Austria's Ferdinand Assassinated in Bosnia - Trigger to War (June 28, 1914): Ferdinand, the heir to the Austria-Hungarian throne was assassinated while visiting Sarajevo, Bosnia by a Bosnian Serb revolutionary. The culprit escaped into Serbia. Serbia and Bosnia were in the midst of a pro-Slav movement, which opposed Austrian possession of Slav lands in the Balkans, such as Bosnia. Austria elected to deal harshly with Serbia, offering a list of steep demands. Austria-Hungary's demands included strict Serbian compliance with an investigation, harsh punishment against the suspected revolutionary group (the Young Bosnians), all with close Austrian oversight. Serbia was on the verge of accepting in order to avoid war over the matter, but was reassured support by Russia, who jumped on the opportunity to assert its will and influence in the Slavic nations of the Balkans. Austria consequently declared war on Serbia. Russia followed with a declaration of war on Austria-Hungary, setting into motion a chain reaction which brought the other European powers into the conflict, bringing to a head the tensions that had been building up for decades, instigating WWI.

Causes of World War I

1. **Colonial Rivalries.** European powers shared an insatiable appetite for expansionism and wealth creation. Natural resources were required to feed their growing industrialization capabilities. Most land throughout the world that could be feasibly conquered was already under European colonial control, leaving colonial powers to fight over increasingly limited territory, such as the African interior. By the late 1800s, bitter rivalries developed as colonial powers butted heads with greater frequency.

2. **Arms Race.** As economic rivalries and colonial competition came to a boiling point, nations began to build their military arsenals at an unprecedented rate. Armament build-ups continued to spiral out of control as European powers sought to gain a military advantage over one another.

3. **Unmitigated Nationalism.** European kingdoms had given way to nation-states throughout the 1800s following the Napoleonic Wars, lending widespread support to colonial, economic and military expansion. The Napoleonic Wars taught Europeans that it was critical to consolidate and strengthen one's nation in relation to potential rivals. Furthermore, new nations and new colonial powers such as the German Empire and Italy (formed comparatively recently, during the mid-1800s) were especially fervent, as they had
been under foreign domination for so long, and were eager to reverse the situation. Their tactics became increasingly brutal and hostile as they felt compelled to play catch up with established colonial powers such as the United Kingdom, France and Spain.

4. Complex Network of Alliances. As tensions grew, alliances were formed. Nearly all of the European powers were mobilized and prepared to go to war at the drop of a hat. As Germany grew in strength, France and the UK formed an alliance to keep it in check. By the late 1800s, Germany was threatening UK naval dominance. France had just lost an important region to Germany from their loss in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, and remained vulnerable to this still-growing power along their eastern border. Russia and Austria-Hungary had become distrustful of one another, as both were interested in gaining control over the Balkans. France and the UK recruited Russia to their alliance to force Germany into a two-front war in the event of hostilities, while Russia sought help in order to counterbalance the Austrian threat. Consequently, Germany and Austria-Hungary became natural bedfellows. They recruited the Ottoman Empire based in Turkey to neutralize Russia, with the promise of regaining lost Balkan territories used as a carrot.

5. The Catalyst. The Balkans had become a tinder box, as both Austria and Russia had designs on the region. When the heir to the Austrian throne was assassinated in Bosnia in 1914, Austria reacted harshly, resulting in war. Serbia was prepared to concede to Austria, but Russia made a strong showing of support, giving it courage to standup to Austria. Austria then declared war, and all the treaties and alliances were triggered, initiating The Great War (WWI).

Austria Invades Serbia to Begin War (August 12, 1914): Austria-Hungary launches invasion of Serbia to start the Great War (WWI). In July, Austrian heir to the throne was assassinated in Bosnia (part of Austria-Hungary Empire), as part of a pan-Slavic movement based out of Serbia, with the objective of limiting Austrian influence and control in the Balkans. Russia encouraged Serbia to resist Austria-Hungary's subsequent demands, which included investigating and prosecuting the suspected group, under the oversight of the Austrians. Consequently, Austria invaded in August. Russia subsequently invaded Austria-Hungary, limiting its ability to conquer Serbia. In which case, Serbia was able to repel the Austrian offensive until late 1915.

