PROJECT READER

WORLD WAR I AND AMERICA

TOLD BY THE AMERICANS WHO LIVED IT
The readings presented here are drawn from *World War I and America: Told by the Americans Who Lived It*. Published to mark the centenary of the American entry into the conflict, *World War I and America* brings together 128 diverse texts—speeches, messages, letters, diaries, poems, songs, newspaper and magazine articles, excerpts from memoirs and journalistic narratives—written by scores of American participants and observers that illuminate and vivify events from the outbreak of war in 1914 through the Armistice, the Paris Peace Conference, and the League of Nations debate. The writers collected in the volume—soldiers, airmen, nurses, diplomats, statesmen, political activists, journalists—provide unique insight into how Americans perceived the war and how the conflict transformed American life. It is being published by The Library of America, a nonprofit institution dedicated to preserving America’s best and most significant writing in handsome, enduring volumes, featuring authoritative texts. You can learn more about *World War I and America*, and about The Library of America, at www.loa.org.

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**Preface**

Many Americans do not appreciate the key role the United States played in deciding the outcome of World War I, the deep impact the war had on Americans who lived through it, or the profound ways in which it continues to resonate today. While the U.S. was a belligerent for only nineteen of the war’s fifty-two months, and suffered a fraction of the losses of the other major combatants, in the climactic campaigns of the war Americans fought with ferocious intensity. In the five and a half months the American Expeditionary Forces were engaged in major fighting, the U.S. lost more than 50,000 men killed in action, a combat toll greater than that of the entire Vietnam War. Equally important, the war ushered in powerful and complex changes in American culture and society. The war helped women to finally win the vote and ushered in the permissive Jazz Age, but also led to Prohibition and a heightened fear of immigrants. Amid deadly racial violence and frustrated hopes for full citizenship for African Americans, it gave rise to the militant “New Negro” and began the Great Migration to the North. It made the United States the most powerful actor on the global stage, and brought about a dramatic debate over America’s role in the world. And it called into question the traditional meanings of glory, honor, courage, causing many to believe, as Ernest Hemingway wrote, “There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity.”

This Reader presents twenty-two selections by American participants in the conflict, written from 1915 to 1929. They are drawn from the Library of America volume *World War I and America: Told by the Americans Who Lived It*, and give a firsthand look at the war from different points of view. Understanding how Americans perceived the conflict at the time allows us to encounter World War I on its own terms and to draw connections with the experiences of Americans today, both combatants and civilians. The selections focus on seven
key themes. Each theme features an introduction by a distinguished scholar, questions for discussion, and suggestions for further reading. The reader is intended to help facilitate an informed and rewarding conversation about the war and its consequences.
Introduction

VII. AT HOME/COMING HOME:
THE TOLL OF WAR

American soldiers returned home victorious, and communities across the nation welcomed them back with parades, speeches, and eventually, monuments. Proud of having served their country, returning servicemen flocked to join the American Legion, founded by World War I veterans in 1919. Legion halls soon became more than places where veterans could relax with former comrades-in-arms, as the organization emerged as a strong lobbyist on behalf of veterans’ causes.

The nation had been ill-prepared for war, and was even less ready for peace. Nearly 200,000 wounded men returned, a number that grew when veterans with shell shock and gas-related tuberculosis flooded hospital wards in the 1920s. Scrambling to cure these patients, the Veteran’s Bureau (the predecessor of today’s Veterans Administration) built a new federally-managed veterans’ hospital system. Doctors treating veterans confronted new and often confusing medical conditions. Psychologists such as Norman Fenton, who had served at a hospital for “war neurosis” cases in France, compiled lengthy descriptions of men’s symptoms, often in their own words, to gain a better understanding the long-term impact of combat on veterans’ mental health.

Even healthy veterans found the return home rocky during the post-war recession of 1919. Many veterans had hoped to use military service as a stepping stone into a better life. The army had promised as much by touting the physical and education benefits of military service. Millions of soldiers had contributed to army-sponsored savings accounts, hoping to accumulate start-up funds for a home or business. Scarce jobs forced many veterans to use that money to survive. With few government benefits available to them, veterans began to complain vociferously about the mismanaged homecoming.

Not everyone was sympathetic to veterans’ financial and medical difficulties, questioning whether their predicament
was truly a result of the war or just the consequence of poor individual decisions. The response was generally the latter whenever black veterans applied for the minimal health services or occupational training programs available. Both white and black veterans, however, confronted a government bureaucracy primarily concerned with limiting the drain on public funds.

Responding to veterans’ rising frustration, the Legion took the lead in pressing forward a claim for adjusted compensation. The adjusted compensation campaign targeted industrialists’ war profits, arguing that it was unjust for the war to make civilians rich and soldiers poor. In 1924, all veterans received an adjusted compensation bond (also known as “the bonus”) redeemable in 1945. The exact amount an individual received depended on how long a man had served. For many the bonus was close to $1,200. Veterans ultimately received the bonus in 1936, nine years early, after the Depression triggered several mass demonstrations in Washington D.C. known as the Bonus Marches.

Financial security was not the answer to every difficulty veterans encountered after coming home. Talking about what they had experienced was hard. “Before I reached home,” one soldier recalled in his memoir, “I decided that I must clear my mind of all the terrible experiences of the past two years, as much as possible.” It would be unjust, this soldier felt, “to make my family and friends sad and uncomfortable by inflict- ing upon them the horrors in which they had no part.” Ernest Hemingway captured the difficulties of readjusting to civilian life in his 1925 short story, “Soldiers’ Home.” Individual families might have wanted veterans to put the war behind them, but collectively Americans demonstrated a strong desire to publically honor veterans’ patriotism. Throughout the 1920s, towns and cities dedicated thousands of statues, memorial halls, athletic stadiums, and parks to the wartime generation.

To memorialize the more than 4,400 American “unknown dead”—men who were buried in unidentified graves in military cemeteries or at sea, or whose remains were never found—the United States interred one unidentified soldier in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier located in Arlington Cemetery, Virginia. President Warren Harding presided over the solemn
ceremony, and reassured veterans that the nation acknowledged their generation’s sacrifice. After the Unknown Soldier was laid to rest, the nation collectively observed two minutes of silence to honor the fallen warrior and pray for a peaceful future. Some writers mocked the ceremony as an empty gesture filled with piety that protected listeners from confronting the reality of war. Flowery, patriotic speeches would only seduce the next generation of naïve young men into believing that war was a glorious adventure.

Veterans lined up on both sides of this cultural debate over how to remember the Great War. Was it a just and noble cause? Was it a rich man’s war, poor man’s fight? Were the nation’s interests really served best by fighting? American society ponders these timeless questions each time veterans return home from war.

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ARLINGTON, NOVEMBER 1921

Warren G. Harding: Address at the Burial of an Unknown American Soldier

Warren G. Harding’s election resoundingly repudiated Woodrow Wilson’s idealistic vision of the League of Nations. The United States and Germany signed a separate peace treaty in August 1921, officially concluding the state of war that had lasted four years. In his final minutes in office, Wilson had authorized the exhumation of an unidentified American soldier from a cemetery in France and his entombment in a new marble sarcophagus at the National Cemetery, where he would represent all of the unknown soldiers. On November 11, 1921, the third anniversary of the Armistice, a great procession accompanied the casket of the Unknown Soldier from the Capitol to Arlington. The physically disabled Wilson rode with Edith in the parade only as far as the White House before returning to their new home nearby, while the rest of the cortege proceeded to the vast graveyard across the Potomac. Thousands gathered to hear the President’s speech, Marshal Foch and Medal of Honor winners among them; and hundreds of thousands more heard his message, as it was carried on telephone lines to public-address speakers in cities around the country. With these remarks, the curtain descended on the World War.

