2 March 2009

The Great War

Ossuary and cemetery
Douaumont (near Verdun),
Meuse, France
The Great War: End of Nineteenth-Century Europe

Devastation and Destruction

Expectations, Causes, Consequences

The war to end all wars? Or, the war that did not end?

Käthe Kollwitz, “The Grieving Parents” Vladslo, West Flanders, Belgium (1925-1932).
The Western Front, 1914-1918 and trench warfare

Shovels used by British Army
1913: 2,500
1914-1918: 10,000,000
The Western Front: Devastation

Ypres, Belgium, 1919

Battles of Ypres
31 Oct.-22 Nov. 1914 Allied victory

22 Apr. 25 May 1915 German conquests
(first use of poison gas on western front)

21 July-6 Nov. 1917 (Battle of Passchendaele)
500,000 dead and wounded

I stood up and looked over the front of my hole. There was just a dreary waste of mud and water, no relic of civilization, only shell holes… And everywhere were bodies, English and German, in all stages of decomposition. E.C. Vaughan, *Some Desperate Glory, Officer’s Diary 1917*
Military Dead and Wounded in the War, 1914-1918

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Military Dead</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1,900,000</td>
<td>4,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>4,950,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
<td>4,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria-Hungary</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>3,620,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman Empire</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>950,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>205,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Numbers in Perspective

Average **daily** death toll
900 French soldiers
1300 German soldiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dead and wounded</th>
<th>total population</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6,100,000</td>
<td>64,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>6,650,000</td>
<td>158,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5,600,000</td>
<td>39,600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria-Hungary</td>
<td>4,820,000</td>
<td>51,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>45,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>35,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>305,000</td>
<td>92,000,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

French combat deaths, Sat. (22 Aug. 1914)—27,000
Russian casualties (1915): 5000 per day
horses and mules killed in war: 8,000,000

Canadian soldier and his horse wearing gasmasks, 1916
France in World War One
  • population: 40 million
  • military war dead: 1.4 million
  • military wounded: 4 million

United States in World War Two
  • population: 131 million
  • military war dead: 400,000
  • military wounded: 670,000

Great War: Devastation and Destruction
The Costs of Total War

Cost: US$80,000 every minute of the war (enough at the time to pay rent on six-room house for ten years)

“Christmas in the Field! Give care packages for our warriors” German poster (1914)

“Give your gold for France. Gold is fighting for victory” (French war loan poster, 1915)

British recruiting poster

Great War: Devastation and Destruction
Total War and the Home Front

War Cabinet (Great Britain)
Hindenburg Program (Germany)

“Food for the Guns” British postcard, 1917

Go, soldiers, and fulfill your duties...
Oh Lord, come to your empire [Reich],
.... may Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Barbarians + Civilization: Mobilizing the Colonies

“Some Indian gentlemen coming to defeat the German barbarians”

African Army and Colonial Troops Day

India Gate Memorial
New Delhi, India
74,187 Indian military deaths in World War One
The Alliance System, 1892-1914

1892 Alliance of France and Russia

1904 Entente Cordiale between France and Great Britain

Great War: Expectations, Causes, Consequences
“In two weeks, we shall defeat France, and then we will turn around, defeat Russia, march to the Balkans and establish order there”
—German Interior Minister, Friedrich Wilhelm von Loebell, 1914
Peace and the Idea of War, 1871-1914

Napoleon’s victories, 1794-1812

Wars of German unification, 1864-1871

overseas expansion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British military spending</th>
<th>1887 32,000,000 British pounds</th>
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<tr>
<td>1898 44,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913 77,000,000</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German military spending</th>
<th>1890 31,000,000 British pounds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900 40,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914 110,000,000</td>
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“Death of the Spanish General in Morocco”
cover of illustrated supplement to *Petit Journal* 13. Nov. 1893
Paris Peace Conference, 1919 and Treaty of Versailles

Key terms of Treaty of Versailles (between Allied Powers and Germany)

Germany lost approx. 13% of European territory and all overseas colonies

German military limited to 100,000; no draft allowed
no submarines or weapon manufacture

Germany solely responsible for the war

Germany to pay reparations of 132 billion marks—equal to two year’s of Gross National Product before the war
Permanent Changes to the Landscape

5 million acres of northern France ruined

60 feet blown off the height of one hill near Verdun

1990—22 tons of unexploded shells removed from département of the Somme alone (approximate size and location shown on map)

“Destroyed Village”

Great War: the war that did not end?
Ossuary and cemetery
Douaumont (near Verdun), Meuse