Primary Combatants as of 1914:

**Allied Powers:**
- United Kingdom
- France
- Russia
- Canada
- Serbia
- Montenegro

**Central Powers:**
- German Empire
- Austria-Hungary
- Ottoman Empire

Germany Invades Belgium/France - Beginning Trench Warfare (August 14, 1914):
Germany invades Belgium as part of its plan to quickly defeat France, enabling it to divert
most of its military resources to the eastern front to fight Russia. In order to out-flank the French military, which would concentrate along shared border and around Paris, it needed to launch from inside Belgium. Therefore, Belgium’s neutrality was not honored. Germany enjoyed early success, steamrolling Belgium, and quickly taking ground inside France. However, France - with the help of UK and Canadian troops - was able to bog down the German military in trench warfare, forcing them into a two-front war after all.

Declarations of War:

1. Austria-Hungary Declared War on Serbia: When Serbia declined to accept harsh demands by Austria after Ferdinand assassination, Austria-Hungary declared war. Serbia was encouraged to refuse terms by Russia, who offered support, eyeing an opportunity to gain influence and control in Slavic Balkans. Slav-dominated Russia believed itself to be the natural leader of the Slavic world.

2. Russia Mobilized Along Austria-Hungarian Border: As part of its agreement to protect Serbia, Russia prepared to invade Austria-Hungary, amassing troops along their shared border.

3. Germany Declared War on Russia and France: The German Empire, an ally of Austria-Hungary, realized that it would be drawn into a two-front war with France and Russia. Its only chance at victory was to quickly strike and defeat France, allowing it to concentrate its troops along its eastern borders with Russia before it could mobilize its massive army. It had been calculated that Russia would be the slowest of the three to mobilize, while France could be forced to surrender fairly quickly. Therefore, Germany could not afford to wait until Russia invaded. By then, it would be too late, as France and Russia would be fully mobilized on either side.

4. UK and France Declared War on Germany and Austria-Hungary: As part of its plan, the German Empire began its invasion to the west within less than two weeks of declaring war on France. Its military strategy to defeat France included the conquest of Belgium, a neutral nation. This action, along with the fact that it was an ally with France, drew the UK into WWI.

5. Ottoman Empire Joined Central Powers: The German Empire and Austria-Hungary recruited the Ottoman Empire as war declarations were being made, enjoining them to their side. The Ottomans were important, since they would force Russia into a two-front war, diverting some of their military resources to the south. Plus, they could attack British assets in the Middle East, while also enabling the Central Powers to enclose the Balkans on either side. The Ottoman Empire was promised the return of territory they had lost in the Balkans, as well as territories lost to the UK in the Middle East.

Naval Battle of Coronel - South America - Germany vs UK (Nov. 1, 1914): Germans invade and defeat British naval vessels off the southern coast of Chile, toward the southern tip of South America. This prompts the UK to send reinforcements, which meet the German
squadron off the coast of the nearby Falkland Islands, a month later (Dec. 8). The British utterly destroy the Germans, ending their presence in the region.

**Russia Invades German Empire and Austria-Hungary (1914):** Russia mobilized troops along both its German and Austria-Hungary borders to support Serbia. Russia had encouraged Serbia to defy Austrian demands, pledging its aid in an attempt to increase its power and influence in the Slavic Balkan territories. This prompted Germany and Austria to declare war against Russia, eliciting the Russian invasions.

**Germans successfully defend against Russian invasion of East Prussia (1914).**

**Russia Conquers Galacia Portion of Austria-Hungary (1914):** Russians successfully invade Austria-Hungary, controlling most of Galacia. Forces Germans to divert more troops to aid its ally.

