WITNESS HISTORY An American War Song

"Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there,
That the Yanks are coming...
We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over.
Over there."
—George M. Cohan, from the song "Over There," written in 1917

Focus Question How did the Allies win World War I?

By 1917, European societies were cracking under the strain of war. Casualties on the fronts and shortages at home sapped morale. The stalemate dragged on, seemingly without end. Soon, however, the departure of one country from the war and the entry of another would tip the balance and end the stalemate.

Waging Total War

As the struggle wore on, nations realized that a modern, mechanized war required the channeling of a nation’s entire resources into the war effort, or total war. To achieve total war, governments began to take a stronger role in directing the economic and cultural lives of their people.

Economies Committed to War Production

Early on, both sides set up systems to recruit, arm, transport, and supply armies. Britain immediately imposed universal military conscription, or "the draft," which required all young men to be ready for military or other service. Britain, too, instituted conscription in 1916. Germany set up a system of forced civilian labor as well.

Governments raised taxes and borrowed huge amounts of money to pay the costs of war. They rationed food and other products, from boots to gasoline. In addition, they introduced other economic controls, such as setting prices and forbidding strikes.

Economic Warfare At the start of the war, Britain’s navy formed a blockade in the North Sea to keep ships from carrying supplies in and out of Germany. International law allowed wartime blockades to eat into or wear away.

Terms, People, and Places

- Summarize events that led to the end of the war.
- Analyze the causes and effects of American entry into the war.
- Explain the effect that years of warfare had on morale.
- Describe how World War I became a total war.

Vocabulary Builder

Use the information below and the following resources to teach the high-use word from this section.

High-Use Word erode, p. 831

Example SENTENCE

The ocean tide eroded the rocks on the shore, turning them into smooth stones.
Waging Total War

Instruct

- Introduce: Key Terms Ask students to find the key term propaganda (in blue) in the text and explain its meaning. Point out that during World War I, governments used propaganda to raise morale and mobilize their citizens. Have students speculate on other ways that a government can try to control or influence public opinion.
- Teach Discuss the idea of a total war. Using the Numbered Heads strategy (TE, p. T23), ask How did governments manipulate their economies to support the war? (raised taxes, borrowed money, rationed goods, set prices, and forbade strikes) How did Britain strike at Germany’s economy? (Britain blockaded Germany, so that Germany could not import needed goods.) How did Germany strike at Britain’s economy? (Germany tried to stop the flow of goods to Britain as well.)
- Analyzing the Visuals Point out the propaganda art on this page. Discuss the effects this poster may have had on a viewer. Then display Color Transparency 156: To the End, by Louis Raemaeker. Use the lesson suggested in the transparency book to guide a discussion on how propaganda art was used in World War I.

Independent Practice

Ask students to consider the role of conscription during war time. Have them write a paragraph explaining the benefits and drawbacks of conscription within a democracy.

Monitor Progress

As students write their responses, circulate to ensure they understand the role of conscription.

Answer

Caption It uses emotion by giving men something to fight for and appealing to their sense of family, safety, and moral obligation.

830 World War I and the Russian Revolution

to confiscate contraband, or military supplies and raw materials needed to make military supplies, but not items such as food and clothing. In spite of international law, the British blockade stopped both types of goods from reaching Germany. As the war progressed, it became harder and harder to feed the German and Austrian people. In Germany, the winter of 1916 and 1917 was remembered as "the turning winter," because the potato crop failed and people ate turnips instead.

To retaliate, Germany used U-boats to create its own blockade. In 1915, Germany declared that it would sink all ships carrying goods to Britain. In May 1915, a German submarine torpedoed the British liner Lusitania off the coast of Ireland. Almost 1,200 passengers were killed, including 128 Americans. Germany justified the attack, arguing that the Lusitania was carrying weapons. When American President Woodrow Wilson threatened to cut off diplomatic relations with Germany, though, Germany agreed to restrict its submarine campaign. Before attacking any ship, U-boats would surface and give warning, allowing neutral passengers to escape to lifeboats. Unrestricted submarine warfare stopped—

Propaganda War Total war also meant controlling public opinion. Even in democratic countries, special boards censored the press. Their aim was to keep complete casualty figures and other discouraging news from reaching the public. Government censors also restricted popular literature, historical writings, motion pictures, and the arts.

