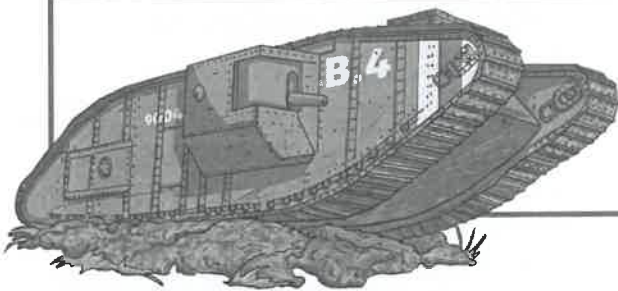


The First World War

The First World War, also known by other names such as The Great War or World War One, was an awful event in our world's history. The conflict lasted four years, three months and fourteen days from 28th July 1914 until 11th November 1918 and resulted in over seventeen million **casualties**.

Trench Warfare

For most of the war, armies were engaged in **trench warfare** on the Western Front. This front line stretched for many hundreds of miles in a continuous line of trenches. When ordered to, soldiers would climb up and charge towards the enemy. This was known as going 'over the top'. One of many examples of this was the Battle of the Somme. Its first day is believed to be, in numbers of **casualties**, the worst day in the history of the British Army.



Did You Know...?

Tanks were used for the first time in the First World War. They had a top speed of just 4 mph!

The Christmas Truce

In December 1914, troops tired of fighting defied orders, crept out of their trenches and made a **truce**.

It was late on Christmas Eve when the guns stopped and the sound of carol singing could be heard from the German side of the trenches. Then, on Christmas Day, a British soldier kicked a football out of his trench and a football match started between sides. Germany reportedly won 3-2!

Those in command were angry about the **truce** and, as a result, by midnight on Christmas Day a flame was lit to show that the truce was over. The soldiers returned to their trenches. The fighting continued for another three and a half years.



Glossary

casualty – A person killed or injured in a war or accident.

commemorate – To recall and show respect for.

trench warfare – A type of combat where enemies fight from long, narrow ditches.

truce – An agreement to stop fighting for a period of time.

The First World War

The First World War, also known as World War I, was an awful, brutal and devastating event in the early 1900s. The conflict lasted over four years, from July 1914 until November 1918. It is estimated that over ten million civilians and seven million military personnel died as a result of the war. However, many more people (and animals) were casualties of one of the bloodiest wars in our history.

How Did It Begin?

There are many different reasons for the beginning of the war. It was a tense time for many countries. However, many historians believe it was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on 28th June 1914 which triggered a dramatic series of events that led to the outbreak of fighting.

Did You Know?

The First World War is known by many different names. For example:

- World War I
- The Great War
- The War of the Nations
- The War to End All Wars

On the Front Line

Fighting on the Western Front took place from long, narrow ditches in the ground, which were known as trenches. They could be a terribly hostile place to live because of the exposed conditions. When the soldiers were not fighting, they wrote letters to friends and family or played card games in order to boost morale.

Life at Home in Britain

Women played a crucial role in the war effort at home. They were able to take on more opportunities in farms and factories after the men had gone to war. When the need for shells increased during 1915, large numbers of women were brought in to work at munitions factories. By 1918, over a million women were employed in munition work.

During the war, many women also started new and important jobs on farms and railways.



Questions

1. How many civilians died during the First World War? Tick **one**.

- ☐ Over seven million military personnel
- ☐ Over twenty million people
- ☐ Over ten million
- ☐ Over four years

2. Which other names were used for the First World War? Tick **two**.

- ☐ The Biggest War
- ☐ The Great War
- ☐ The Second World War
- ☐ The War to End All Wars

3. Match the information to the correct subtitle.

On the Front Line

Women had an important role.

When they had spare time, they would write letters.

Life at Home in Britain

The number working on the railways increased.

People fought from ditches in the ground.

