

**May
1917**

*Selective Service Act;
Convoy system put in place*

**June
1917**

*American troops
arrive in France*

**March
1918**

Russia exits war

**June
1918**

*Battle of
Château-Thierry*

**August
1918**

*Allied
counteroffensive*

**November
1918**

*Cease-fire
ends fighting*

1917

1918

1919

3 Americans on the European Front

SECTION PREVIEW

Objectives

- 1 Describe how the United States prepared to take part in World War I.
- 2 Explain how American troops helped turn the tide of the war.
- 3 Describe the war's end and its costs.
- 4 **Key Terms** Define: Selective Service Act; American Expeditionary Force; convoy; armistice; genocide.

Main Idea

American troops helped the Allies defeat the Central Powers in World War I.

Reading Strategy

Predicting Content Create a list of this section's bold-face headings and subheadings. Under each one, write a one-sentence prediction of what the content will be. Then check your predictions against the actual text.

By the time the United States entered the war in April 1917, the Allies desperately needed replacement troops. In June, President Wilson agreed to send a small force to Europe under the command of General John J. Pershing. A veteran of the Spanish-American War, the general had also taught for a time at West Point. Pershing would need all his experience and skills to lead the American forces against a determined German army.

Preparing for Action

Despite the success of the preparedness movement, in April 1917 the United States was far from ready to send an army to the European front. Instead, a cautious Congress sent naval support, supplies, arms, and \$3 billion in loans. The token force of 14,500 men led by General Pershing served mainly to boost Allied morale. After landing in France, Pershing realized that he needed more troops. He recommended that the army should number 1 million men by 1918 and 3 million the year after that.

Draftees and Volunteers When the United States entered World War I, the armed forces

had only 120,000 enlisted men and 80,000 National Guardsmen. In May 1917 Congress passed a **Selective Service Act**, authorizing a draft of young men for military service.

During the Civil War the draft had sparked riots. Now, however, the general feeling that this would be the “war to end all wars” resulted in wide acceptance of the program. By November 1918 more than 24 million men had registered for the draft. From those, a lottery picked 3 million draftees to serve in the war. Volunteers and National Guardsmen made up the remainder of what was called the **American Expeditionary Force (AEF)**.

Among the Americans who served their country were thousands of women. Some 11,000 women volunteered to serve in uniform as nurses, drivers, and clerks. Another 14,000 women served abroad, as civilians



In 1917 American soldiers marched off to war, carrying items such as this shaving kit.



Denied combat opportunity by the United States, these New York National Guardsmen fought with the French as the 369th Infantry Regiment. Though facing combat for the first time, they performed with such skill and bravery that they were awarded the French Croix de Guerre. **Diversity** Why do you think African Americans suffered discrimination in the armed forces?

American and Allied units fought separately, but a further division existed within the American ranks. The more than 300,000 African Americans who volunteered or were drafted into service were kept apart from white troops. Though many African Americans fought with distinction and nearly 4,000 died or were wounded, most never saw combat. The marines refused to accept African Americans altogether, and the navy used them for minor tasks only. The army, too, used African Americans mostly for manual labor.

These assignments distressed many African Americans. The 369th Infantry Regiment, who came to be known as the Harlem Hell Fighters, was especially eager to fight. Its members persuaded their white officers to loan the regiment to the French, who integrated the regiment into the French army. Because of their distinguished service, the entire regiment received France's highest combat medal, the Croix de Guerre.

working for the government or for private agencies.

The Convoy System In addition to building a fighting force, the War Department had to worry about transporting its troops overseas. In April 1917 alone, German U-boats had sunk 430 Allied and neutral ships.

Starting in May 1917 all merchant and troop ships traveled in a **convoy**. A convoy consisted of a group of unarmed ships surrounded by a ring of destroyers, torpedo boats, and other armed naval vessels. The torpedo boats were specially equipped to track and destroy submarines. Between April and December 1917, merchant marine losses dropped by half.

American Soldiers in Europe From the time the AEF arrived in France in June 1917, Pershing kept them independent of the Allied armies. In Pershing's view the Allies had become too accustomed to defensive action. He wanted to save his men's strength for offensive moves.[†]

[†] American infantrymen were called *doughboys*. This term originated during the Civil War in reference to the dumpling-shaped buttons on Union infantry uniforms.