Both sides waged a propaganda war. Propaganda is the spreading of ideas to promote a cause or to damage an opposing cause. Governments used propaganda to motivate military mobilization, especially in Britain before conscription started in 1916. In France and Germany, propaganda urged civilians to loan money to the government. Later in the war, Allied propaganda played up the brutality of Germany’s invasion of Belgium. The British and French prose circulated tales of atrocities, horrible acts...
Women Join the War Effort

Women played a critical role in total war. As millions of men left to fight, women took over their jobs and kept national economies going. Many women worked in war industries, manufacturing weapons and supplies. Others joined women’s branches of the armed forces. When food shortages threatened Britain, volunteers in the Women’s Land Army went to the fields to grow their nation’s food. Nurses shared the dangers of the men whose wounds they tended. At aid stations close to the front lines, nurses often worked around the clock, especially after a big “push” brought a flood of casualties. In her diary, English nurse Vera Brittain describes sweating through 90-degree days in France, “stepping homewards, replacing intestines, and draining and reinsewing unmarred rubber tubes” with “grasping human remnants heaped on the floor.”

Morale Collapses

Despite inspiring propaganda, by 1917 the morale of troops and civilians had plumped. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy.

War Fatigue

Long casualty lists, food shortages, and the failures of generals to win promised victories led to calls for peace. Instead of praising the glorious deeds of heroes, war poets began denouncing the leaders who ordered them to die. War fatigue had plunged. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy. Germany was sending 15-year-old recruits to the front. Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy.

Revolution in Russia

As morale collapsed, troops in some French units mutinied. In Italy, many soldiers deserted during the retreat at Caporetto. In Russia, soldiers left the front to join in a full-scale revolution back home.

Total war demanded that civilians work tirelessly to produce and conserve goods to keep the war going. If civilians were unhappy, they might not work well or they might create domestic unrest that would upset supplies and reduce the war effort.

Women’s work during World War I laid the groundwork for the women’s suffrage movement. The suffrage movement, which had been a central part of the social agenda of many European women for decades, gained momentum during World War I. The war spotlighted women’s contributions to society and highlighted the need for women to participate in the democratic process.

Edith Cavell

Edith Cavell (1865–1915) did not plan on becoming a hero. As she faced a firing squad, her last reported words were, “Standing as I do in view of God and Humanity, I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness toward anyone.” Why do you think the British government spread the story of Edith Cavell to the world?

Monitor Progress

■ After students read Edith Cavell’s War Diary, ask what the primary sources have in common with the poem by Siegfried Sassoon (in the text).

■ Have students read the Vocabulary Builder and complete the worksheet.

Answers

■ Total war demanded that civilians work tirelessly to produce and conserve goods to keep the war going. If civilians were unhappy, they might not work well or they might create domestic unrest that would upset the war effort.

■ The people rebelled and overthrew the government. Russia pulled out of the war.

■ Like most ordinary people caught up in war, Edith Cavell had little control over the situation. She was a nurse, and her main concern was caring for the sick and wounded. She was not a political activist. However, she helped Allied soldiers escape to the Netherlands. This act was considered a war crime, and she was sentenced to death.

■ The people rebelled and overthrew the government. Russia pulled out of the war. What happened in Russia, partly because of low morale? (The people rebelled and overthrew the government. Russia pulled out of the war.)

■ Why were people tired of war? (Troops may refuse to continue fighting or not fight well; civilians may not work hard to contribute materials that support the war; both troops and civilians may rebel to end the war.)

■ Remind students that the drop in morale affected the end of the war. (Troops may refuse to continue fighting or not fight well; civilians may not work hard to contribute materials that support the war; both troops and civilians may rebel to end the war.)

■ Ask students what might happen if the drop in morale continued. (Civilians may rebel and overthrow the government. Troops may refuse to continue fighting.)

■ Remind students that both pieces reflect a weariness and bitterness toward war.

■ Have students read the Vocabulary Builder and complete the worksheet.

