

Section 6: The War to End All Wars

(Chapter 7 of Text)

Introduction

The turn of the century swept in on a wave of prosperity and optimism, but the tide shifted in 1914, when war broke out in Europe. Because of its close ties with Great Britain, Canada quickly stepped into the war on Britain's side. Its participation in World War I profoundly altered Canada. Although it suffered heavy casualties, Canada emerged from the war a proud nation that had earned the respect of both its allies and its foes.

This unit examines the impact of the war both at home and abroad; it explores the implications of war on the home front (including the role of women and the debate over conscription that raged between French and English Canadians); and it will trace the final stages of the war and examine Canada's role in peacemaking and the creation of the League of Nations.

Overall, this unit provides an appreciation of the sacrifices made by Canadians in the war that was though to be "The War to End all Wars." It will assist you in understanding the issues that united and divided Canadians during the war years and the way in which Canada experienced growth as a nation.

Story Outline for Chapter 7 The War on the Western Front

THE STORY	THE DETAILS	TERMS & PEOPLE
<p><i>Canada entered the 20th Century as a growing and prosperous nation. That optimism was broken by the outbreak of the "Great War" in Europe.</i></p>	<p>Page 133</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Robert Borden was Canada's prime minister in 1914. 2). Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914. 3). As a member of the British Empire, Canada was automatically at war with Germany. 4). Canada entered the British Empire; but by the end of the war in 1918 it emerged as a nation in its own right. 	<p>Great War: a phrase used to describe what came to be known as World War I <i>after</i> the end of World War II.</p>
<p><i>The Great War was caused by several factors, e.g. Alliance System, militarism, imperialism, and nationalism.</i></p>	<p>Page 134-135: What Caused World War I?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The alliance system was actually designed to help keep the peace in Europe. It was believed that no one country would risk a general war because of the associated costs/risks. 2). Germany and Britain were locked in a naval arms race (militarism). Britain felt threatened by Germany's attempt to build a navy as large as Britain's. 3). France, Britain, Germany, etc. competed with one another for colonies in Africa and Asia (imperialism). This competition created tensions between the great nations of Europe. 4). British and German alike felt proud when their respective countries acquired new colonies. People often associated their own self-worth with the greatness of their nation (nationalism). 5). The factors described above all fostered tension between the two alliances making war more and more likely with every passing year. 	<p>Alliance System: Britain and its allies were known as the Triple Entente. Germany and its allies were known as the Triple Alliance. E.g. If Britain were attacked by Germany then France and Russia would be automatically at war with Germany.</p> <p>Militarism: a belief in the wisdom of military preparedness for war at all times (even during peace).</p> <p>Imperialism: a policy of extending your rule over foreign countries; expanding your territory by acquiring colonies.</p> <p>Nationalism: a belief in the greatness and rightness of one's own nation and also the belief that other nations are either not as good as your own or pose a threat to your country's security.</p>
<p><i>The alliance system in Europe created a situation where one small event might trigger a general war.</i></p>	<p>Page 135-136: Assassination at Sarajevo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). The Arch Duke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary was assassinated in 1914 by Gavrillo Princip (a member of the Black Hand). 2). Austria-Hungary accused the Serbian Government of being directly involved in the plot to kill the arch duke. 3). A-H made demands on Serbia and warned if these demands were not met then A-H would invade. 	<p>Arch Duke F. Ferdinand: the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary.</p> <p>Gavrillo Princip: a Serbian nationalist who resented Austria-Hungary's interference in Bosnia.</p> <p>Black Hand: a Serbian nationalist organization.</p>

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<p><i>The "alliance system," and in particular Austria-Hungary's invasion of Serbia, touched off a series of events that resulted in World War I.</i></p>	<p>Page 136-137: War Spreads to W. Europe</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Germany put into action the "Schlieffen Plan" so that they could avoid having to fight the majority of France's armies on the French-German border. 2). Britain was brought into the war once German invaded neutral Belgium. 3). Canada was automatically at war when Britain declared war on Germany. 4). France/England successfully push back Germany at the Battle of the Marne. 5). For the next four years the great powers of Europe fight one another using trench warfare. 	<p>Schlieffen Plan: a planned military manoeuvre whereby Germany planned to go around the majority of France's defences by attacking that country from the north (unfortified French-Belgian border).</p> <p>Trench Warfare: warfare in which opposing sides occupy trenches; usually very bloody, miserable, and endless; a war of attrition, e.g. A war in which one side tries to out-kill the other.</p>
<p><i>Large numbers of English Canadians flocked to recruiting stations to join the war effort on the side of Britain.</i></p>	<p>Page 137-138: Canada Prepares for War</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). By September 1914 over 30,000 men had volunteered for the army. 2). Sam Hughes set up a training camp in Quebec called the Valcartier Camp. 3). Canadian soldiers were forced to use sub-standard equipment like the Ross Rifle. 4). Canada's soldiers were placed under the command of British General Sir Edwin Alderson. 5). By February 1915 the Canadian Division was ready for the Western Front. 	<p>Sam Hughes: minister of the militia for Canada during the Great War.</p> <p>Valcartier Camp: the largest Canadian military training base during the World War I period.</p> <p>Ross Rifles: a rifle completely inappropriate for Trench warfare because it overheated and failed to fire when it got dirty.</p> <p>Western Front: a term describing the conflict in France and Belgium.</p>
<p><i>The armies of either side lived and fought in a dizzying network of trench-works.</i></p>	<p>Page 140-141: In the Trenches</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Canadians pioneered the night time trench raid. 	<p>Night Time Trench Raid: a small group would cross "No Man's Land" and enter the trench of the enemy. Once there the Canadians would kill a few enemy soldiers and then sneak back across to their own lines.</p>
<p><i>Canadians first distinguished themselves at the Battle of Ypres (1915).</i></p>	<p>Page 143: The Battle of Ypres</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Germany used chlorine gas on the French. The French ran away and the Germans charged forward seizing the French trench. 2). Canadians held the line preventing a German breakthrough. 3). Canada's stand at Ypres earned them a reputation as being courageous fighters. 	<p>Chlorine Gas: a caustic agent used to kill and/or disfigure the army of an opponent. This gas when breathed in caused damage to the lungs and/or death; it also burned the skin upon contact.</p> <p>Ypres (1915): known as the "second battle of Ypres" the Germans first used chemical weapons.</p>

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<p><i>By the end of 1916, the mood of Canadians both on the battlefield and on the home front had swung from hope to despair; it seemed as though the war would go on forever.</i></p>	<p>Page 145-146: Battle of the Somme</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). General Haig wanted to go on the offensive in order to smash through the German lines. 2). The British launched a massive artillery strike against the German trenches. 3). Then the French and British went "over the top" and charged at the German position. 4). The German machine guns/artillery massacred the charging soldiers of the allies. 5). France and England had more than 600,000 dead and wounded. 6). Canada lost 24,000 men in several battles during the Somme Offensive. 	<p>General Douglas Haig: commander and chief of the British army. He was an officer of the old-school who failed to appreciate the destructiveness of modern equipment and how impenetrable trenches had become as a result.</p> <p>Somme Offensive: another term used to describe the Battle of the Somme. Canadians distinguished themselves at Flers-Courcelette, the Sugar Factory, Pozieres Ridge, Fabeck Graben and the Regina Trench.</p>