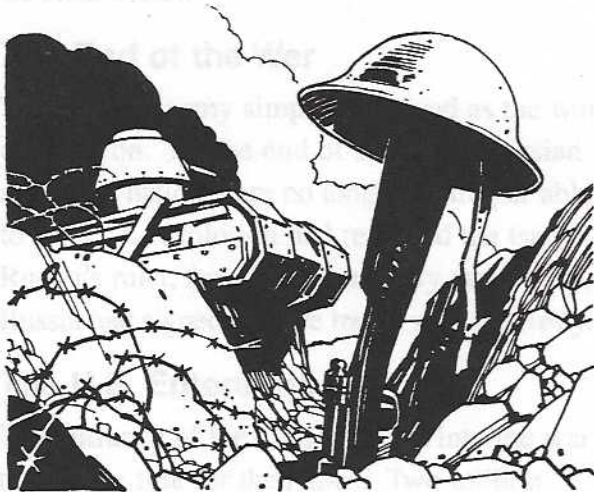




World War I: Later Stages

Battles at Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes

While Germany was attacking France, two separate Russian armies attacked Austria-Hungary and East Prussia. The Russian armies were huge, but they were very poorly trained, equipped, and led. The two Russian commanders hated each other and did not cooperate well. Messages were sent over wireless radio transmitters and were not coded, which enabled them to be intercepted. The German army essentially destroyed both Russian armies, first at Tannenberg and later at Masurian Lakes.



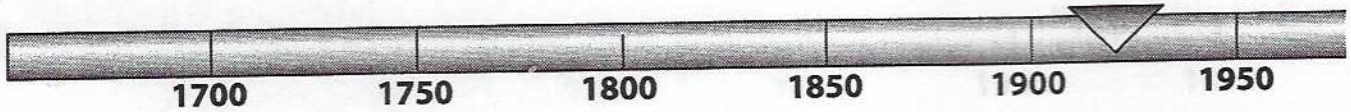
Verdun

By 1916 the German commander-in-chief had decided to attack and destroy the famous complex of fortresses at Verdun, which controlled access to eastern France. The intent was to kill huge numbers of French troops and end the stalemate which had developed. In February 1916, the Germans launched massive attacks against the French at

Verdun and sent waves of troops to wipe out the French defenders. French reinforcements were sent in, and Germany made few real gains. With their rallying cry of "They shall not pass!" the French were able to keep the Germans from advancing. Losses on both sides were high. The battle cost the French 400,000 casualties and the Germans about 320,000 casualties.

Bloodbath at the Somme

The British hoped to break the stalemate near the Somme River in northeastern France. They launched a massive artillery barrage of 1.6 million artillery shells against the entrenched German forces. The German troops moved underground and avoided most of the damage from the barrage. The British troop advance was met with massive force. More than 60,000 British troops were wounded or killed on the first day. When the battle finally ended later in the year, the British had suffered 420,000 casualties, the French lost 195,000, and the German defenders suffered 650,000 casualties. No real progress was made.



Reading
Passages

World War I: Later Stages *(cont.)*

Other Battles

A fierce battle was fought in 1915 on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey where British forces were trying to keep open a narrow waterway which supplied Russia. The British forces were defeated by the Turks with a loss of 214,000 British and Allied casualties and 300,000 Turkish soldiers. The British won a bitter and costly sea battle at Jutland near Denmark in June 1916, which gave them clear command of the seas for the rest of the war. The Third Battle at Ypres in Belgium had the same effect as the battles at Verdun and the Somme—massive casualties on both sides but no clear victor.

The End of the War

The Russian army simply dissolved as the war dragged on. By the end of 1917, the Russian army and nation were no longer willing or able to fight. A revolution had removed the tsar, Russia's ruler, from the throne. By early 1918, Russia had signed a peace treaty with Germany.

The U.S. Enters the War

The entrance of the United States into the war turned the tide for the Allies. Two million U.S. troops were sent to France, where

they fought as an independent force under American leadership. In a series of battles at the Second Battle of the Marne, Argonne Forest, and St. Michel, the Germans realized that they could not match the American forces. Germany was losing on other fronts as well as in Bulgaria, Turkey, and Italy.

Armistice

The Germans agreed to an *armistice*, or peace agreement, on Allied terms which took effect on November 11, 1918, at 11:00 A.M. World War I, the costliest war in human history up to that time, was finally over. Nearly 10 million soldiers were killed, and at least 21 million more were wounded. No one knows how many civilians were killed or injured by the war, but estimates suggest there were at least as many civilian deaths as military deaths from disease, starvation, and war-related causes. Most of the nations in Europe were financially ruined and owed massive war debts. The Treaty of Versailles, the peace settlement which followed the war, was very punitive toward Germany, and aimed to punish the country. This planted the seeds for a future war.