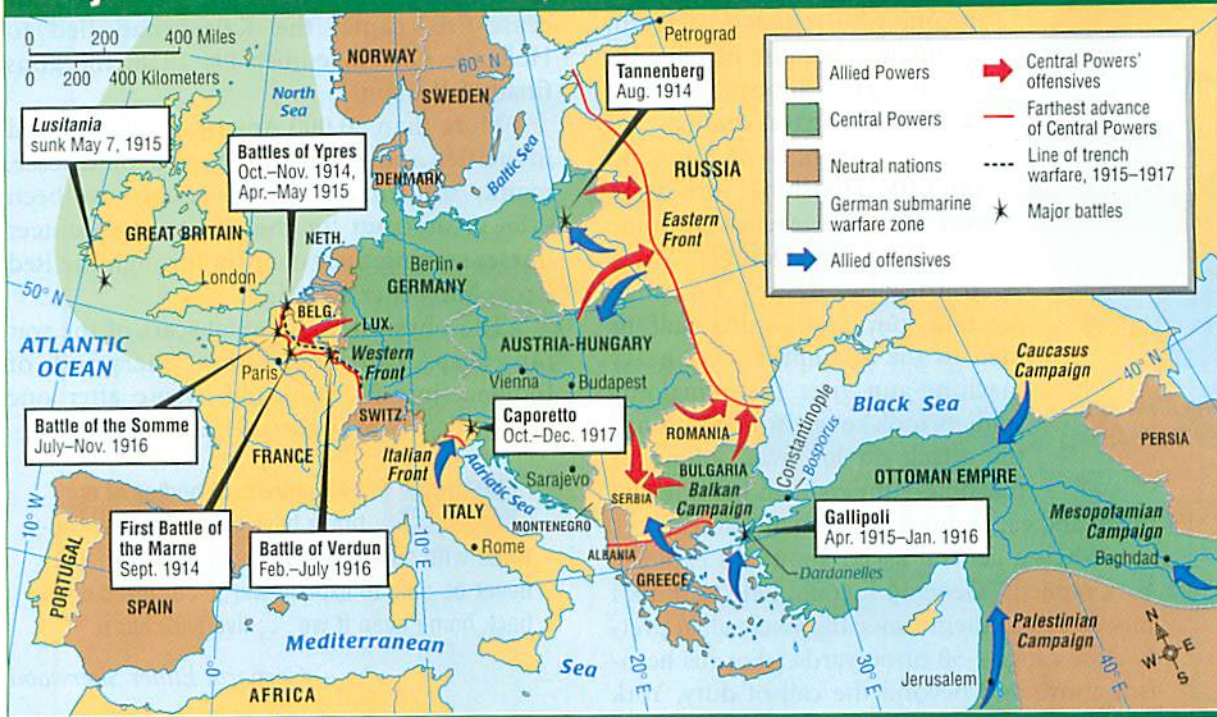
Turning the Tide of War

As American involvement in the war expanded, a major development occurred within the alliance. In November 1917 followers of Vladimir Lenin, called Bolsheviks, violently overthrew Russia's government. Lenin had been living in Switzerland and had promised to make peace with Germany if he ever gained control in Russia. For this reason Germany had helped arrange his return to Russia in April 1917. By November, Lenin had taken over the country.

Lenin made peace with Germany on March 3, 1918. Russia's exit from the war freed the Germans from the two-front war they had been forced to fight. From March through May 1918, German forces turned all their energies toward pounding the French and British lines. They finally broke through, and by June 3 were about 50 miles from Paris.

Americans Save Paris American forces came to the rescue. Marching out from Paris, the men received this word from their leader, Brigadier

Major Battles of World War I, 1914–1917



After the Germans advanced through Belgium, the French prevented them from capturing Paris in the First Battle of the Marne. The war, however, was far from over. A deadly stalemate ensued. **Location** Locate the line of trench warfare. What was its strategic value?

Why didn't it extend across Switzerland?

General James G. Harbord: "We dig no trenches to fall back on. The Marines will hold where they stand." At the battle of Château-Thierry in early June, they did just that. At a loss of over half of their troops, they helped the French save Paris, blunted the edge of the German advance, and began to turn the tide of the war.

Allied Counterattack After turning back the Germans outside Paris, the Allies took heart. Using a new weapon, the tank, which could cross trenches and roll through barbed wire, they began to break the German lines. On August 8 at the battle of Amiens, the Allied armies stopped the German advance once and for all.

On August 11, German general Erich von Ludendorff sensed that the end was near. He advised Kaiser Wilhelm to seek a peace settlement. The Allies, however, insisted on total surrender. In September some 500,000 American troops, assisted by 100,000 French, began to hit the final German strongholds. In the battle of St. Mihiel, the first major military effort entirely in American hands, General Pershing and his troops ousted the Germans

from a long-held position. Soon after, the German army was in full retreat.

The Allies also began to use airplanes to drop bombs. Aerial dogfights already had taken place. Each side had its "aces," such as the American captain Eddie Rickenbacker, who downed 26 enemy fighters. Now Colonel Billy Mitchell organized a fleet of over 1,400 bomb-carrying planes. Although not very effective at first, bombing raids would become a devastating weapon in the future.

