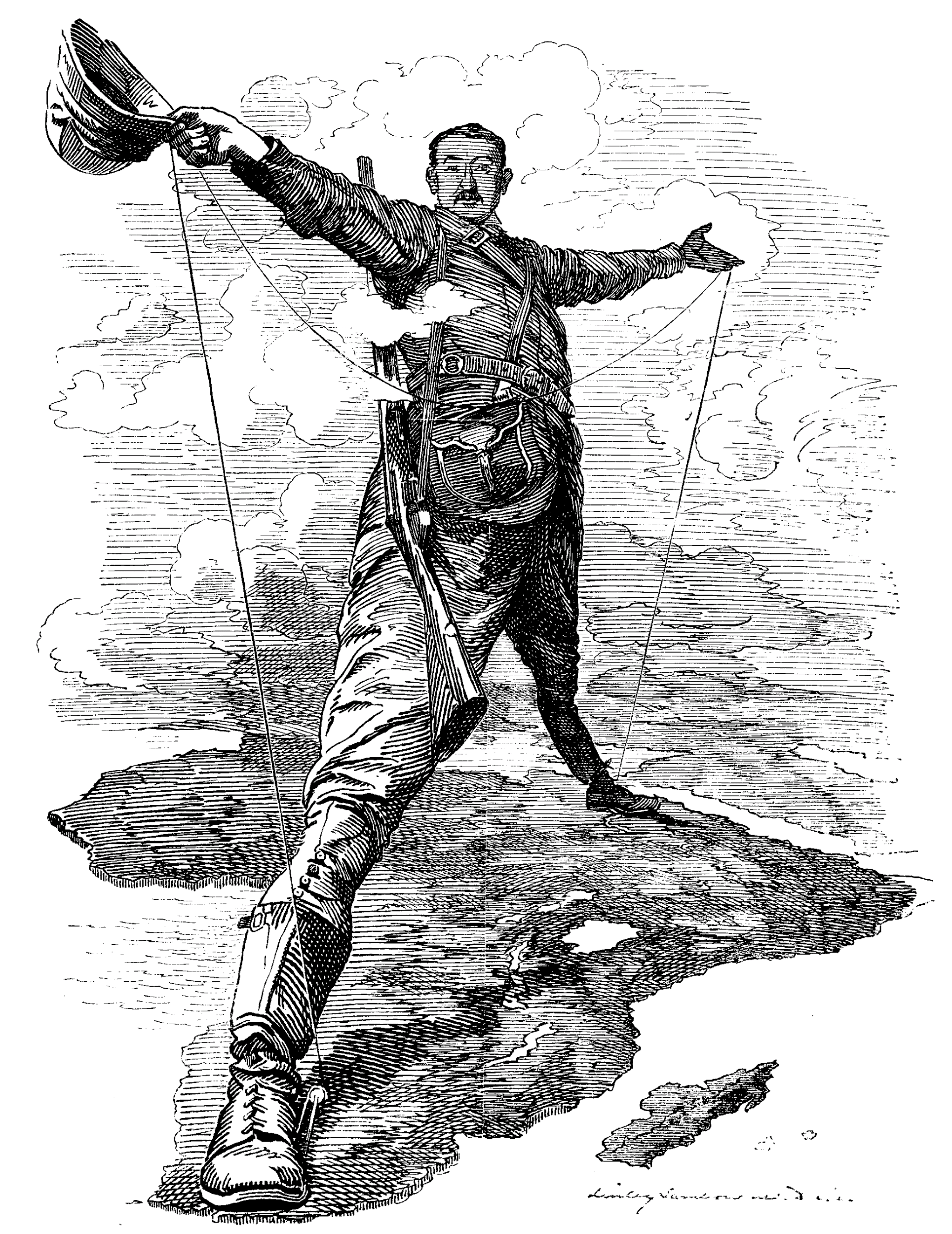
Summary: World War I was the war to end all wars, but as we can see today that never came true. The four year span of military conflict was not just between Germany and the Allied Forces, but spread across Europe, Africa, The Middle East and the Pacific Ocean. Almost all major nations played a part in this event and still mourn the fallen or remember the scars that this war created. During this war, new technologies would alter the battlefield including mustard gas, planes, and tanks. After four years of fighting this war would end and forever change the world in both society and technology, but also the idea of war itself. The objective of this website is to explore the events and ideas that occurred during this war to see how World War I still matters today.

