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**Content Reading Guide: World War I Part 2**

Imperialism, militarism, nationalism, and alliance systems all set the stage for the first World War. When a Serb nationalist, **Gavrilo Princip**, assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, Austria-Hungary went to war against Serbia. Russia came to “defend” Serbia to attempt to stop Austria-Hungary from controlling the Balkan Peninsula. Since Russia and Austria-Hungary had two different alliances, it brought in other nations into the fight.

On 8/1/1914, Germany declared war on Russia. Russia came to “defend” Serbia from Austria-Hungary. Germany had an alliance system with Austria-Hungary. Then, on 8/3/1914, Germany declared war on France. They knew France would aid Russia due the alliance system they had together. Also on 8/3/1914, Germany invaded Belgium. Britain declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary. World War I had begun.

Germany initiated the **Schlieffen Plan**. They attacked France first, then attacked Russia. Each side had modern weapons, such as machine guns and tanks. In September of 1914, the Allies halted Germany at the Marne River and each side dug trenches. “No man’s land” was the area between the trenches. At the Battle of the Somme, on July 1, 1916, Britain lost 60,000 troops in a single day. Over one million died in the end. This grew into 3 years of trench warfare.

Many in the USA wondered, why fight a war 3,000 miles away? Socialists blamed capitalistic imperialism for starting the war and did not want to intervene. America was also a “Melting Pot” of many people groups. European immigrants did not want to fight their own people groups. However, Germany’s aggressive offensive created sympathy for the Allies. Also, America had more money invested with the Allies. Therefore, The USA sent vast amounts of war supplies to help the Allies.

In 1917, a British blockade prevented resources from reaching Germany. Over 700,000 Germans reached the point of starvation. Germany began fighting the blockade by using submarines called U-boats. On May 7, 1915, **the Lusitania**, a British Luxury Liner, was sunk and destroyed. Over 1,000 people died and 128 were American. America was furious with Germany over the incident.

President Woodrow Wilson wanted a “…peace without victory…a peace between equals.” On 1/31/1916, Germany ignored the plea and declared they would sink all ships in British waters. Germany also issued the **Zimmerman note,** a telegram asking Mexico to join Germany and attack the USA; in return Mexico would get Texas and other areas they had lost to the USA. As a result, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare War. Congress declared War on Germany and joined the Allies. The USA was now in WW I.