MR. SECRETARY OF WAR AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: We are met to-day to pay the impersonal tribute. The name of him whose body lies before us took flight with his imperishable soul. We know not whence he came, but only that his death marks him with the everlasting glory of an American dying for his country.

He might have come from any one of millions of American homes. Some mother gave him in her love and tenderness, and with him her most cherished hopes. Hundreds of mothers are wondering to-day, finding a touch of solace in the possibility that the Nation bows in grief over the body of one she bore to live and die, if need be, for the Republic. If we give rein to fancy, a score of sympathetic chords are touched, for in this body there once glowed the soul of an American, with the
aspirations and ambitions of a citizen who cherished life and its opportunities. He may have been a native or an adopted son; that matters little, because they glorified the same loyalty, they sacrificed alike.

We do not know his station in life, because from every station came the patriotic response of the five millions. I recall the days of creating armies, and the departing of caravels which braved the murderous seas to reach the battle lines for maintained nationality and preserved civilization. The service flag marked mansion and cottage alike, and riches were common to all homes in the consciousness of service to country.

We do not know the eminence of his birth, but we do know the glory of his death. He died for his country, and greater devotion hath no man than this. He died unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in his heart and hope on his lips, that his country should triumph and its civilization survive. As a typical soldier of this representative democracy, he fought and died, believing in the indisputable justice of his country's cause. Conscious of the world's upheaval, appraising the magnitude of a war the like of which had never horrified humanity before, perhaps he believed his to be a service destined to change the tide of human affairs.

In the death gloom of gas, the bursting of shells and rain of bullets, men face more intimately the great God over all, their souls are aflame, and consciousness expands and hearts are searched. With the din of battle, the glow of conflict, and the supreme trial of courage, come involuntarily the hurried appraisal of life and the contemplation of death's great mystery. On the threshold of eternity, many a soldier, I can well believe, wondered how his ebbing blood would color the stream of human life, flowing on after his sacrifice. His patriotism was none less if he craved more than triumph of country; rather, it was greater if he hoped for a victory for all human kind. Indeed, I revere that citizen whose confidence in the righteousness of his country inspired belief that its triumph is the victory of humanity.

This American soldier went forth to battle with no hatred for any people in the world, but hating war and hating the purpose of every war for conquest. He cherished our national rights, and abhorred the threat of armed domination; and in
the maelstrom of destruction and suffering and death he fired
his shot for liberation of the captive conscience of the world.
In advancing toward his objective was somewhere a thought of
a world awakened; and we are here to testify undying gratitude
and reverence for that thought of a wider freedom.

On such an occasion as this, amid such a scene, our thoughts
alternate between defenders living and defenders dead. A
grateful Republic will be worthy of them both. Our part is to
atone for the losses of heroic dead by making a better Republic
for the living.

Sleeping in these hallowed grounds are thousands of Amer-
icans who have given their blood for the baptism of freedom
and its maintenance, armed exponents of the Nation’s con-
science. It is better and nobler for their deeds. Burial here is
rather more than a sign of the Government’s favor, it is a sug-
gestion of a tomb in the heart of the Nation, sorrowing for its
noble dead.

To-day’s ceremonies proclaim that the hero unknown is not
unhonored. We gather him to the Nation’s breast, within the
shadow of the Capitol, of the towering shaft that honors
Washington, the great father, and of the exquisite monument
to Lincoln, the martyred savior. Here the inspirations of yes-
terday and the conscience of to-day forever unite to make the
Republic worthy of his death for flag and country.

Ours are lofty resolutions to-day, as with tribute to the dead
we consecrate ourselves to a better order for the living. With
all my heart, I wish we might say to the defenders who survive,
to mothers who sorrow, to widows and children who mourn,
that no such sacrifice shall be asked again.

It was my fortune recently to see a demonstration of modern
warfare. It is no longer a conflict in chivalry, no more a test of
militant manhood. It is only cruel, deliberate, scientific de-
struction. There was no contending enemy, only the theoreti-
cal defense of a hypothetical objective. But the attack was made
with all the relentless methods of modern destruction. There
was the rain of ruin from the aircraft, the thunder of artillery,
followed by the unspeakable devastation wrought by bursting
shells; there were mortars belching their bombs of desolation;
machine guns concentrating their leaden storms; there was the
infantry, advancing, firing, and falling—like men with souls
sacrificing for the decision. The flying missiles were revealed by illuminating tracers, so that we could note their flight and appraise their deadliness. The air was streaked with tiny flames marking the flight of massed destruction; while the effectiveness of the theoretical defense was impressed by the simulation of dead and wounded among those going forward, undaunted and unheeding. As this panorama of unutterable destruction visualized the horrors of modern conflict, there grew on me the sense of the failure of a civilization which can leave its problems to such cruel arbitrament. Surely no one in authority, with human attributes and a full appraisal of the patriotic loyalty of his countrymen, could ask the manhood of kingdom, empire, or republic to make such sacrifice until all reason had failed, until appeal to justice through understanding had been denied, until every effort of love and consideration for fellow men had been exhausted, until freedom itself and inviolate honor had been brutally threatened.

I speak not as a pacifist fearing war, but as one who loves justice and hates war. I speak as one who believes the highest function of government is to give its citizens the security of peace, the opportunity to achieve, and the pursuit of happiness.

The loftiest tribute we can bestow to-day—the heroically earned tribute—fashioned in deliberate conviction, out of unclouded thought, neither shadowed by remorse nor made vain by fancies, is the commitment of this Republic to an advancement never made before. If American achievement is a cherished pride at home, if our unselfishness among nations is all we wish it to be, and ours is a helpful example in the world, then let us give of our influence and strength, yea, of our aspirations and convictions, to put mankind on a little higher plane, exulting and exalting, with war’s distressing and depressing tragedies barred from the stage of righteous civilization.

There have been a thousand defenses justly and patriotically made; a thousand offenses which reason and righteousness ought to have stayed. Let us beseech all men to join us in seeking the rule under which reason and righteousness shall prevail.

Standing to-day on hallowed ground, conscious that all America has halted to share in the tribute of heart and mind and soul to this fellow American, and knowing that the world
is noting this expression of the Republic’s mindfulness, it is fit-
ting to say that his sacrifice, and that of the millions dead, shall
not be in vain. There must be, there shall be, the commanding
voice of a conscious civilization against armed warfare.

As we return this poor clay to its mother soil, garlanded by
love and covered with the decorations that only nations can
bestow, I can sense the prayers of our people, of all peoples,
that this Armistice Day shall mark the beginning of a new and
lasting era of peace on earth, good will among men. Let me
join in that prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy
kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the king-
Ernest Hemingway: “Soldier’s Home”

Nowhere were the changes in American life seen more vividly than in its fiction, not in just the substance but also in the style; and nobody epitomized that literary readjustment—with his stark staccato sentences—more than Ernest Hemingway. Severely wounded in 1918 while serving as a Red Cross volunteer in Italy, he returned home in early 1919. That summer he visited Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, which, coupled with his remembrances of war, would inspire several of the works included in *In Our Time* (1925), his first collection of short stories. A job with the *Toronto Star* allowed him to return to Europe in 1921 and become part of the expatriate literary world in Paris. Over the next decade, the war permeated his writing, most especially his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), which his experiences in Italy inspired.