Chapter 1: Europe before the War

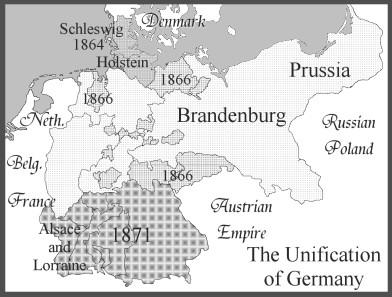
Europe is a region that historically has been unstable and changing. Regional wars and constantly changing borders from conquest or diplomatic agreements are a major part of European history. Only after the fall of the Soviet Russia has Europe stabilized. In the late 1800’s Europe conquered the last part of the world that would struggle to fight back. Europe would then look to itself and see possible war to expand their imperial empires which would lead to one of the most violent wars in history and would forever change Europe and its Empires.

**Section 1 Imperialism and Colonialism in Europe**: 

Before World War I, many of the European nations were expanding their power in Africa, in just a span of thirty years, Africa would go from indigenous rule to European Colonies. Europeans were already present in Africa before this rapid change due to merchants and missionaries. The European conquest occurred mostly due to superior technology, military and economies. And for many of these nations, colonialism was a way to expand their power outside of European borders. All major powers of World War 1 had claims in Africa and Asia, where the British Empire had much more than others.

The British Empire before 1880 was in a golden age, where the phrase the “Sun never sets on the British Empire” was true, Britain had control of Australia, India, major parts of Africa, Egypt and Canada. The British were known for their strong navy but also the ability to use their colonies to produce various goods. France had Vietnam, parts of North Africa, while Germany had colonies in Indonesia and Africa. Colonization was done not just to expand borders to but to produce more economic opportunities. Imperialism was also important to these nations, as they were not just controlling these colonies by trade, but by stronger military force, and for some of these nations in the past to expand their borders they would go to war with neighboring countries. The Austro-Hungarians did this, where by going to war with the Ottomans they were able to take more land, but also start to make claims in the Balkans. Imperialism and the drive to expand borders is still a problem today, where Russia has recently ceded a part of Ukraine via invasion. Though most nations are not considered imperialistic, many nations exert their strength without claiming other parts of countries, the United States is a great example of this, where it has over 800 military bases in over 70 countries across the globe. 

Section 2 Germany:

Many people forget that Germany is a relatively young nation compared to France, Russia and Britain. The region of Germany before its unification was composed of various independent states and two Empires, Austria and Prussia. In 1815, the German Confederation was formed, but both these “super states” were competing for power, and as time went on Prussia and the German states became industrialized and in 1862 would be led by one of the most powerful men in history Otto Von Bismarck. He became the prime minister of Prussia and aimed to make the Prussian states aligned with Germany and he was able to, and in 1866 the Austro-Prussian War occurred which led to a German victory. This made France worried about Germany's imperialist drive to expand its borders. In 1870 war broke out between Prussia and France, and the Prussian forces were able to capture Paris within 6 months. After occupying Paris, France would surrender, and after the war, the German Empire would become one of the strongest powers in Europe. Many Europeans saw this as a problem, but due to their horrific defeat France would start to build up better defenses in case Germany planned to take more French land, and the G ermans took note of this and would plan around it in World War 1, by attacking through Belgium. Both sides were not prepared for the hell that their next war would bring. 