4. Which word below is most similar in meaning to hostile? Tick **one**.

- ☐ friendly
- ☐ hospital
- ☐ wonderful
- ☐ difficult

The First World War

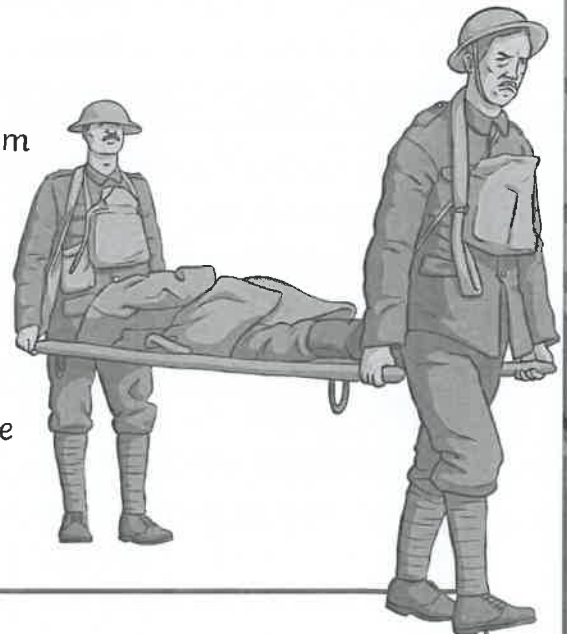
The First World War, also known by other names such as The Great War or World War I, was a truly terrible event in our world's history. The conflict lasted four years, three months and fourteen days from 28th July 1914 until 11th November 1918. It is estimated that over ten million civilians and seven million military personnel died as a result of the war. Yet many more people (and indeed, animals) also became casualties of one of the greatest and most devastating wars in our history. The true cost of this war will never be known.

How Did It Begin?

There are many possible explanations for why the war began. The early 1900s were a difficult and tense time for many countries. However, it is commonly believed that it was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on 28th June 1914 which triggered a dramatic series of events that eventually led to the outbreak of war.

On the Front Line

Fighting on the Western Front took place from trenches. They could be a terribly hostile place to be; smelly, muddy and often overrun with rats due to the open latrines (toilets). In order to boost morale, soldiers were encouraged to write letters to friends or play card games. Many soldiers wrote poems to describe their experiences.



A Great War?

The war's impact was massive and far-reaching, affecting citizens across the globe. As a result, it is known by many different names. For example:

- The Great War
- World War One (often abbreviated to WWI)
- The War of the Nations
- The War to End All Wars

Did You Know...?

It took another six months of negotiation to achieve peace following 11th November 1918.

Although the signing of the armistice resulted in a ceasefire, the war did not officially end until 28th June 1919 – exactly five years to the day after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand.



Glossary

Armistice Day - Remembrance Day: the Sunday nearest 11th November

assassination - murder

ceasefire - a stop in fighting

centenary - a celebration of one hundred years since an event

civilians - ordinary people, not military

commemorate - recall and show respect for

homing pigeons - pigeons able to find their way home over great distances

military personnel - for example, soldiers

munitions - weapons

trenches - long, narrow ditches on the Front Line

The First World War

The First World War, also known as World War I, lasted for four years from July 1914 until November 1918. It was a devastating event which cost many millions of people their lives. It is estimated that in total over seventeen million soldiers and civilians died as a result of the war however many more were left injured.

How Did It Begin?

There is no simple answer to explain the start of the war. It was a tense time for many countries. However, many historians believe it was the **assassination** of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28th June 1914 which triggered a series of events. This eventually led to war.

Did You Know...?

The First World War is known by many different names. For example:

- World War I
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Life at War

Fighting took place from long, narrow ditches in the ground, which were known as trenches. The cold, wet and exposed conditions meant that they were unpleasant places to live. When the soldiers were not fighting, they wrote letters or played card games to pass the time.

Life at Home in Britain

Women played a crucial role in the war effort at home. After the men had gone to war, they were needed to work on farms and in factories.

By 1918, over a million women were employed in **munitions** work. The number of women working on the railways also increased.



Did You Know...?

Animals, such as homing pigeons and dogs, helped to deliver important information across long distances.

Armies also used flags and lamps to send messages, although this was difficult in bad weather!

Questions

1. How long did the First World War last? Tick **one**.

- ☐ It lasted for twelve months.
- ☐ It lasted for four months from July 1914.
- ☐ It lasted from July until November 1918.
- ☐ It lasted for four years from July 1914 until November 1918.

2. Why did the war begin? Tick **two**.

- ☐ It began because of only one simple reason.
- ☐ It began because Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated.
- ☐ It began because this time was tense for many countries.
- ☐ It began because animals were sending messages.

3. Match the information to the correct subtitle.

Life At War

They wrote letters.

They worked on farms.

Life At Home in Britain

They made munitions (weapons).

They played card games to pass the time.

4. How did armies communicate? Tick **two**.

- ☐ They used mobile phones and chat apps.
- ☐ They used munitions (weapons).
- ☐ They used dogs and homing pigeons.
- ☐ They used flags and lamps.