Krebs went to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas. There is a picture which shows him among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing exactly the same height and style collar. He enlisted in the Marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine in the summer of 1919.

There is a picture which shows him on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture.

By the time Krebs returned to his home town in Oklahoma the greeting of heroes was over. He came back much too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over.

At first Krebs, who had been at Belleau Wood, Soissons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel and in the Argonne did not want to talk about the war at all. Later he felt the need to talk but no one wanted to hear about it. His town had heard too many atrocity stories to be thrilled by actualities. Krebs found that to
be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he had done this twice he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it. A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told. All of the times that had been able to make him feel cool and clear inside himself when he thought of them; the times so long back when he had done the one thing, the only thing for a man to do, easily and naturally, when he might have done something else, now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves.

His lies were quite unimportant lies and consisted in attributing to himself things other men had seen, done or heard of, and stating as facts certain apocryphal incidents familiar to all soldiers. Even his lies were not sensational at the pool room. His acquaintances, who had heard detailed accounts of German women found chained to machine guns in the Argonne forest and who could not comprehend, or were barred by their patriotism from interest in, any German machine gunners who were not chained, were not thrilled by his stories.

Krebs acquired the nausea in regard to experience that is the result of untruth or exaggeration, and when he occasionally met another man who had really been a soldier and they talked a few minutes in the dressing room at a dance he fell into the easy pose of the old soldier among other soldiers: that he had been badly, sickeningly frightened all the time. In this way he lost everything.

During this time, it was late summer, he was sleeping late in bed, getting up to walk down town to the library to get a book, eating lunch at home, reading on the front porch until he became bored and then walking down through the town to spend the hottest hours of the day in the cool dark of the pool room. He loved to play pool.

In the evening he practiced on his clarinet, strolled down town, read and went to bed. He was still a hero to his two young sisters. His mother would have given him breakfast in bed if he had wanted it. She often came in when he was in bed and asked him to tell her about the war, but her attention always wandered. His father was non-committal.

Before Krebs went away to the war he had never been allowed to drive the family motor car. His father was in the real estate business and always wanted the car to be at his command
when he required it to take clients out into the country to show them a piece of farm property. The car always stood outside the First National Bank building where his father had an office on the second floor. Now, after the war, it was still the same car.

Nothing was changed in the town except that the young girls had grown up. But they lived in such a complicated world of already defined alliances and shifting feuds that Krebs did not feel the energy or the courage to break into it. He liked to look at them, though. There were so many good-looking young girls. Most of them had their hair cut short. When he went away only little girls wore their hair like that or girls that were fast. They all wore sweaters and shirt waists with round Dutch collars. It was a pattern. He liked to look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street. He liked to watch them walking under the shade of the trees. He liked the round Dutch collars above their sweaters. He liked their silk stockings and flat shoes. He liked their bobbed hair and the way they walked.

When he was in town their appeal to him was not very strong. He did not like them when he saw them in the Greek’s ice cream parlor. He did not want them really. They were too complicated. There was something else. Vaguely he wanted a girl but he did not want to have to work to get her. He would have liked to have a girl but he did not want to have to spend a long time getting her. He did not want to get into the intrigue and the politics. He did not want to have to do any courting. He did not want to tell any more lies. It wasn’t worth it.

He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live along without consequences. Besides he did not really need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl. Nearly everybody did that. But it wasn’t true. You did not need a girl. That was the funny thing. First a fellow boasted how girls mean nothing to him, that he never thought of them, that they could not touch him. Then a fellow boasted that he could not get along without girls, that he had to have them all the time, that he could not go to sleep without them.

That was all a lie. It was all a lie both ways. You did not need a girl unless you thought about them. He learned that in the
army. Then sooner or later you always got one. When you
were really ripe for a girl you always got one. You did not have
to think about it. Sooner or later it would come. He had learned
that in the army.

Now he would have liked a girl if she had come to him and
not wanted to talk. But here at home it was all too compli-
cated. He knew he could never get through it all again. It was
not worth the trouble. That was the thing about French girls
and German girls. There was not all this talking. You couldn’t
talk much and you did not need to talk. It was simple and you
were friends. He thought about France and then he began to
think about Germany. On the whole he had liked Germany
better. He did not want to leave Germany. He did not want to
come home. Still, he had come home. He sat on the front
porch.

He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of
the street. He liked the look of them much better than the
French girls or the German girls. But the world they were in
was not the world he was in. He would like to have one of
them. But it was not worth it. They were such a nice pattern.
He liked the pattern. It was exciting. But he would not go
through all the talking. He did not want one badly enough.
He liked to look at them all, though. It was not worth it. Not
now when things were getting good again.

He sat there on the porch reading a book on the war. It was
a history and he was reading about all the engagements he had
been in. It was the most interesting reading he had ever done.
He wished there were more maps. He looked forward with a
good feeling to reading all the really good histories when they
would come out with good detail maps. Now he was really
learning about the war. He had been a good soldier. That
made a difference.

One morning after he had been home about a month his
mother came into his bedroom and sat on the bed. She smoothed
her apron.

“I had a talk with your father last night, Harold,” she said,
“and he is willing for you to take the car out in the evenings.”

“Yeah?” said Krebs, who was not fully awake. “Take the car
out? Yeah?”

“Yes. Your father has felt for some time that you should be
able to take the car out in the evenings whenever you wished but we only talked it over last night.”
“T’ll bet you made him,” Krebs said.
“No. It was your father’s suggestion that we talk the matter over.”
“Yeah. T’ll bet you made him,” Krebs sat up in bed.
“Will you come down to breakfast, Harold?” his mother said.
“As soon as I get my clothes on,” Krebs said.
His mother went out of the room and he could hear her frying something downstairs while he washed, shaved and dressed to go down into the dining-room for breakfast. While he was eating breakfast his sister brought in the mail.
“Well, Hare,” she said. “You old sleepyhead. What do you ever get up for?”
Krebs looked at her. He liked her. She was his best sister.
“Have you got the paper?” he asked.
She handed him the Kansas City Star and he shucked off its brown wrapper and opened it to the sporting page. He folded the Star open and propped it against the water pitcher with his cereal dish to steady it, so he could read while he ate.
“Harold,” his mother stood in the kitchen doorway, “Harold, please don’t muss up the paper. Your father can’t read his Star if it’s been mussed.”
“I won’t muss it,” Krebs said.
His sister sat down at the table and watched him while he read.
“We’re playing indoor over at school this afternoon,” she said. “I’m going to pitch.”
“Good,” said Krebs. “How’s the old wing?”
“I can pitch better than lots of the boys. I tell them all you taught me. The other girls aren’t much good.”
“Yeah?” said Krebs.
“I tell them all you’re my beau. Aren’t you my beau, Hare?”
“You bet.”
“Couldn’t your brother really be your beau just because he’s your brother?”
“I don’t know.”
“Sure you know. Couldn’t you be my beau, Hare, if I was old enough and if you wanted to?”
“Sure. You’re my girl now.”
“Am I really your girl?”
“Sure.”
“Do you love me?”
“Uh, huh.”
“Will you love me always?”
“Sure.”
“Will you come over and watch me play indoor?”
“Maybe.”
“Aw, Hare, you don’t love me. If you loved me, you’d want to come over and watch me play indoor.”

Krebs’s mother came into the dining-room from the kitchen. She carried a plate with two fried eggs and some crisp bacon on it and a plate of buckwheat cakes.

“You run along, Helen,” she said. “I want to talk to Harold.”
She put the eggs and bacon down in front of him and brought in a jug of maple syrup for the buckwheat cakes. Then she sat down across the table from Krebs.