Section 3 Balkan Expansion: The Balkan Peninsula today is composed of various countries and is where the newest European countries exits, due to constant turmoil and civil wars. The Balkans were not always like this, but due to history this region would become extremely important to this war. The Ottoman Empire once extended deep into Europe after defeating the Byzantine Empire in 1453 which was once part of the Roman Empire, would over the next 200 years expand farther into Europe, but after major defeats in 1683 it would start to lose the land it conquered and by the eve of World War I, the Balkans would be composed of independent states, those these independent states were the target of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The Austro-Hungarians would start to expand its borders here as well after wars with the Ottoman Empire it would take over modern day Bosnia, but aimed to take Serbia next. The Russian Empire opposed this as it was their last ally in the Balkans, and due to the Austro-Hungarian invasion would declare war and began World War I.

Though the Balkans would be a major reason for World War I, this region still suffers from it and all the prior conquests, The area is composed of many ethnic groups including Slavs, Croats, Serbs and Greeks, but due to the invasion of the Ottomans new groups would settle in these lands including many people who were Islamic causing religious problems in this region too alongside the ethnic problems. It's the reason these nations fought against the Austro-Hungarians and Ottomans, they wanted their own identity and laws. It's the reason the borders in this region have changed recently that the populations have different cultures and identities and want to have their own nation to allow their cultures and ideas to flourish.

Section 4 Industrialization: 

The 19th century was a time to be alive, similar to what is happening today, technology was rapidly evolving, and due to the discovery of coal and oil new ways of transportation were being made. Cars were getting popular before and during the war, while on the other hand just nine years before the war started the Wright Brothers flew the first plane. The rapid technological advancements would be used in this war with great success. The Germans would use Airships or Blimps to do air raids, while broadly balloons were used for reconnaissance. Airplanes were first used for mi litary recon in 1911. Planes would be integral to the war and saw more active use later in the war compared to airships which were abandoned in 1917 due to most being shot down. While on the ground tanks would make their first military appearance in 1915, where they were used to break trench warfare.

Besides vehicles, technology advanced in weapons drastically, where in the last major European war, the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, standard issue rifles still were single loaded, but by the start of WWI, these rifles would be replaced by bolt action rifles often carrying 5 rounds before reloading, which increased the lethality of weapons. Machine guns evolved during the war and for the first time, both sides would be using these rapid fire guns. A famous poet, Hillaire Belloc, said “Whatever happens, we have got The Maxim gun, and they have not,” with both sides having the advanced guns, World War I became a war of evolving technology to counteract one another. The only other war to have a similar technological race would be the Second World War. 

Section 5 Alliances:

There are many reasons that World War I became as big as it got. What started as a regional war in the Balkans became a war across Europe and is often cited that due to the intricate alliances that this war became international. Diplomacy is important, making friends and alliances often prevents nations from invading one another and having beneficial trade. Its why NATO exists today as it is a way for many nations to work together and protect one another. For example if a Baltic Country like Estonia or Latvia were invaded by Russia, NATO nations would react and defend their ally. Though in World War I there were a lot less nations participating in these broad alliances. Where NATO is composed of 28 nations, the Entente was just three nations.

The Triple Entente was between Russia, Britain and France, which was formed in 1907 to counteract the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy. So when war was to break out, all nations would declare war on one another besides Italy, who believed the Triple Alliance was for defensive wars not offensive wars, Italy later on would join the Entente. The United State of America stood back in the early part of this war due to a longstanding isolationistic view on Europe known as the Monroe Doctrine but due to German U-boats that would change as the war went on and the USA would start supporting the Entente.

Chapter 2: War breaks out in Europe

After an assassination of an important Austro-Hungarian, the major militaries of Europe would mobilize and begin the war to end all wars. A new style of warfare was adopted during this war, where both sides dug in for a war of attrition and stagnation. And unlike other wars, it wasn’t just a soldiers war, but a war that used the entire nation.

