees of independence should be allowed for the Balkan states.
12. The Turkish people should be governed by the Turkish government. Non-Turks should govern themselves.
13. An independent Poland should be created which should have access to the sea.
14. A League of Nations should be set up to guarantee the political and territorial independence of all states.



Treaty of Versailles



The main terms of the Versailles Treaty were:

Germany has to give up all of its colonies
the Rhineland (German/Belgian border region)
was demilitarized and occupied for 15 years

Germany is forced to pay reparations of
132 million Goldmarks

Germany had to admit the war was their fault
(the war-guilt clause)

Germany's military was limited (no draft, no
tanks, no heavy artillery, no aircraft, no airships)

Germany signed the Versailles Treaty under protest
the USA Congress refused to ratify the treaty

IF WORLD WAR ONE WAS A BAR FIGHT



Germany, Austria and Italy are standing together in the middle of a pub when Serbia bumps into Austria and spills Austria's pint.

Austria demands Serbia buy it a whole new suit because of the new beer stains on its trouser leg.

Germany expresses its support for Austria's point of view.

Britain recommends that everyone calm down a bit.

Serbia points out that it can't afford a whole suit, but offers to pay for the cleaning of Austria's trousers.

Russia and Serbia look at Austria.

Austria asks Serbia who it's looking at.

Russia suggests that Austria should leave its little brother alone.

Austria inquires as to whose army will assist Russia in doing so.

Germany appeals to Britain that France has been looking at it, and that its sufficiently out of order that Britain not intervene.

Britain replies that France can look at who it wants to, that Britain is looking at Germany too, and what is Germany going to do about it?

Germany tells Russia to stop looking at Austria, or Germany will render Russia incapable of such action anymore.

Britain and France ask Germany whether it's looking at Belgium.

Turkey and Germany go off into a corner and whisper. When they come back, Turkey makes a show of not looking at anyone.

Germany rolls up its sleeves, looks at France, and punches Belgium.

France and Britain punch Germany. Austria punches Russia. Germany punches Britain and France with one hand and Russia with the other.

Russia throws a punch at Germany, but misses and nearly falls over. Japan calls over from the other side of the room that it's on Britain's side, but stays there. Italy surprises everyone by punching Austria.

Australia punches Turkey, and gets punched back. There are no hard feelings because Britain made Australia do it.

France gets thrown through a plate glass window, but gets back up and carries on fighting. Russia gets thrown through another one, gets knocked out, suffers brain damage, and wakes up with a complete personality change.

Italy throws a punch at Austria and misses, but Austria falls over anyway. Italy raises both fists in the air and runs round the room chanting.

America waits till Germany is about to fall over from sustained punching from Britain and France, then walks over and smashes it with a barstool, then pretends it won the fight all by itself.

By now all the chairs are broken and the big mirror over the bar is shattered. Britain, France and America agree that Germany threw the first punch, so the whole thing is Germany's fault. While Germany is still unconscious, they go through its pockets, steal its wallet, and buy drinks for all their friends.