“I wish you’d put down the paper a minute, Harold,” she said.

Krebs took down the paper and folded it.

“Have you decided what you are going to do yet, Harold?” his mother said, taking off her glasses.

“No,” said Krebs.

“Don’t you think it’s about time?” His mother did not say this in a mean way. She seemed worried.

“I hadn’t thought about it,” Krebs said.

“God has some work for everyone to do,” his mother said. “There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom.”

“I’m not in His Kingdom,” Krebs said.

“We are all of us in His Kingdom.”

Krebs felt embarrassed and resentful as always.

“I’ve worried about you so much, Harold,” his mother went on. “I know the temptations you must have been exposed to. I know how weak men are. I know what your own dear grandfather, my own father, told us about the Civil War and I have prayed for you. I pray for you all day long, Harold.”

Krebs looked at the bacon fat hardening on his plate.

“Your father is worried, too,” his mother went on. “He thinks you have lost your ambition, that you haven’t got a
definite aim in life. Charley Simmons, who is just your age, has a good job and is going to be married. The boys are all settling down; they’re all determined to get somewhere; you can see that boys like Charley Simmons are on their way to being really a credit to the community.”

Krebs said nothing.

“Don’t look that way, Harold,” his mother said. “You know we love you and I want to tell you for your own good how matters stand. Your father does not want to hamper your freedom. He thinks you should be allowed to drive the car. If you want to take some of the nice girls out riding with you, we are only too pleased. We want you to enjoy yourself. But you are going to have to settle down to work, Harold. Your father doesn’t care what you start in at. All work is honorable as he says. But you’ve got to make a start at something. He asked me to speak to you this morning and then you can stop in and see him at his office.”

“Is that all?” Krebs said.

“Yes. Don’t you love your mother, dear boy?”

“No,” Krebs said.

His mother looked at him across the table. Her eyes were shiny. She started crying.

“I don’t love anybody,” Krebs said.

It wasn’t any good. He couldn’t tell her, he couldn’t make her see it. It was silly to have said it. He had only hurt her. He went over and took hold of her arm. She was crying with her head in her hands.

“I didn’t mean it,” he said. “I was just angry at something. I didn’t mean I didn’t love you.”

His mother went on crying. Krebs put his arm on her shoulder.

“Can’t you believe me, mother?”

His mother shook her head.

“Please, please, mother. Please believe me.”

“All right,” his mother said chokily. She looked up at him. “I believe you, Harold.”

Krebs kissed her hair. She put her face up to him.

“I’m your mother,” she said. “I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby.”

Krebs felt sick and vaguely nauseated.
“I know, Mummy,” he said. “I’ll try and be a good boy for you.”
“Would you kneel and pray with me, Harold?” his mother asked.
They knelt down beside the dining-room table and Krebs’s mother prayed.
“Now, you pray, Harold,” she said.
“I can’t,” Krebs said.
“Try, Harold.”
“I can’t.”
“Do you want me to pray for you?”
“Yes.”
So his mother prayed for him and then they stood up and Krebs kissed his mother and went out of the house. He had tried so to keep his life from being complicated. Still, none of it had touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie. He would go to Kansas City and get a job and she would feel all right about it. There would be one more scene maybe before he got away. He would not go down to his father’s office. He would miss that one. He wanted his life to go smoothly. It had just gotten going that way. Well, that was all over now, anyway. He would go over to the schoolyard and watch Helen play indoor baseball.

From *In Our Time* (1925)
Questions for Discussion and Suggestions for Further Reading

I. WHY FIGHT? / Introduction by Michael S. Neiberg

1. Alan Seeger was an American who volunteered to fight for France in 1914. How does his view of the war compare with the one presented by President Wilson in 1917?

2. Why did Americans fight in World War I? How do their reasons for going to war compare with those of the Americans who have fought in more recent conflicts?

3. What reasons did the Socialists give for opposing the war in 1917? How do their criticisms compare with those directed at American foreign policy today?

Suggestions for Further Reading:


Jennifer D. Keene, World War I: The American Soldier Experience (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011)


II. THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR / Introduction by Edward G. Lengel

1. How can language be used to describe modern combat to those who have never experienced it?

2. What place do traditional concepts of courage and strength have on a battlefield where even the bravest and most skilled soldiers are vulnerable to sudden, random, and unseen forces of destruction?

3. War is defined by violence, and yet much of the experience of war takes place away from scenes of violence, in moments of anticipation, recollection, or simply waiting. How do the selections portray/evoke these moments?
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:


III. RACE AND WORLD WAR I / Introduction by Chad Williams

1. How did W.E.B. Du Bois see the role of black Americans in fighting for democracy in “Close Ranks”? When he wrote “Returning Soldiers” less than a year later, how had his vision changed?

2. How does the military of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries compare with the army of 1917–19 in regards to race? What impact has the desegregation of the armed forces had on American society as a whole?

3. What does Charles Isum’s story tell us about the US army in 1919? What were the senior officers in his division afraid of, and how would their leadership be judged in today’s US military?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:


IV. AMERICAN WOMEN AT WAR / Introduction by Jennifer D. Keene

1. What are we to make of the varied experiences related in the selections? Is there a “women’s experience of war”?

2. How much has changed since World War I in the roles that women play during times of national conflict? Is their support as essential on the home front as it was in World War I?

3. Does war act as a transformative force in women’s lives?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:


Jennifer D. Keene, World War I: The American Soldier Experience (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011)


V. THE HOME FRONT: SELLING UNITY, SUPPRESSING DISSENT / Introduction by Chad Williams

1. How did Justice Holmes defend the value of free speech? Do you find his arguments persuasive?

2. Are there legitimate political and moral limits to wartime dissent in a democratic society?

3. How do the efforts of the Wilson administration to win support for World War I compare with the attempts of more recent administrations to rally public opinion in wartime?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:


Celia Malone Kingsbury, For Home and Country: World War I Propaganda on the Home Front (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2010)

VI. AMERICA ON THE WORLD STAGE / Introduction by Michael S. Neiberg

1. Should the United States try to promote democracy internationally?

2. Can the United States best serve its interests and preserve peace by acting through international organizations, or by maintaining its national sovereignty and the freedom to act unilaterally?

3. Was Wilson foolish or wise in trying to build an international order that did not rest upon the balance of power? Is it possible to have an international system that does not ultimately depend upon the use of force?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:


VII. AT HOME/COMING HOME: THE TOLL OF WAR / Introduction by Jennifer D. Keene

1. Was the Great War a just and noble cause for the Americans who fought in it? Were America’s interests best served by fighting in World War I?

2. Did the use of conscription in World War I result in a more fair sharing of the burdens and sacrifice of war than the all-volunteer force of today?

3. How has the experience of returning from war changed in the last hundred years? What has remained the same?
Suggestions for further reading:


Chronology, June 1914–November 1921

1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife Sophie are shot to death in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on June 28 by Gavrilo Princip, a young Bosnian Serb. Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, July 28. Russia orders full military mobilization, July 30. Austria-Hungary orders full mobilization, July 31.

Germany declares war on Russia, August 1. France orders full mobilization, August 1. Germany invades Luxembourg, August 2, and Belgium, August 4. Britain declares war on Germany, August 4. President Woodrow Wilson proclaims American neutrality on August 4. Montenegro declares war on Austria-Hungary, August 5. Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia, August 6. France and Great Britain declare war on Austria-Hungary, August 12. Japan declares war on Germany, August 23. (Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary becomes known as the Central Powers, and alliance of France, Russia, and Britain as the Entente or the Allies.)

