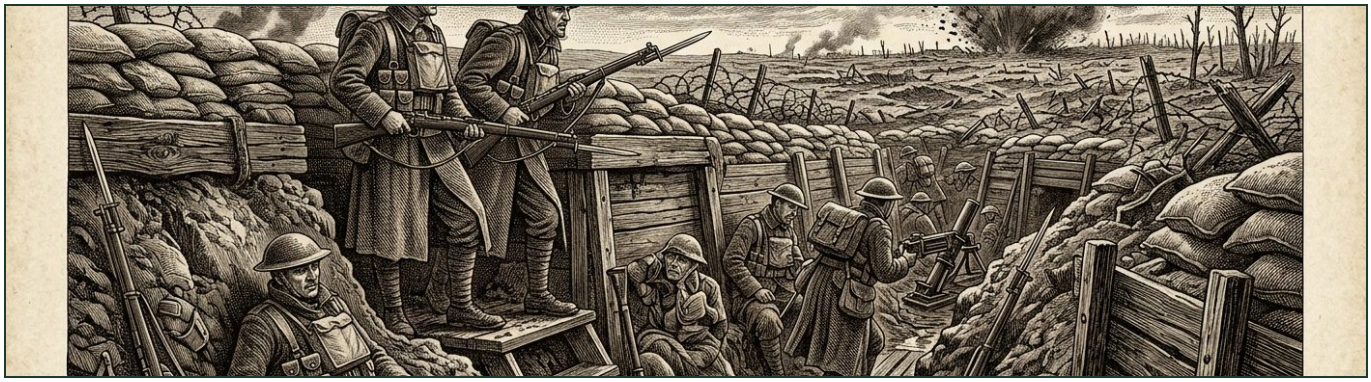


1914 – 1918

World War I Timeline

World War I was a global war fought mainly in Europe from 1914 to 1918. The United States stayed neutral for three years before entering on the Allied side in 1917.

1914 — **Assassination of Franz Ferdinand**

Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, is shot in Sarajevo on June 28, triggering a chain reaction through Europe's alliances.

> **Why it mattered:** *Within weeks the assassination pulled most of Europe's major powers into the deadliest war the world had yet seen.*

1914 — **War Begins**

Germany, Austria-Hungary, and their allies go to war against France, Britain, and Russia in August.

> **Why it mattered:** *Armies dug hundreds of miles of trenches across France and Belgium — the grinding trench warfare that would define the war had begun.*

1915 — **Sinking of the Lusitania**

A German submarine sinks the British ocean liner Lusitania in May, killing nearly 1,200 people including 128 Americans.

> **Why it mattered:** *American deaths turned US public opinion sharply against Germany and began pushing the country toward entering the war.*

1916 — **Battle of the Somme**

A massive Allied offensive on the Somme River in France lasts four months and produces more than a million casualties on both sides.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Somme — one of the bloodiest battles in history — showed the terrible human cost of trench warfare and shook public confidence in the war's leadership.*

World War I Timeline *continued*

1916 — **Battle of Verdun**

German and French forces fight for nearly ten months near Verdun, France, in the longest battle of the war.

> **Why it mattered:** *With roughly 700,000 casualties and almost no territory gained on either side, Verdun became a symbol of the war's terrible waste.*

1917 — **United States Enters the War**

Germany resumes attacks on American ships and is caught secretly urging Mexico to attack the US. Congress declares war on Germany in April.

> **Why it mattered:** *About two million fresh US troops eventually crossed to Europe, giving the exhausted Allies the reinforcements needed to tip the balance.*

1917 — **Russian Revolution**

Revolution sweeps Russia, the tsar is overthrown, and a new government pulls Russia out of the war in December.

> **Why it mattered:** *Germany could move troops from the Eastern Front to France — but the revolution showed the war was pushing nations to the breaking point.*

1918 — **Germany's Last Offensive**

Germany launches a massive spring offensive hoping to win before US troops arrive in full force.

> **Why it mattered:** *The offensive gained ground at first but exhausted Germany's last reserves — when it stalled, the Allies launched a counterattack that would not stop.*

1918 — **Allied Advance**

Allied forces drive Germany back across France and Belgium through the summer and fall, breaking through the German lines.

> **Why it mattered:** *Germany's army was crumbling, its allies were surrendering, and revolution was spreading at home — the war was ending.*

1918 — **The Armistice**

Fighting stops at 11:00 AM on November 11 — the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

> **Why it mattered:** *After more than four years and an estimated 20 million deaths, World War I was over. The peace treaty would redraw the map of Europe and plant the seeds of the next world war.*