

The End of WWI

Why the USA entered WWI: Had been neutral and isolationist. Were upset by the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 **but not enough to enter the war over**. In 1917, Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare, sunk 7 American ships and **then they entered the war**. Also annoyed Germany was trying to get Mexico on side and (President Wilson at least) wanted to make a safe, fair, democratic world of international co-operation.

The War at Sea

Early Battles: victory for the Royal navy in the North Sea at Heligoland (1914) which kept the German fleet in port for several months; some east coast British towns were shelled by German ships.

British Blockade: Germany's ports were blockaded by Britain- stopping supplies getting through Germany's small coastline. Over half a million German civilians died of starvation. Crucial factor in Germany's surrender.

Battle of Jutland: Germany attempted to stop the British blockade by attacking ships at Jutland. They sank more ships (14 British lost to 11 German) but failed to lift the blockade. Both sides claim the victory.

U-Boat Campaign: Germans attempt to blockade the British by using U-boats to sink trade ships. Sank the Lusitania (British ship carrying some American passengers and probably supplies). Unrestricted submarine warfare from after the Battle of Jutland. Hoping to keep the US out of the war. Failed although it made it easier then for Germany to keep using U-boats. Germans had 46 large U-boats, 23 smaller and they caused British supplies of food to reach crisis levels in 1917, however the U-boats couldn't keep it up and the British started a convoy system.

Convoy System: Ships travelled in groups to protect the merchant shipping. Slowed them down, but the U-boats could not sink a whole convoy. From May 1917, majority of merchant vessels reached their destination. Germans had failed.

Russia's Surrender in 1917

Soldiers began mutinies in July 1917 during the Kerensky Offensive where they disobeyed the commands of their leaders and refused to fight. They were pushed back 150 miles. They surrendered, signing the treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany because:

- 1) **Lack of morale: the Russian soldiers did not care about the country's treaty obligations towards Britain and France.**
- 2) **They were not good soldiers- badly led, poorly equipped, underfed and had to walk long distances because transport in Russia was so bad.**
- 3) **The soldiers lacked discipline. The Tsar (king) was forced to abdicate (resign) in March 1917 and the soldiers began to set up committees which disobeyed the officers and allowed Communists to argue against the war.**
- 4) **They lacked supplies, made worse by constant strikes about living and working conditions by the Russian people- including Petrograd rail workers in October 1917.**
- 5) **Communist Revolution under the Bolshevik party in October 1917 which took over the government. This new government promised to end the war ('Peace, Bread and Land') and that was their first act.**

Why Germany agreed to an armistice in 1918: 1) Conditions in Germany were terrible due to British blockade. People were starving. 2) Revolutionary groups were starting to break out in Germany and the communist revolution in Russia made the German government worry that the same would happen in Germany unless the war was over. 3) President Wilson of the USA had published his Fourteen Points which were all about fairness and international co-operation, as well as a League of Nations who would protect Germany and the German government wanted to take advantage of those points. 4) The failure of the German Spring Offensive/ Ludendorff Offensive pushed the Germans back to the Hindenburg line. The Germans wanted to end the war before Germany got invaded by the Allies.