Germans occupy Brussels, August 20. French and British are defeated in series of battles fought along the French frontiers, August 20–24.


Austro-Hungarians invade northwest Serbia, August 12, but are defeated and retreat across border, August 23.

British begin naval blockade of Germany as main body of German surface fleet remains in harbor, unwilling to risk battle with numerically superior British forces.

German troops in Togoland surrender to British and French forces, August 26. New Zealand, Australia, and Japan occupy German colonies in the Pacific, August 26–October 14.

French and British halt German advance in battle of the Marne, fought west of Paris, September 5–9. Germans withdrawn from the Marne to the Aisne River. Both sides move troops north toward the Channel coast.
Russians capture Lemberg (Lviv) in Austrian Galicia, September 3, and begin siege of Przemyśl, September 24.


Austro-Hungarians launch second invasion of northwest Serbia, September 8.

British and French capture Douala, capital of Cameroon, September 27. (Last German garrison in Cameroon surrenders February 18, 1916.)

Germans begin series of attacks on Allied forces defending Belgian town of Ypres, October 19, in attempt to breakthrough to Channel ports of Dunkirk and Calais. Belgian army retreats to west bank of Yser River and floods lowlands between Nieuport and Dixmude.

Austro-Hungarian forces in Galicia relieve siege of Przemyśl, October 9.

Ottoman Empire enters war on October 29 as Turkish fleet bombards Russian ports in Black Sea.

Battle of Ypres ends November 22 as Germans fail to break through Allied defenses. Both sides entrench along Western Front, which runs for 475 miles from the North Sea coast to the Swiss border.

Siege of Przemyśl resumes on November 6 as Austro-Hungarian armies in Galicia withdraw to the Carpathians.

Garrison at Tsingtao (Qingdao), German concession port in northern China, surrenders to Japanese, November 7, after six-week-long siege.


Fighting begins between Russians and Turks in the Caucasus, November 6. Ottoman Sultan Mehmed V declares jihad against the Allies, November 14, in unsuccessful attempt to foment rebellion among the Muslim populations of the British, French, and Russian empires. British and Indian troops occupy Basra in Mesopotamia, November 22.


Serbs launch counteroffensive, December 3–6, that re-
captures Belgrade on December 15 as Austro-Hungarian
forces are driven from Serbia.
Turks launch offensive in Caucasus, December 22, and
are defeated at Sarikamish, December 29–30.

1915

Sarikamish campaign ends, January 15, after Turks lose
two-thirds of their attacking force.
Germans announce on February 4 that Allied merchant
ships in war zone around Great Britain and Ireland will be
sunk by U-boats (submarines) without warning and that
neutral shipping should avoid entering the zone. Unre-
stricted U-boat campaign begins on February 18.
Germans defeat Russians in second battle of the Masur-
ian Lakes, February 7–22.
Anglo-French naval force begins bombarding Turkish
fortifications in the Dardanelles, February 19.
Russians capture 120,000 prisoners when garrison of
Przemyśl surrenders on March 22.
British impose total blockade on Germany, including all
food imports, March 11.
Anglo-French fleet loses three obsolete battleships to
mines in unsuccessful attempt to force passage of the
Dardanelles, March 18.
Germans launch offensive at Ypres, April 22, using poi-
sonous chlorine gas released from cylinders. Battle contin-
ues until May 25 as Germans gain ground but fail to
capture Ypres. (British begin using poison gas in Septem-
ber 1915.)
Turkish police arrest more than two hundred prominent
Armenians in Istanbul, April 24. (Evidence indicates that
in March 1915 the leadership of the Committee of Union
and Progress, which had ruled the Ottoman Empire since
1913, decided to remove the Armenian population of Anatolia
by deportation and mass murder.) British, Australian, New
Zealand, and French troops land on Gallipoli peninsula,
April 25, beginning land campaign to open the Darda-
nelles. Campaign becomes stalemated, with Allied forces
confined to shallow beachheads.
French launch new offensive in the Artois, May 9–June
18, supported by British attacks at Aubers Ridge, May 9,
and Festubert, May 15–25.
Germans and Austro-Hungarians break through Russian
lines between Gorlice and Tarnow in southeast Poland, May 2–4, and recapture Przemyśl, June 3, and Lemberg, June 22, as Russians retreat from Galicia.

Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary, May 23. Italian troops cross the Austrian border and advance to the Isonzo River with objective of seizing Trieste. In the first battle of the Isonzo, June 23–July 7, Italians fail to capture high ground east of the river. (Italians will launch four additional offensives in the Isonzo valley, July 1915–March 1916, that fail to break through Austro-Hungarian defenses.)

Ottoman authorities begin deportation of Armenians from Anatolia into the Syrian desert in May as mass killings are carried out by Kurdish tribesmen and criminal gangs recruited by the Special Organization, paramilitary group controlled by the Committee of Union and Progress. (By the summer of 1916 an estimated 800,000 to one million Armenians are killed, or die from hunger and disease, in the massacres and deportations, along with at least 150,000 Assyrian Christians.)

U-boat sinks British ocean liner *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland on May 7, killing 1,198 people, including 128 Americans. United States protests sinking on May 13 as an “unlawful and inhumane act.” Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan resigns on June 9, fearing that Wilson’s continued defense of the right of Americans to travel on belligerent ships will lead to war.

German air service deploys first fighter aircraft with forward-firing machine gun in July. (British and French will introduce equivalent aircraft into service by early 1916. From the beginning of the war all of the major powers use aircraft for reconnaissance and bombing raids; Germans also use Zeppelins for bombing and maritime reconnaissance.)

Germans and Austro-Hungarians launch new offensive, July 13, that forces Russians to retreat from Poland. German forces capture Warsaw, August 5. Austro-Hungarians capture Brest-Litovsk, August 26.

U-boat sinks British liner *Arabic* off Ireland, August 19, killing two Americans. Seeking to avoid American entry into war, Germans suspend unrestricted U-boat campaign, August 27, and pledge on September 1 not to sink passenger ships without warning.

German forces in South-West Africa (Namibia) surrender, July 9.
British troops land at Suvla Bay, August 6, as part of new attempt to break stalemate at Gallipoli. Offensive ends on August 15 with Turks still holding high ground and the Allies confined to their beachheads. French launch offensives in Champagne, September 25–November 6, and the Artois, September 25–October 16. Attack in the Artois is supported by British offensive at Loos, September 25–October 19.

Germans capture Vilna, September 18. Russian retreat ends in late September along line running from Gulf of Riga south to the Romanian border near Czernowitz (Chernivtsi).

British and Indian troops in Mesopotamia advance up Tigris and capture Kut, September 28.

French and British troops begin landing at Salonika, Greece, on October 5 in effort to aid Serbs. German and Austro-Hungarian forces invade Serbia from the north, October 7, and capture Belgrade, October 9. Bulgaria invades Serbia from east, October 14. Serbian army begins winter retreat across mountains into Montenegro and Albania, November 24. (Survivors are evacuated from the Adriatic coast by Allies, January–April 1916, and later join Allied forces at Salonika.)

British begin advance up Tigris toward Baghdad, November 19, but fail to breakthrough Turkish defenses at Ctesiphon (Salman Pak), November 22–25, and retreat to Kut. Turks begin siege of Kut, December 7. Allies begin evacuation of Gallipoli in mid-December.

1916 Allied evacuation of Gallipoli is completed, January 8. Austro-Hungarians invade Montenegro, January 5, and complete occupation of the country, January 25. Russians begin offensive in the Caucasus, January 10, and capture Erzurum, February 16.