**African Theater (1914):**
**West Africa:** UK and France immediately gain the upper hand in German colonies of Togo and Kamerun.

**South Africa:** Germans invade South Africa, counting on support of Boers (Dutch farmers inherited by the British when they conquered South African from the Dutch), who had just revolted against UK rule a decade earlier. UK spends the remainder of 1914 consolidating control and securing loyalty among the Boers.

**East Africa:** The Germans successfully defend their colonies of Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda.

**Ottoman Empire Invades Russia (1914):** The Ottomans joined the Central Powers just as the war started, with an invasion of Russia, with the purpose of forcing it into a two-front war. The Ottomans' motivation was to regain territories lost in the past century, including Balkan territories, Middle Eastern territories to the UK, and Caucasus territories to Russia. Russia gained a decisive upper hand by the end of 1914.

**UK-German Naval Warfare (1914):** The UK devastates the German fleet off the west coast of South America, ending the German threat in that part of the world. The UK also successfully blockades the north coast of the German Empire, constricting their ability to bring in needed supplies. However, Germany is successful in harrassing Allied vessels in the North Atlantic.
United Kingdom imposes a naval blockade of Germany (1914).

Canada Joins United Kingdom (1914): Canada quickly joined the Allies to support the UK, its most important ally in the world, and to foster a greater sense of nation, as it was still a self-governing federation under British dominion. Canadia soldiers primarily served in the trenches in France, fighting against the Germans.

Italy Joins Allies (June, 1915): The allies persuade Italy to leave the Triple Alliance with the German Empire and Austria-Hungary, and join their side instead. Although allies with Germany and Austria, Italy did not agree to join WWI, since it understood that the alliance was defensive in nature, and viewed the Central Power's involvement as pre-emptive. In 1915, the allies offer Italy various territories across the Adriatic Sea, in Slovenia, Croatia, and Albania. Italy is persuaded, entering the war in June of 1915 by mounting an offensive strike against Austria-Hungary across their shared border.

Italy Unsuccessfully Invades Austria-Hungary (June, 1915): The Italians met the Austrians along the Italy-Austria border in the Alps in 1915. The massive Italian army outnumbered the Austrians about by 2 to 1. However, the Austrians held a superior, higher-ground position in the Alps, negating the numerical advantage of the Italians. Plus, the Italians were poorly equipped. Italian commanders attempted several frontal assaults in 1915, but were badly defeated each time.

Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria Conquer Serbia (Nov, 1915): In 1915, the Central Powers finally persuaded Bulgaria to join their side, with the promise of the southern portion of Serbia (approximate to modern Macedonia) as their spoil of victory. With Austria-Hungary allocating greater numbers of troops, and the additional push from the SE by the Bulgarians, the Serbian army was overwhelmed. By the end of 1915, Serbia was completely conquered by the Central Powers, with Bulgaria taking possession of the southern portion as promised, and Austria-Hungary taking possession of the remainder. The surviving Serbian troops would escape to Albania, from where they would launch attacks against Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria throughout the duration of the war.
Stalemate Along Western Front (1915): Throughout 1915, both sides essentially held their ground. The ground along this swathe of territory was fairly soft, enabling both sides to dig serviceable trenches. Plus, machine gun technology made it difficult to move the enemy side from its entrenched position. The Germans introduced chemical warfare to the battlefield, killing thousands. However, they were unable to capitalize. The Germans continue to occupy Belgium and Luxembourg throughout 1915, forcing many of them into battle.

Germany and Austria-Hungary Turn Tables on Russia, Conquering Lithuania and Poland (1915): With the Western Front largely set for the time being, and Russia gaining ground inside Austria-Hungary, Germany redeployed the larger proportion of its army to the Eastern Front. This turns the tide of the war along the Eastern Front, as Russia is driven out completely out of Austria-Hungary. The unified German-Austrian battalions continue east, as Russia is forced to retreat. By the end of 1915, Germany and Austria conquer Lithuania and Poland from Russia.