Section 1: “The Damn Fool Event in the Balkans”

There are not many events in history that a singular nobody would change the world in one day. On June 28th 1914 Gavrilo Princip killed two people, and what he did would cause the ignition of World War I. The Balkans were unstable at the dawn of World War I, and the recently acquired Bosnia there were still people in Bosnia who wanted to be part of Serbia instead of Austria-Hungary. These nationalist would plan to assassinate the visiting Archduke on June 28th. The itinerary for his visit in Sarajevo was published to those who wanted see the visit. The Archduke’s vehicle was an open car, and on the parade the first assassination attempt failed, where a grenade was thrown but did not detonate. The failed assassin took a cyanide pill and jumped into the river, but the pill failed and the river was shallow.

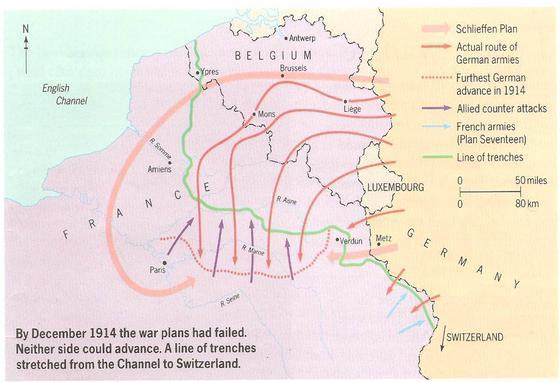
But coincidentally the Archduke’s car would take a wrong turn and went into reverse. the building next door was where Gavrilo Princep was loitering and he took the opportunity to finish what he and the other nationalists couldn’t do. Princep killed Ferdinand and his wife. This event would cause Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia shortly after, and then cause the chain reaction of war declarations from other European powers causing World War I. 

Section 2: Schlieffen Plan

With Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia, it was inevitable that Russia would declare war on Austria-Hungary. Germany had to defend its ally, but feared that the other Entente powers would declare war on Germany. The German military was planning for this possibility, where based on their previous war with France, they planned for a two front war. Germany would flank through Belgium and Luxembourg to take out France within six weeks. During that six weeks’ time Russian forces would mobilize and be ready to fight Germany on the eastern side. This plan was called the Schlieffen Plan. A point in this plan was to avoid sieging Paris as it took months in the Franco-Prussian War, but instead eliminate the French military to win the war in France.

This plan would fail for multiple reasons. First off, the Russian mobilized in 10 days versus six months. The Belgians defended their land instead of letting Germany walk through, which caused Britain to declare war on Germany. Due to the lack of rapid movement, Germany was unable to take France over it six months. The German forces had great success in the Battle of the Frontiers, and were able to make progress towards Paris, but the joint forces of Britain and France would hold the line at the Battle of the Marne. 

Section 3: Trench Warfare.

The German offensive push of 1914 would come to a massive halt at the river Marne. This battle gave the Entente a well needed victory. The battle was very bloody and both sides had massive casualties, and the French alone had over 200,000 casualties. This victory would change the war on the west as both sides would start to entrench themselves. The next campaign on the front would be the Race to the Sea where both sides would fight each other while new trenches were built from Switzerland all the way to the coast. The Entente powers wanted to out flank Germany, but during this race no battle had a decisive victory. The German war plan changed from annihilation to exhaustion. The next three years would be mostly composed of trench warfare and occasional offensive on certain positions. Neither side would have a major victory to eliminate the opposition.