■ Note Taking Transparencies, 171
The United States Declares War/Victory at Last

Instruct
- **Introduce**: Ask students to recall the state of the Allied cause in 1917. Have them predict how the entry of the United States on the side of the Allies will affect the morale of both sides.
- **Teach**: Review the reasons the United States declared war against the Central Powers. Then point out that although the United States declared war in April 1917, troops did not arrive in Europe until 1918. Ask: How did the Central Powers try to take advantage of the delay? (They pushed to win the war before American troops arrived.) What was the outcome of this strategy? (The Germans pushed back troops on the Western Front, but were unable to win before American reinforcements arrived.)
- **Quick Activity**: Display Color Transparency 160: Summary of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points. Use the lesson suggested in the transparency book to guide a discussion about Wilson’s terms for resolving the conflict.
- **Color Transparencies**: 160

Independent Practice
Have students suppose that they are living in the United States during 1917. Ask them to write a letter to the editor explaining whether or not the United States should enter the war. Letters should refer to the Zimmerman Note and Germany’s decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare.

Monitor Progress
- As students work on their letters, circulate to ensure they understand how opinion on entering the war shifted during this time.
- Check Reading and Note Taking Study Guide entries for student understanding.

Answers
- Poor morale, among other factors, led to revolution in Russia and Russia’s eventual withdrawal from the war, which weakened the Allies.
- American soldiers came into the war supplied with resources and training, but hadn’t experienced war on their home soil.

The United States Declares War

In April 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. Many factors contributed to the decision of the United States to exchange neutrality for war in 1917.

**Why Join the Allies?** Many Americans supported the Allies because of cultural ties. The United States shared a cultural history and language with Britain and sympathized with France as another democracy. On the other hand, some Germans Americans favored the Central Powers. So did many Irish Americans, who resented British rule of Ireland, and Russian Jewish immigrants, who did not want to be allied with the tsar. Germany had ceased submarine attacks in 1915 after pressure from President Wilson. However, in early 1917, Germany was desperate to break the stalemate. On February 1, the German government announced that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare. Wilson angrily denounced Germany.

Also, in early 1917, the British intercepted a message from the German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, to his ambassador in Mexico. In the note, Zimmermann authorized his ambassador to propose that Germany would help Mexico “to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona” in return for Mexican support against the United States. Britain revealed the Zimmermann note to the American government. When the note became public, anti-German feeling intensified in the United States.

**Declaring War** In April 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. “We have no selfish ends to serve,” he stated. Instead, he painted the conflict idealistically as a war “to make the world safe for democracy” and later as a “war to end war.” The United States needed months to recruit, train, supply, and transport a modern army across the Atlantic. But by 1918, about two million American soldiers had joined the war-weary Allied troops fighting on the Western Front. Although relatively few American troops engaged in combat, their arrival gave Allied troops a much-needed morale boost. Just as important to the debt-ridden Allies was American financial aid.

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The Fourteen Points

Though he had failed to maintain American neutrality, Wilson still hoped to be a peacemaker. In January 1919, he issued the Fourteen Points, a list of his terms for resolving this and future wars. He called for freedom of the seas, free trade, large-scale reductions of armaments, and an end to secret treaties. For Eastern Europe, Wilson favored self-determination, the right of people to choose their own form of government. Finally, Wilson urged the creation of a “general association of nations” to keep the peace in the future.

Victory at Last

A final showdown on the Western Front began in early 1918. The German high command wanted to achieve a major victory before American troops arrived in Europe. In March, the Germans launched a huge offensive that by July had pushed the Allies back 40 miles. These offensives exhausted the Germans, however, and by then American troops were arriving by the thousands. The Allies then launched a counterattack, slowly driving German forces back across France and Belgium. In September, German generals told the kaiser that the war could not be won. Uprisings exploded among hungry city dwellers across Germany. German morale in Germany plummeted. The government in Germany toppled, with the Allies. At 11 A.M. on November 11, 1918, the Great War at last came to an end.

Celebrating the Armistice

As the guns went silent, crowds celebrated the end of the war. Here, British and American soldiers and civilians wave the American and French flags in relief and jubilation.

Checkpoint What are three factors that led the United States to enter the war?

Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress

- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.

Reteach

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary.

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-assessment and vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-2631

Questions should relate to the main idea of the thesis and be useful for research.

Answers

- three of the following: unrestricted submarine warfare, cultural ties, the Zimmermann Note
- Wilson’s desire to “make the world safe for democracy”
- U.S. financial aid helped the Allies, and domestic unrest disrupted the government.

Writing About History

Quick Write: Gather Evidence to Support Thesis Statement Suppose you are writing an essay with the following thesis statement: “Women played a critical role in World War I.” Write three questions like the two before that would help you gather evidence to support this thesis.

- What types of things did women do during the war?
- Why was this work important?

WEB CODE: L2