Corporal Alvin York

AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY

The final Allied assault, the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, began on September 26, 1918. Over a million AEF troops began the drive to expel the Germans from France and cut their supply lines. Many acts of heroism shone during these final months. But the bravery of Corporal Alvin York stood out above the rest.

Born in 1887, York grew up in the mountains of Tennessee, where he learned to shoot by hunting wild turkeys. York did not volun-

Main Idea CONNECTIONS


What were some of the military innovations introduced during World War I?



Corporal Alvin York
(1887–1964)

teer to fight. In fact, he applied to be classified a conscientious objector, someone who refuses to serve in the military because of religious beliefs. His application was denied, and he was drafted.

As a member of the 82nd Infantry Division, York took part in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. On October 8 his patrol tried to destroy a German machine-gun nest, losing half its men in the attempt. Facing heavy machine-gun fire, the remaining soldiers took cover. York continued the attack on his own, killing 25 machine-gunners with his rifle and pistol and capturing 132 German soldiers.

When a general asked about his exploits, York replied, "General, I would hate to think I missed any of them shots; they were all at pretty close range—50 or 60 yards." For his heroism above and beyond the call of duty, York received the Congressional Medal of Honor as well as the French Croix de Guerre. 

Ending the War

The Allies pressed on against their enemy. The German commanders begged for peace, still

hoping to dictate some terms. The Allies refused. By the time the **armistice**, or cease-fire, came, the Kaiser had fled to Holland. On November 11, 1918, the guns finally fell silent.

More than 50,000 American soldiers died in battle, and many more died of disease, mainly influenza. The toll would have been even greater but for the efforts of volunteer nurses serving their country through the Red Cross and other agencies.

The physical and mental scars of the war ran deep. Corporal Elmer Sherwood of Indiana, just 21 years old, wrote after one bloody battle in August 1918:



“Hundreds of bodies of our brave boys lie on Hill 212, captured with such a great loss of blood. We will never be able to explain war to our loved ones back home even if we . . . live and return.”

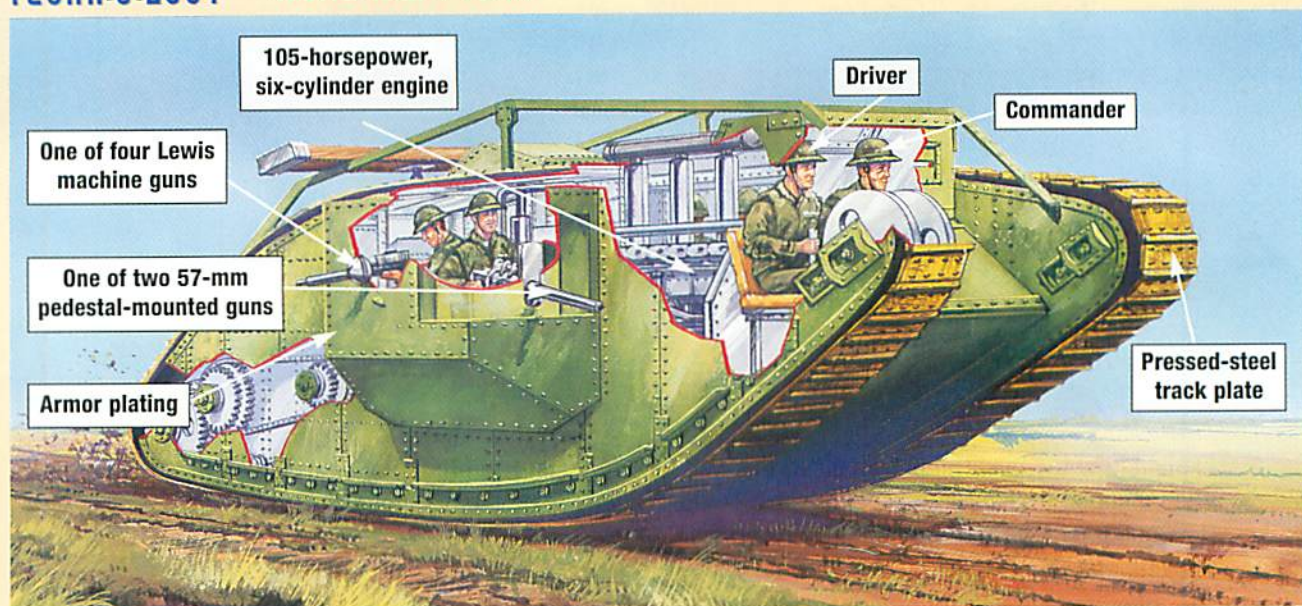
—Corporal Elmer Sherwood

American losses were tiny compared with those suffered by the Europeans. The total death toll of 8 million soldiers and sailors is only an estimate. Still, this figure averages out to more than 5,000 soldiers killed on each day of the war. Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and France all suffered more than a

Major Battles of World War I, 1917–1918



In 1917 the United States entered the war, providing the Allies with both economic and military support. **Location** Why was the fighting concentrated on the western fronts by 1917–1918?