Stalemate between Russian and Ottoman forces in Caucasus (1915).

Ottoman Genocide Against Armenians Begins (1915): Reports of Armenians switching sides to join the Russians in battle fostered distrust among the Turkish Ottomans. Armenians were an ethnic group within the NE portion of the Ottoman Empire. As Allies closed in, 250 prominent Armenians were executed. This was followed by a mass deportation of Armenians to the Syrian desert. Armenians were stripped of their assets, and marched into this barren land without sufficient food, water or supplies. Soldiers orchestrating the exile allowed and participated in atrocities such as robbing, raping and indiscriminate murdering. Many also died of starvation and disease. As many as 500,000 would die during this mass deportation.

German U-Boat Attacks (1915): German U-boats (submarines) begin the tactic of sinking supply ships in the North Sea and North Atlantic Ocean to gain control over the supply lines between Britain and U.S. This tactic would later sink a civilian passenger ship, killing a number of Americans, which would help provoke the U.S. into the war.
**UK Naval Blockade of Germany (1915):** UK maintains effective naval blockade of Germany, placing pressure on their ability to bring in necessary supplies.

**Allies Attempt to Invade Ottoman Empire (1915):**

**Turkish Straits:** Ottomans inflict mass casualties upon the invading Allies, successfully defending European portion of their Empire.

**Iraq:** Ottomans decisively defeat British in their attempt to invade Mesopotamia.

**Arabia:** British successfully incite Arab revolts against the Ottomans on the Sinai Peninsula and in Palestine.

**Ottomans unsuccessfully try to conquer Suez Canal (Egypt) from the British (1915).**

**African Theater (1915):**

**West Africa:** Continued fighting between French/British versus the Germans in German colonies of Kamerun and Togoland. Allies maintain upper hand.

**South Africa:** British end the Boar rebellions and gain their cooperation against the Germans. British colony of South Africa conquers German colony of South West Africa in 1915.

**Unsuccessful Russia Counteroffensive Against Germany and Austria-Hungary (1916):** Russian launches a counteroffensive against the Germans and Austrians which is initially successful, but the gains are quickly given back due to a successful counterattack by the Central Powers. The Russian public becomes increasingly disenchanted with the war effort.

**Stalemate Continues in Trench Warfare Along Western Front (1916):** By 1916, the Germans realized that it was unlikely they would be able to break through the established lines of control, and reverted to a more defensive posture, to hold their initial gains, and to enable them to redeploy troops to other battlefields where further gains were achievable. The Germans did attempt to maximize French casualties by concentrating firepower against certain targets, without the objective of gaining ground, in order to weaken the will of the French. The French and their allies largely held their ground, launching their own offenses.

**Italy-Austria Stalemate (1916):** The Italians achieve a minor victory by taking the town of Gorizia along the Isonzo River (which roughly marked the boundary of control between the Italian and Austria-Hungary armies). Other than this, battles were fought to a stalemate.

**Romanian Joins Allies, Suffers Major Losses to Central Powers (1916):** Refused to join the Allies until 1916, when they are motivated by the prospect of adding Transylvania to Romania, now a possibility with a weakening Austria-Hungary. But they are quickly defeated, with more than half their country under Central Power control by the end of 1916.
Russia promised support in persuading Romania to join Allied cause, which proved to be woefully inadequate against the Central Powers.

Bulgaria Holds Gains in Romania and Serbia (1916): Bulgaria continues to protect its gains in Serbia (modern Macedonia) and Romania, but the resistance from the Serbs and Romanians/Russians invites great difficulties in loss of life and economic troubles. Bulgaria's involvement in the war begins to show signs of being very unpopular with its citizenry.

Serbs Carry Out Insurgency Against Central Powers from Albania (1916): Serbs that escaped to Albania, now supported by Allies such as France, engage in raids into southern Serbia (modern Macedonia), attacking Bulgarian strongholds. Attacks succeed in weakening national morale and support within Bulgaria.