Germans begin offensive at Verdun, February 21, and capture Fort Douaumont, key French position, February 25, but are unable to breakthrough inner defensive line. Fighting extends to left (west) bank of the Meuse, March 6, as Germans continue offensive intended to exhaust French army in battle of attrition.

Germany declares war on Portugal, March 9, after the Portuguese government seizes interned German ships.

Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa raids Columbus,
New Mexico, on March 9, killing eighteen Americans. Wilson sends military expedition led by General John J. Pershing into Mexico in pursuit of Villa, March 15 (expedition ends in early February 1917 without Villa being captured).

U-boat torpedoes French passenger ship Sussex in the English Channel, March 24, injuring several Americans. Wilson warns Germany on April 18 that the U.S. will break diplomatic relations if attacks on passenger ships continue. German government pledges on May 4 that it will abide by established rules of naval warfare, which require that the passengers and crew of a ship be placed in lifeboats before it is sunk.

Allied forces begin offensive in German East Africa, April 3. (Fighting extends into Portuguese East Africa and Northern Rhodesia in 1917–18 before last German forces surrender on November 25, 1918.)

Irish republicans begin Easter Uprising in Dublin, April 24. Insurrection is suppressed by British troops, April 29.

Russians capture Trabzon, Turkish Black Sea port, on April 18. British garrison at Kut surrenders, April 29.

American volunteer pilots fly first patrol with Escadrille N. 124, French fighter squadron later known as the Lafayette Escadrille, May 13.

Sykes-Picot agreement, ratified May 16, divides postwar Middle East into zones of British and French direct control and indirect influence while envisioning international zone in Palestine under British, French, and Russian administration. (The borders established in Middle East during the 1920s do not follow boundaries outlined in Sykes-Picot agreement.)


German fleet sails into North Sea on May 31 in attempt to engage British fleet on favorable terms. In battle of Jutland, May 31–June 1, British lose three battle cruisers, three armored cruisers, eight destroyers, and 6,000 men killed, while Germans lose one battle cruiser, one obsolete battleship, four light cruisers, five destroyers, and 2,500 men killed. British retain control of North Sea and continue blockade.

Russian offensive in Galicia, June 4, breaks through
Austro-Hungarian lines and captures 200,000 prisoners by June 12. Germans make final attempt to capture Verdun, June 23. Arab revolt against Ottoman rule begins in the Hejaz, June 10.

British and French begin offensive along Somme River, July 1, after week-long preliminary bombardment. In sixth battle of the Isonzo, August 6–17, Italians succeed in capturing Gorizia. (Italians will launch another four offensives along the Isonzo, September 1916–June 1917, that make limited gains in the high ground east of the river.) Italy declares war on Germany, August 28.

Romania declares war on Austria-Hungary, August 27, and invades Transylvania. German, Bulgarian, and Turkish forces invade southern Romania, September 2. Germans and Austro-Hungarians begin counteroffensive in Transylvania, September 25.

British use tanks for the first time with limited success on the Somme, September 15. Russian offensive in Galicia ends, September 20. French counteroffensive at Verdun recaptures Fort Douaumont, October 24.

Wilson wins reelection on November 7, defeating Republican Charles Evans Hughes.

Battle of the Somme ends, November 18, with a maximum Allied advance of seven miles. British lose 420,000 men killed, wounded, or missing, while French casualties total 200,000; German casualties are estimated at 430,000.

Franz Joseph, emperor of Austria since 1848, dies on November 21 and is succeeded by his nephew Karl.

Herbert Henry Asquith, prime minister of Great Britain since 1908, resigns on December 5, and is succeeded by David Lloyd George. Germans capture Bucharest, December 6, as Romanian army retreats north into Moldavia. French counteroffensive at Verdun, December 15–18, regains much of the ground lost earlier in the year. French lose 377,000 men killed, wounded, or missing in battle, while German casualties total 337,000.

Decision by German military and naval leadership to resume unrestricted U-boat warfare is endorsed by Kaiser Wilhelm II on January 9.

Wilson calls for “peace without victory” in address to the Senate, January 22.
Unrestricted U-boat warfare resumes, February 1. United States breaks diplomatic relations with Germany, February 3. Text of Zimmerman telegram, diplomatic message proposing a German-Mexican alliance against the United States, is published on March 1.

Germans shorten their line in France by withdrawing 12–25 miles to “Hindenburg Line,” strongly fortified position, March 16–18.

British retake Kut, February 25, and occupy Baghdad, March 11.

Food riots in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), March 8–12, result in mutiny by city garrison. Tsar Nicholas II abdicates, March 15, as provisional government is established with Prince Lvov as prime minister.

Wilson asks Congress on April 2 to declare war against Germany. War resolution is approved by the Senate, 82–6, on April 4 and by the House, 373–50, on April 6. (U.S. army has 127,000 officers and men, with another 80,000 men in the National Guard on federal service.)

British begin offensive at Arras on April 9. Canadian troops capture Vimy Ridge, April 9–12. Battle continues until May 16 as British are unable to exploit initial success; British casualties total 150,000 killed, wounded, or missing.

French launch offensive against Chemin des Dames, high ground north of the Aisne, on April 16 that fails to achieve breakthrough. Offensive ends on May 16 after French lose 130,000 men killed, wounded, or missing. Failure of attack cause widespread protests and unrest in French army, with many soldiers refusing to engage in further attacks. French commanders restore order by improving leave conditions and avoiding costly attacks.

General Pershing is appointed commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), May 10. Wilson signs Selective Service Act, May 18, making men twenty-one to thirty eligible for the draft (registration is extended in September 1918 to men eighteen to forty-five).

British capture Messines ridge south of Ypres, June 7–14.

Wilson signs Espionage Act, June 15, that includes penalties for attempts to incite “disloyalty” in the armed forces or to obstruct enlistments.

White mobs attack black residents of East St. Louis, Illinois, July 2–3, during rioting that kills at least thirty-nine African Americans and nine whites.


Germans begin using mustard gas, a liquid blistering agent, in Flanders, July 12. (Allies will begin using mustard gas in June 1918. Poison gas causes death of an estimated 90,000 soldiers on all sides, 1915–18.)

British launch offensive at Ypres, July 31, after fifteen-day preliminary bombardment.

U-boats sink almost 4.4 million tons of shipping, February–August 1917. (Germans had sunk 4.2 million tons, August 1914–January 1917.) Sinkings begin to decline as British gradually adopt convoy system, aided by increasing numbers of U.S. destroyers made available for escort duty.

Italians capture Bainsizza plateau northeast of Gorizia in eleventh battle of the Isonzo, August 19–September 12.

Germans capture Riga, September 3.

Germans and Austro-Hungarians launch offensive at Caporetto on the upper Isonzo, October 24, and force the Italians to retreat sixty miles to the Paive River. Italians lose 280,000 men taken prisoner, while another 350,000 men become stragglers or desert.

Third battle of Ypres (also known as battle of Passchendaele) ends, November 10, with maximum Allied advance of four miles; British lose 244,000 killed, wounded, or missing, the Germans 215,000. Georges Clemenceau becomes premier of France, November 16. British break through Hindenburg Line at Cambrai, November 20, in surprise attack using more than 300 tanks. German counteroffensive on November 30 recovers much of the lost ground.

British break through Turkish defenses at Gaza, November 1–6, and advance into Palestine. Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issues declaration on November 2 committing British government to “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” British occupy Jerusalem, December 9.