5. Find and copy one word to describe what happened to the number of women on railways.

The number _____.

The First World War

The First World War, also known by other names such as The Great War or World War One, was a truly terrible event in our world's history. The conflict lasted four years, three months and fourteen days from 28th July 1914 until 11th November 1918. It is estimated that a total of over seventeen million **civilians** and military personnel died as a result of the war.

Trench Warfare

The First World War was different from previous wars. There were new tactical advances in technology and industry which changed the future of war. For example, this was the first large-scale use of aeroplanes and tanks in warfare.



We remember the war for its **trench warfare**, where the Western Front stretched for hundreds of miles in a continuous line of trenches from the English Channel to the Swiss border. Soldiers spent much time in these trenches and, when ordered to, would climb out and charge towards the other side and the enemy troops. This was known as going 'over the top'.

The Christmas Truce

Whilst the First World War was a war of destruction and disaster, there were stories of hope and humanity. One such story was that of the Christmas **truce**, a famous and mythologised tale of a ceasefire between enemies.

Propaganda from home promised that the war would be over by Christmas 1914. However, by December, the stalemate continued. Both sides had lost many casualties and were weary of war. It was late on Christmas Eve when the faint sound of carol singing could be heard from the German side of the trenches. The British troops could also see small fir trees and brightly-lit lanterns decorating the German trenches.

The following day, soldiers met in No Man's Land to shake hands, exchange Christmas gifts and take photographs. They even played impromptu games of football. Alas, due to the generals' disapproval, the **truce** was called to an end.



Poppies and Remembrance

Each November, we **commemorate** the lives of the casualties of war by holding a two-minute silence on Armistice Day, also known as Remembrance Day or Poppy Day. The war ended on 11th November 1918. In 2018, 11th November marks the centenary of the end of the First World War.

Did You Know...?

- The poppy is a symbol of remembrance and was inspired by a war poem by John McCrae called 'In Flanders' Fields'.
- After the war ended, wild poppies grew all across the battlefields.



Glossary

civilian – A person not in the armed forces.

commemorate – To recall and show respect for.

espionage – The practice of using spies to obtain information.

trench warfare – A type of combat where enemies fight from long, narrow ditches.

truce – An agreement to stop fighting for a period of time.

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The First World War

The First World War, also known by other names such as The Great War or World War One, was a brutal and horrifying event in our world's history. The conflict lasted four years, three months and fourteen days from 28th July 1914 until 11th November 1918. It is estimated that a total of over seventeen million civilians and military personnel died as a direct result of the war, however many millions more suffered indirectly as a result of illness or famine.

Trench Warfare

The First World War was different from previous wars, with tactical advances in technology and industry changing the methods of combat. For example, this was the first large-scale use of aeroplanes in warfare, for example for **reconnaissance**. Tanks were also used for the first time – although they were primitive compared to their modern equivalents, with top speeds of only 4 mph.

Trench warfare, where armies from both sides fought from long, narrow ditches in the ground called trenches, was a key feature of this war. Soldiers spent much of their time in these trenches, locked in a **stalemate** with the enemy for many months at a time. However, when ordered to, they would climb out and advance through **No Man's Land** towards the other side. This was known as going 'over the top'.

The Christmas Truce

Whilst the First World War was a war of destruction and disaster, there were stories of hope and humanity. One such story was that of the Christmas **truce**, a famous and mythologised tale of a ceasefire between enemies.

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It is important to remember that in addition to paid employment, women were also running the household. This involved queuing for rations, sewing new clothes and mending old ones, gardening for home-grown food and raising their children, often alone.

Lest We Forget

11th November 2018 marks the **centenary** of the end of the First World War. Each November, we commemorate the lives of the casualties of war by holding a two-minute silence on Armistice Day, also known as Remembrance Day or Poppy Day.

Did You Know...?

- 'Lest we forget' is a commonly used phrase in war remembrance services. It is a plea not to forget past sacrifices made for our freedom today.
- Wild poppies spontaneously grew all across the old battlefields, symbolic of the bloodshed and tragedy of war.
- The Royal British Legion in the UK sells poppies.



Glossary

centenary – The hundredth anniversary of a significant event, from the Latin centum meaning a hundred.

conscription – A law which states that if you are able to fight, you must fight.

munitions – Weapons such as bombs, missiles, bullets and shells.

No Man's Land – The name given to the area between two opposing trench lines.

reconnaissance – The military observation of an area to locate an enemy.

stalemate – A situation in which further progress seems impossible.

truce – An agreement to stop fighting for a period of time.