WORLD WAR I PART 8 OF 9 · AGES 11–16

CONSEQUENCES OF WORLD WAR I

How the war of 1914–1918 changed borders, governments and lives, and what it left behind for the next generation.

Four empires fall

The German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman empires collapsed. Germany became a republic, and Russia's revolution led to the Soviet Union in 1922.

The Treaty of Versailles

Signed on 28 June 1919. Germany accepted blame for the war, paid reparations, lost Alsace-Lorraine and was limited to an army of 100,000.

The League of Nations

Founded on 10 January 1920 to settle disputes peacefully. 41 states attended its first Assembly, but the USA never joined.

New countries in Europe

Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Finland, Estonia and Latvia emerged from the fallen empires. Border wars went on until 1923.

A new Middle East

Ottoman lands came under British and French control; Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon later emerged. Many borders ignored local peoples.

Calls for independence

Colonial soldiers and workers had served in huge numbers. In India and elsewhere, the war strengthened demands for self-government.

The 1918 flu pandemic

As the war ended, flu infected about a third of the world's people. At least 50 million died (CDC), possibly up to 100 million (IWM).

The road to another war

Resentment of Versailles in Germany helped the Nazi Party win support. On 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland, starting the Second World War.

Remembering the war

In the UK and elsewhere, a two-minute silence is held at 11am on 11 November, the moment the Armistice began. The red poppy, which grew on the battlefields, became a symbol of remembrance.

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