U.S. declares war on Austria-Hungary, December 7. Congress proposes Eighteenth Amendment, establishing prohibition, to the states, December 18.

1918

Wilson outlines terms of peace settlement in Fourteen Points address to Congress, January 8.

Bolsheviks sign peace treaty with Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, March 3.

Outbreak of Spanish influenza in Kansas in early March spreads across the United States and travels overseas.

Germans launch offensive against British at St. Quentin, March 21–April 5, and advance up to forty miles. Attack is most successful on Western Front since 1914, but fails to capture railroad junction at Amiens. Allies lose 255,000 men killed, wounded, or captured, the Germans 240,000. French general Ferdinand Foch becomes first Allied supreme commander on the Western Front, April 3. Germans break through British defenses along Lys River south of Ypres, April 9–29, but fail to capture supply center at Hazebrouck.

Romania signs peace treaty with Central Powers at Bucharest, May 7.

Wilson signs Sedition Act, May 16. (The Wilson administration will prosecute 2,168 individuals for their speeches or writings under the Espionage and Sedition acts and obtain 1,055 convictions; forty-one defendants are sentenced to terms of ten, fifteen, or twenty years.)

Germans launch third spring offensive, May 27–June 4, breaking through French lines along the Aisne River and advancing to the Marne. American troops join French in defense of Marne crossing at Château-Thierry, June 1–3, and drive Germans from Belleau Wood, June 6–25.


During final German offensive, July 15–18, Americans fight with the French along the Marne, then join counter-offensive that advances to Aisne and Vesle rivers in early August.

British launch offensive at Amiens, August 8–12, that captures 12,000 prisoners in its first day.

American troops land at Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok, August 16, and Arctic port of Archangel, September
4. (Troops are sent to guard military supplies and railroads and to assist Czechoslovak forces that seek to leave Russia and fight with the Allies.)

New and more virulent strain of Spanish influenza arrives in United States in late August. (Influenza pandemic of 1918–19 kills an estimated 675,000 Americans and at least thirty million people worldwide.)

In its first operation as an independent army under Pershing’s command, the AEF eliminates the St. Mihiel salient southeast of Verdun, September 12–16, capturing 13,000 prisoners. Allies begin general offensive, September 26–29, attacking in Flanders, Picardy, and Champagne. AEF launches Meuse-Argonne offensive, September 26.

French, British, Serbian, and Greek forces begin offensive in Macedonia, September 15, and advance up the Vardar valley. Bulgaria signs armistice, September 29.

Eugene V. Debs, four-time Socialist candidate for president, is tried in Cleveland under the Espionage Act of 1917 for having made an antiwar speech in June 1918. Convicted on September 13, he is sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

British forces capture Damascus, October 1.

British break through Hindenburg Line, September 29–October 5. Prince Max of Baden, the newly-appointed German chancellor, sends note to Wilson on October 5 asking for an armistice and peace negotiations on basis of the Fourteen Points. Americans break through main defensive line in the Meuse-Argonne, October 14–17. German navy orders U-boats to end attacks on civilian ships, October 21. (Germans sink 4.1 million tons of merchant shipping, September 1917–October 1918; 178 U-boats are lost at sea, 1914–18.) American troops in Europe total 2,057,000.

Ottoman Empire signs armistice, October 30. Italian victory in battle of Vittorio Veneto, October 24–November 3, brings about collapse of Austro-Hungarian army. Austria-Hungary signs armistice, November 3. Allies launch series of attacks along the Western Front, October 31–November 4. Wilhelm II abdicates his throne, November 9, as German republic is proclaimed in Berlin. Germans sign armistice that goes into effect on November 11 at 11 A.M.

Czechoslovak republic proclaimed in Prague, November

1920 Last American troops leave France, January 3. (American occupation of Germany ends in January 1923.) Soviet Russia signs treaties recognizing Estonian, Lithuanian,
and Latvian independence, February 2–August 11. Senate votes 49–35 to ratify Versailles treaty with reservations, March 19, falling seven votes short of the necessary two-thirds majority. (Austrian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian treaties all incorporate the League of Nations covenant, and are never submitted to the Senate for ratification.) Last U.S. troops leave Vladivostok, April 1. At conference held in San Remo, Italy, April 19–26, British and French agree that France will receive League of Nations mandate for Syria (including Lebanon) and Britain will receive mandates for Iraq and Palestine (including territory that becomes Transjordan in 1923). Peace treaty with Turkey is signed at Sèvres, August 10. (United States is not a signatory to the Sèvres treaty, which is replaced by Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.) Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment is completed, August 18. Poland and Lithuania sign peace treaty, October 7. Warren G. Harding, Republican senator from Ohio, defeats James M. Cox, Democratic governor of Ohio, in presidential election on November 2. Eugene V. Debs, who is still in federal prison, receives more than three percent of the popular vote. (Debs is released on December 25, 1921, after Harding commutes his sentence.)

1921

Poland and Soviets sign treaty in Riga, March 18, ending their 1919–20 war. Harding signs congressional resolution ending state of war with Germany, Austria, and Hungary, July 2. United States signs separate peace treaties with Austria, August 24, Germany, August 25, and Hungary, August 29. Harding dedicates Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, November 11.

More than 116,000 Americans died while serving in the armed forces during World War I; of these deaths, 53,000 were the result of hostile action and 63,000 were from non-combat causes. Battle deaths by service were approximately 50,500 in the army, 400 in the navy, and 2,500 in the marines; 26,000 of the battle deaths were men killed in the Meuse-Argonne campaign (September 26–November 11, 1918). It is estimated that 46,000 of the non-combat deaths were from influenza.

Great Britain and Ireland lost 74,400 military dead; India, 74,000; Australia, 62,000; Canada, 57,000; New Zealand, 18,000; South Africa, 7,000; and Newfoundland,
1,200. France lost 1,400,000 military dead, including 70,000 from its colonies; Russia, 1,800,000; Italy, 650,000; Romania, 336,000; Serbia, 278,000; and Belgium, 38,000. Germany lost 2,000,000 military dead; Austria-Hungary, 1,200,000; the Ottoman Empire, 770,000; and Bulgaria, 87,500. About 15,000 African soldiers died on both sides in African campaigns, along with an estimated 150,000 porters and laborers, mostly from disease and malnutrition. The total number of military dead from 1914 to 1918 is estimated at more than 9 million, while total civilian deaths from violence and war-related food shortages and epidemics (excluding the 1918 influenza pandemic) are estimated at 6 million, including 2,100,000 in the Ottoman Empire and 1,500,000 in Russia.
Biographical Notes

Mary Borden (May 15, 1886–December 2, 1968) Born in Chicago, Illinois, the daughter of a wealthy businessman with extensive holdings in real estate, mining, and dairy products. Graduated from Vassar in 1907. Married George Douglas Turner, a Scottish lay missionary, in 1908. Published two novels under pseudonym Bridget Maclagan, 1912–13. Used her inheritance to establish military hospital at Rousbrugge, Belgium, in July 1915; her nursing staff included the American volunteer Ellen N. La Motte. Served as director of hospital at Bray-sur-Somme, August 1916–February 1917, and at hospital in Mont-Notre-Dame during the 1917 spring offensive in Champagne before returning to Rousbrugge. Published four poems in the English Review, August–December 1917. After divorce from her first husband, married Edward Spears, a British liaison officer who had served with the French army on the Somme. Lived in Paris, 1918–21, before moving to England. Published The Forbidden Zone (1929), collection of sketches and poems based on wartime experiences, nonfiction work The Technique of Marriage (1933) and numerous novels, including Jane: Our Stranger (1923), Flamingo (1927), and Passport for a Girl (1939). Organized field hospital in Lorraine in February 1940. Escaped from Bordeaux in late June 1940 and returned to England. Reorganized hospital unit and served with Free French forces in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Libya, 1941–42, and in eastern France in 1945; spent remainder of the war with her husband, who served as the British envoy in Syria and Lebanon, 1941–44. Published memoir Journey Down a Blind Alley (1946), describing experiences in Second World War. Continued to write novels, including For the Record (1950) and Martin Merriedew (1952). Died in Warfield, Berkshire, England.