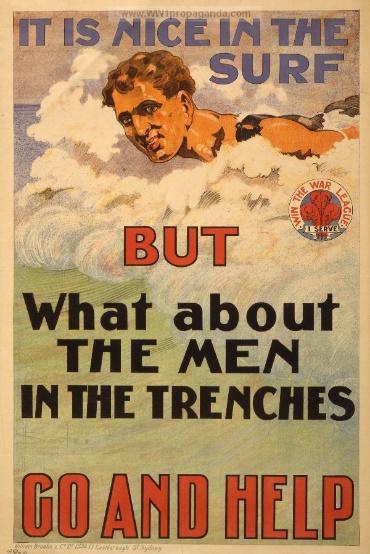
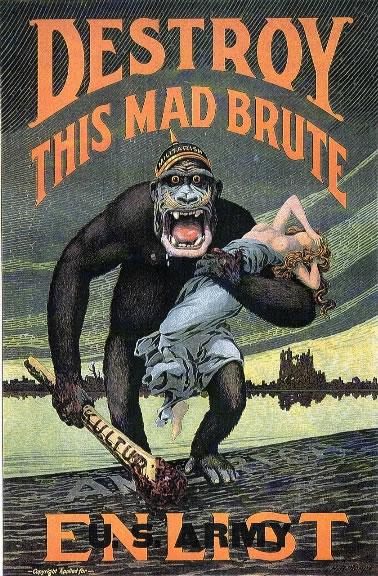
Trench warfare was a majority of World War I, where both sides would dig out lines of defenses. Trenches became home to many soldiers, soldiers would fire from trenches, which protected them from other rifle and artillery fire. The area between the trenches became no-man’s land, where any person out there was a sitting duck. Barbed wire and mines were placed in between to cause problems to any assault on a trench. Barbed wire was used at first to contain cattle, but was a cheap and replaceable tool to make it harder for assaults on trenches. As the war went on new weapons were used to overcome trenches. Trench raids became more effective due to new guns and gas weapons, while tanks and airplanes made trenches easier to overcome.

Section 4: Eastern Front

While Germany pushed in the west, it also had to defend itself from the Russian assault. Russia invaded East Prussia in mid-August with a strength of over 800,000 men, compared to the defenders the Germans only had 250,00 in strength. The German army was able to win at Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes. The Russian soldiers were not trained as well compared to a German soldier which is one reason their invasion failed, alongside a rushed plan to aide their French allies, the Russians did not have great success against Germany.

Austria Hungary and Russia would also battle in 1914, where Russia was victorious and able to take over Galicia, which is a part of present day Poland. The Austro-Hungarian losses forced Germany to send more soldiers to the Eastern Front to aide their ally. Though by the end of 1914, the war on the east would slow down after an Austro-Hungarian defeat at their Przemysl Fortress. The Austro-Hungarians also lost on the Serbian Front. After three offensive pushes, and even taking important locations, the Serbians were able to counter attack and force the Austrians out until 1915, where Germany would aid their ally. The Ottoman Empire remained neutral during the initial part of the war, but by the end of the year The Ottomans would agree to join the central powers. 

Section 5: Total War and Propaganda

Unlike any war before, World War 1’s massive casualties and combat in civilian areas would become a total war. Where most militaries before WWI relied on mercenaries or volunteer enlistment, WWI would have conscription and drafts to get the soldiers needed to keep fighting in the war of attrition. Many civilians saw the brute force of the war, due to their towns and villages being the frontline across the entire war. Many civilians were displaced or killed during the war. Over two million died due to military action, while over five million died due to malnutrition and disease. Germans would bomb civilian locations throughout the war. In early 1915, Germany would use its zeppelins to bomb Great Britain , but were not effective. Germany would also deploy artillery in 1918 that had a range of 75 miles, and required calculations of the earth’s rotation for accurate fire. This was used to bomb Paris from afar. These weapons were not just tools of destruction but also tools of fear.