The tank was another new weapon introduced in World War I. It was designed to cross rough terrain and trenches while remaining invulnerable to enemy fire. Tanks were used to launch assaults in advance of foot troops. **Science and Technology** How was the tank a response to trench warfare?

million war dead. Just under 900,000 British troops died. While most of the fighting and dying took place in Europe, there were battles in the Middle East and Africa as well.

The terrible slaughter extended beyond the battlefields. Millions of civilians died during and immediately after the fighting, from starvation, disease, or war-related injuries.

These deaths included hundreds of thousands of Armenian civilians. In a campaign of **genocide**, or the organized killing of an entire people, Ottoman forces deported and murdered Armenians, whom they suspected of disloyalty to the government. The killings of Armenians would continue into the early 1920s.

SECTION 3 REVIEW

Comprehension

- Key Terms** Define: (a) Selective Service Act; (b) American Expeditionary Force; (c) convoy; (d) armistice; (e) genocide.
- Summarizing the Main Idea** What role did American troops play in World War I?
- Organizing Information** Create a chart with three headings: *Preparing for Action*, *Turning the Tide*, and *Ending the War*. Fill in the chart with important details from the section.

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Time Lines** Review the time line at the start of the section. How long did it take

for the American Expeditionary Force to make a significant impact on the course of the war? Explain.

- Drawing Inferences** Long after Pershing's American Expeditionary Force arrived in Europe, French soldiers were still asking, "Where are the Americans?" Why do you think they asked that question?

Writing Activity

- Writing an Expository Essay** Write an essay focusing on the number of war deaths suffered by the main combatants in World War I.

February**1917**Literacy test
for immigrants**June****1917**

Espionage Act

August**1917**Lever Food and Fuel
Control Act**September****1917**Police raids against
IWW members**May****1918**

Sedition Act

1917**1918****1919**

4 On the Home Front

SECTION PREVIEW

Objectives

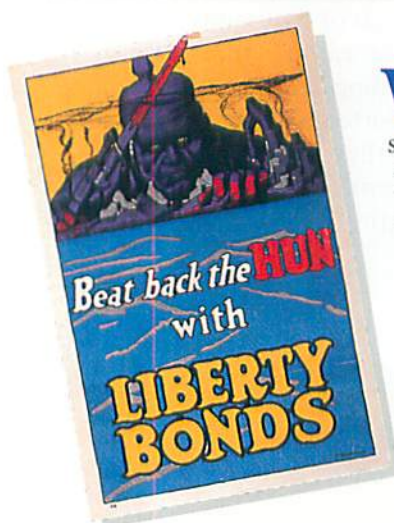
- 1 Explain how the government financed the war and managed the wartime economy.
- 2 Describe how efforts to enforce loyalty led to hostility and repression.
- 3 Describe how the lives of Americans on the home front changed during the war.
- 4 **Key Terms** Define: Liberty Bond; price controls; rationing; daylight saving time; sedition; vigilante.

Main Idea

Americans and their government took extraordinary steps at home to support the war effort.

Reading Strategy

Reading for Evidence As you read, look for evidence to support the following statement, which appears on this page: "Waging war required many sacrifices at home." On a sheet of paper, list as many kinds of sacrifices described as you can.



The U.S. government used posters to whip up sentiment against the "Huns"—the Germans.

Waging war required many sacrifices at home. Despite the efforts of the preparedness movement, the American economy was not ready to meet the demands of modern warfare. In this era, war required huge amounts of money and personnel. As President Wilson explained, now "there are no armies . . . ; there are entire nations armed."

Financing the War

The government launched a vigorous campaign to raise money from the American people. It started offering **Liberty Bonds**, special war bonds sold to support the Allied cause. Like all bonds, they could later be redeemed for the original value of the bonds plus interest. Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo had the idea for Liberty Bonds. By selling war bonds to enthusiastic Americans, McAdoo raised more than \$20 billion. This allowed the United States to loan more than

\$10 billion to the Allies during and just after the war.

Responding to the slogan "Every Scout to Save a Soldier," Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts set up booths on street corners and sold bonds. The government hired popular commercial artists to draw colorful posters and recruited famous screen actors to host bond rallies. An army of 75,000 "four-minute men" gave brief (four-minute) speeches before movies, plays, and school or union meetings to persuade audiences to buy bonds.

Managing the Economy

The government also called on industry to convert to the production of war goods. In 1918 Wilson won authority to set up a huge bureaucracy to manage this process. Business leaders flocked to Washington to take up posts in thousands of new agencies. Because they gave their service for a token salary, they were called "dollar-a-year" men and women.

New Agencies A War Industries Board, headed by financier Bernard Baruch, oversaw the nation's war-related production. The