Willa Cather (December 7, 1873–April 24, 1947) Born in Back Creek Valley, near Winchester, Virginia, daughter of a sheep farmer. Parents and other relatives moved to the Nebraska Divide in 1883, ultimately settling in Red Cloud. Attended University of Nebraska, where she studied Greek, Latin, French, German, and English literature; graduated 1894. Published poetry and short fiction and began contributing reviews to The Nebraska State Journal. Worked in Pittsburgh as a magazine editor and reviewer for Pittsburgh Leader, and later as high school Latin teacher. Published poetry collection April Twilights (1903) and story collection The Troll Garden (1905). Moved to New York in
1906 as editor of *McClure’s Magazine*; subsequently spent time in Boston and London, and frequently returned to Nebraska. First novel *Alexander’s Bridge* published in 1912, followed by *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and *My Ántonia* (1918). Traveled extensively in Southwest. Toured French battlefields to research novel *One of Ours* (1922), inspired by cousin G. P. Cather, who was killed at Cantigny in 1918. Later novels included *A Lost Lady* (1923), *The Professor’s House* (1925), *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1931), *Lucy Gayheart* (1935), and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (1940), along with story collections *Youth and the Bright Medusa* (1920), *Obscure Destinies* (1932), and *The Old Beauty and Others* (1945). Died in New York City.


University, 1894–97. Married Nina Gomer in 1896. Published The Suppression of the Africa Slave-Trade to the United States of America 1638–1870 (1896), The Philadelphia Negro (1899), and The Souls of Black Folk (1903). Professor of history and economics at Atlanta University, 1897–1910. Helped found National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909 and edited its monthly magazine, The Crisis, 1910–34. Executive secretary of Pan-African Congress held in Paris in 1919. Later books included John Brown (1909), Darkwater (1920), Black Reconstruction (1935), and Dusk of Dawn (1940). Resigned from NAACP in 1934 in policy dispute. Professor of sociology at Atlanta University, 1934–44. Returned to NAACP in 1944 as director of special research, but was dismissed in 1948 for criticizing “reactionary, war-mongering” American foreign policy. Helped found Peace Information Center in 1950 and served as its chairman. Indicted in 1951 under Foreign Agents Registration Act for his role in the now-dissolved Center; charges were dismissed at trial later in the year. After wife’s death, married Shirley Graham in 1951. Denied passport in 1952; after it was restored in 1958, visited Soviet Union and China. Settled in Ghana in 1961. Died in Accra.


James Norman Hall (April 22, 1887–July 5, 1951) Born in Colfax, Iowa, the son of a farmer and grocer. Graduated from Grinnell College in 1910. Worked for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Boston while studying for a master’s degree at Harvard. While on vacation in England at the outbreak of World


followed by novels *The Torrents of Spring* and *The Sun Also Rises* in 1926. After divorce from his first wife, married Pauline Pfeiffer in 1927. Returned to United States in 1928, settling in Key West in 1930. Subsequent fiction included *Men Without Women* (1927), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *Winner Take Nothing* (1933), and *To Have and Have Not* (1937); also published *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), about bullfighting, and *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935), about big game hunting. Covered Spanish Civil War as correspondent for North American Newspaper Alliance, 1936–37, an experience that helped inspire novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Settled in Cuba, 1939–40. After divorce from second wife, married war correspondent Martha Gellhorn in 1941 and traveled with her to China as correspondent for *PM*, 1941. War correspondent in northwest Europe for *Collier’s*, May 1944–March 1945. After divorce from third wife, married former war correspondent Mary Welsh in 1946. Published *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950) and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). Won Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. Committed suicide in Ketcham, Idaho.


associate justice of the Massachusetts supreme judicial court, 1883–99, as its chief justice, 1899-1902, and as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1902–32. Died in Washington, D.C.

**Charles R. Isum** (May 22, 1889–March 6, 1941) Born in California. Worked as bookbinder for the *Los Angeles Times*. Drafted into army and was assigned to the medical detachment of the 1st Battalion, 365th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division. In June 1918 his regiment arrived in France, where it held the St. Die sector of the Lorraine front, August–September. Regiment was kept in reserve during opening of the Meuse-Argonne offensive before being sent to Marbache Sector along the Moselle in October. Served in battalion aid station at Pont-à-Mousson under heavy artillery fire, November 5–10, before being sent to Lesménils, where he was gassed on the night before the Armistice. Threatened with court-martial in January 1919 for violating order forbidding black soldiers from speaking with French women, but charges were dropped, and Isum was honorably discharged in March 1919. Returned to Los Angeles and job at the *Times*. Married Zellee Jones. Retired from work in 1930s as heart condition linked to wartime gassing worsened. Daughter Rachel, born 1922, began studying nursing in 1940 at UCLA, where she met star athlete Jackie Robinson and introduced him to her father shortly before his death. (Rachel Isum and Jackie Robinson married in 1946, the year before he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers.)


**Algernon Lee** (September 15, 1873–January 5, 1954) Born in Dubuque, Iowa, the son of a carpenter. Attended University of Minnesota,


**Horace Pippin** (February 22, 1888–July 6, 1946) Born West Chester, Pennsylvania; grew up in Goshen, New York. Developed love of drawing and painting in childhood. Worked at various jobs including hotel porter, furniture crater, and iron molder. Joined the army in 1917 and was sent to France as part of 369th Infantry (“Harlem Hellfighters”), keeping an illustrated journal of his military experiences. Was badly wounded in the right shoulder near Séchault on September 30, 1918 losing the full use of his right arm. Received Croix de Guerre. Returned to United States in 1919 and settled in West Chester, living on odd jobs and his disability pension. Married Jennie Wade in 1920. Resumed activity as an artist, executing oil paintings using his left hand to assist his injured right arm; the first of these, “The End of the War: Starting Home” (c. 1930) took over three years to complete. His work, focused on historical and political themes and scenes of African-American life, attracted local attention and was championed by painter N. C. Wyeth. Began exhibiting in galleries and major museums including the Carlen Gallery (Philadelphia), the Corcoran Gallery


Ashby Williams (June 18, 1874–May 31, 1944) Born John Ashby Williams in Stafford County, Virginia, the son of a farmer. Family moved to Washington, D.C., in 1892. Worked as clerk in government hydrographic office in Norfolk, Virginia, 1898–1901. Attended Oberlin College, 1901–3, and the University of Virginia, 1903–6, where he was awarded a law degree. Practiced law in Roanoke, Virginia, where he served on the board of aldermen, 1908–12. Published *Corporation Laws of Virginia* (1909), an annotated compilation. Married Eva Wallbridge in 1911. Arrived in France in May 1918, commanding Company E, Second Battalion, 320th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division. Trained behind British lines, June–July, and then served in trenches near Ransart, southwest of Arras, July–August. Assigned command of First Battalion, 320th Infantry Regiment, on August 28; led battalion at St. Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Returned to the United States in May 1919 as lieutenant colonel. Published *Experiences of the Great War: Artois, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne*.