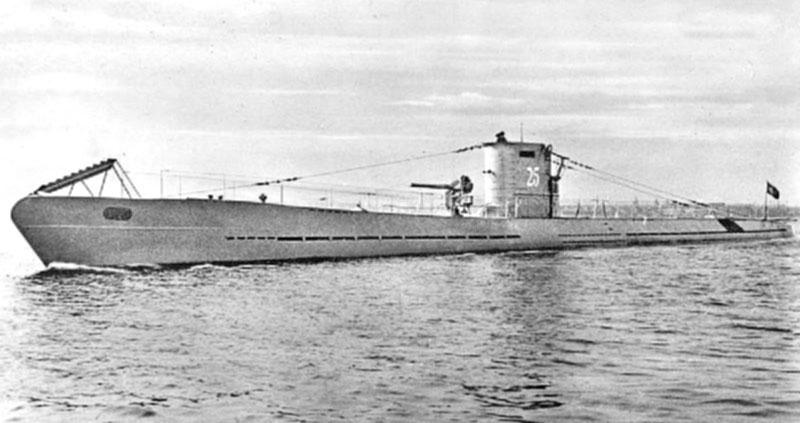
The war was also full of propaganda to gather moral and patriotism in each nation. From movies to news the war was told in certain way to encourage enlistment but also convince the population of a nation. Propaganda was also used to make the enemy seem unhuman often portraying them as beasts. Britain would use its transatlantic cable to influence Americans, while certain losses would be used to inspire others to join to get revenge for the fallen. Propaganda was used a lot during the war and would become a major tool in future wars as media became more accessible to civilians.

Chapter 3: 1915 and Central Power Victory

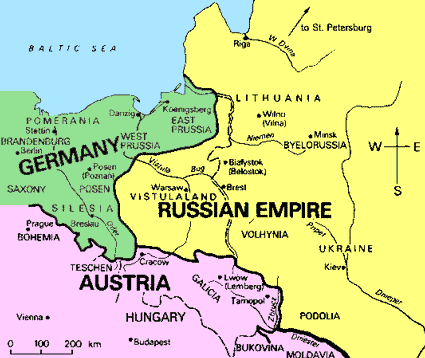
1915 was a good year for the Central Powers, even with the loss of Italy, the central powers would gain the aid of the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. The western front was mostly in stalemate due to trench warfare, but with new technologies the war got worse or the soldier on the ground. The Entente would start its campaign against the Ottoman Empire, with a major defeat at Gallipoli, but other victories elsewhere. The Russians would lose Poland due to a joint offensive from Austria-Hungary and Germany.

Section 1: Naval Warfare and Blockades

Though most of World War I would be fought in Land and Air, there was another type of war being fought in the seas. The larger British Fleet was able to blockade Germany from oversea resources and trade. Only two major attempts were made by the Germans to break the blockade. The battle of Dogger Bay would occur on January 24, 1915. Due to superior intelligence, the British were able to prepare in advance for the German raid. Caught by surprise, the German fleet retreated with one cruiser sunk. While the Germans lacked a stronger navy, the did have another tactic, by using their advanced submarines. U-boats were used to destroy military ships, but in 1915, Germany announced unrestricted submarine warfare. Before this German U-boats needed to surface and check non military boats, but now with this shot without warning. On May 7th The RMS Lusitania was torpedoed and destroyed where 1,198 civilians died. This event would cause the United States to pressure Germany to stop unrestricted warfare, this effort would resume in 1917. The Lusitania was considered an auxiliary war ship and had over 4 million rifle rounds on board, which was the German’s reasoning for destroying it.

The British navy would also do something important in their naval campaign, they would tap and cut Germany’s transatlantic cable to America. Which allowed only British positive news to reach the Americas, but also allowed Britain to intercept messages which would be useful later in the war at getting the United States into the war. 

Section 2: Eastern Front and Poland

Russia’s took massive losses at the start of the war, but had some successes against the Austro-Hungarians. Germany did change its plan and started to aid its weaker ally. By the end of 1914 The Eastern Front now had a larger central force to counter attack the Russian Army. Under equipped and slowly outnumbered the Russians were defeated and forced to retreat out of Poland by the Summer of 1915. On their retreat they did something horrible, killing ethnic minorities that supported Germany on their retreat, and by the end of the year a new frontline in the Eastern front was created. This front was closer to modern day Ukraine and Belarus. The German military would continue fighting on the Eastern Front, which did put strain on its Western Front. The inclusion of the Ottoman Empire to the central powers

The land of Poland during World War 1 was controlled by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. For a small period during the war a puppet government was put in place from 1916 to 1918. Poland is home to various ethnic groups and in the past has been home to various rule. It would only have a short period of independence after World War 1 as it would once be invaded by its previous rulers of Germany and Russia.

