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KEY PEOPLE OF WORLD WAR I

Eight people from seven countries and empires whose decisions, actions or fate shaped the war.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand

Austria-Hungary. Heir to the throne. His assassination in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 set off the July Crisis.

Kaiser Wilhelm II

Germany. Emperor from 1888. He backed Austria-Hungary in July 1914 and abdicated on 9 November 1918, going into exile.

Tsar Nicholas II

Russia. Emperor who took personal command of the army in 1915. He was forced to abdicate in March 1917.

Vladimir Lenin

Russia. Bolshevik leader who seized power in November 1917 and took Russia out of the war at Brest-Litovsk in 1918.

Mustafa Kemal

Ottoman Empire. Officer who rose to fame defending Gallipoli in 1915. Later, as Atatürk, he founded the Republic of Turkey.

Khudadad Khan

India. Machine gunner who kept firing at Hollebeke, Belgium, on 31 October 1914; the first Indian-born soldier awarded the Victoria Cross.

Woodrow Wilson

USA. President who took his country to war in April 1917. His Fourteen Points of January 1918 proposed a League of Nations.

Georges Clemenceau

France. Prime Minister from November 1917. At the 1919 peace conference he pressed for terms that would keep Germany weak.

Look beyond the leaders

Millions of ordinary people also shaped the war: soldiers, nurses, factory workers and labourers from every continent, such as the 25,000 men of the South African Native Labour Corps.

NEXT IN THE SERIES
8. Consequences of World War I

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