Section 3: Horrors of War

The western front between Germany and the Entente was a stalemate of war, both sides were throwing their armies at each other but no decisive victories. One of the larger campaigns to happen in 1915 on this front was the Second Battle of Ypres. This battle would last for one month in the Belgian town Ypres. The series of battles that occurred around Ypres would have a lot of firsts. The Second Battle of Ypres would start by Germans using chemical weapons. The use of chlorine gas, would cause around 6,000 causalities for the French. The battle would continue onward with gas clouds being used to clear trenches and give the Germans surprise attacks due to low visibility. It would be in July that the Entente soldiers would receive proper gasmasks. Towards the end of this battle, the Germans unleashed another new weapon, the Flammenwerfer. The portable flamethrower would make its appearance at the battle.

Even with these new technologies, they were not any more effective than rifles at lethality. Only about 3% of chemical attacks were lethal, but still caused massive injuries to soldiers. Unlike any other war, soldiers were experiencing a living hell. Trenches were full of waste, dead bodies, and in some of them full of water. Disease was rampant due to the low hygiene, rats, and bugs. Trenches were also the target of artillery and gas attacks. Many soldiers were getting shell shock from all of this. Shell shock symptoms were all over the place from fatigue, confusion, insomnia, panic, and often a thousand yard stare. As research went on, shell shock would be identified as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Shell shock would be treated by removal from battle, but some cases were seen as cowardice

Section 4: Gallipoli Offensive

The Ottoman Empire’s entry into the war, made the Entente plan to take them out early. An after a failed operation to take the Suez Canal from Britain, the Entente seemed to have the upper hand in a war with the Ottomans. The plan was to use a joint operation of naval and land forces to take on the Dardanelles, the only defense protecting the Ottoman Capital. On March 18, 1915, the Entente Fleet would launch their naval assault. Both sides would bombard each other, and the minesweepers of the Entente were forced to retreat causing other ships to be damaged by mines. A problem with this fleet was that it was mostly older battleships that were unfit to fight the German Fleet. These older ships were planned to be lost during this campaign, but were forced to stop and the campaign turned to land.

On April 25, 1915, the Entente would launch their land campaign. The land forces were composed of British, French and ANZAC forces. ANZAC soldiers came from Australia and New Zealand. Back and forth battles on the in Gallipoli but due to the defeat of Serbia, and lack of progress in this campaign, made the Entente leave their attempt at the Dardanelles. The campaign was a disaster for the Entente, and the biggest victory the Ottomans would have during the war. The campaign did have a positive effect for ANZAC members, as it was a sign of patriotism. The landing day has become a national holiday serving a similar purpose to Memorial Day for Australia and New Zealand. 

Section 5: Italy and Balkans

Italy was initially part of the Triple Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, but when war broke out it remained neutral. Italy claimed its alliance was a defensive one and would only defend its allies if they were invaded, which in WWI Germany and Austria-Hungary the nations were invading. Italy at the time of World War 1, and were initially going to stay neutral. The Triple Entente instead approached Italy with a deal that would enable to go to war with its old allies. The deal offered off Austro-Hungarian land to Italy, Montenegro, and Serbia, but also aided the financial woes of Italy. Italy agreed and would start their military campaigns against their allies in the spring of 1915. The Italian front would become similar to western front, but their trenches would be in mountainous border between Italy and Austria-Hungary. The Battle of Isonzo would include five Italian pushes with an Italian defeat, but both sides lost many soldiers. 

While war broke out in the Italian front, the Austro-Hungarians were able to have a major victory in the Balkans. With the aid of Germany, Serbia would be invaded again and this time would be successful. The largest reason for this was that it would enable trains to go from Germany to the Ottoman Empire without conflict. The major victories achieved in 1915 would make Bulgaria join the Central powers. With the Serbs in retreat, their remaining army would get aid from the Entente and start another front in Macedonia, which would remain in stalemate until 1918.