Battle of Jutland (Largest Naval Battle of WWI) Between UK and Germany (1916): Germans attempt to destroy enough battleships in the North Sea to compromise the blockade the British were imposing. The blockade undermined the Germans' ability to bring in crucial supplies or engage in commerce, necessary to fund the war effort. Occurring in May and June of 1916, the battle was largely fought to a stalemate. The British suffered greater losses, but due to their numerical superiority, they were able to maintain the naval blockade. Consequently, the Germans resorted to unrestricted submarine warfare for the remainder of the war, sinking both military and civilian vessels that might represent any sort of strategic value, such as interrupting commerce for Allied nations.

Irish Revolts Against United Kingdom (1916): Ireland saw an opportunity to take advantage of UK's involvement in WWI to seize independence. They began planning an armed rebellion, with aid from the Germans. The revolt was finally carried out in 1916, the day after Easter Sunday. It would primarily take place in Dublin, with some scattered activity throughout the rest of the island. UK crushed the revolt within 6 days, and executed 16 people. Most of Ireland, although against Ireland's union with Great Britain, were against the armed rebellion. However, when a surprisingly large number of Irish were executed and exiled, support shifted to the rebel side, which would lead to Ireland's independence in 1921.

Russia conquers portions of Northeast Turkey from Ottoman Empire (1916).
Allied-sparked Arab revolts against Ottomans continue in Arabia (1916).

Ottomans fail again to capture the Suez Canal from the British (1916).

**African Theater (1916):** By the end of 1916, the Allies were firmly in control of Africa. German's West Africa and South West Africa colonies were captured. Germans were near total defeat in their East African colonies.

**German Gains of Russian Territories (1917):** The Germans gain Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus from the Russians. Russia withdraws from the war when the Communist Party takes the reigns of the government, ceding possession of these territories to Germany, temporarily ending the threat from the east.

**Allies Fail to Gain Ground Against Germany on Western Front (1917):** In 1917, the Allies carry out concerted efforts to break the German line, with disastrous results. The Germans maintain air superiority, and along with their entrenched position on the ground, are able to decimate advancing Allied forces. French morale suffers as commanders continue to send them into harm's way, leading to large numbers of soldiers refusing orders.

**February Revolution in Russia (Feb, 1917):** Due to Russia's poor performance in the war, and food shortages at home, the citizens of Petrograd (capital) initiated a mass revolt. It was soon joined by the army which had been recalled to restore order, as well as the police, who were also incapable of restoring order. As a result, the Tsar resigned. A Provisional Government was established.

**Dual Authority in Russia (Feb-Oct, 1917):** The Provisional Government was primarily run by nobles, aristocrats and merchants, with the objective of keeping the country held together until a permanent, democratically-elected government could be established. No longer illegalized, the Soviet Party (the workers party) was also established, and proved to be much more popular with the bulk of the public, as it promised equality for all. The aristocratic and merchant classes promoted a capitalistic republic mirroring western governments, which was viewed as imperialistic by the working class (Soviets). Western-style democracies were perceived to breed inequality. Initially, the Soviets allowed the Provisional Government to rule, but became assertive as the popular opinion was squarely
in their corner. This resulted in dual governance, leading to confusion and chaos, which would bring the Communist Revolution in October. The Russians remained in the war, but their war effort was unorganized and unenthusiastic under the Provisional Government.

**October Revolution in Russia, Withdrawal from War (Oct, 1917):**
The Lenin-led Bolshevik (Communist) party rose to leadership within the Soviet party. As the dual government became unworkable, the Lenin-led Bolsheviks finally marched on the Winter Imperial Palace where the Provisional Government was headquartered, overthrowing the government and assuming rule. As promised, Lenin officially withdrew Russia from the Great War (WWI). In order to end the advance of the German army, they were forced to cede most of its buffer possessions, including Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, while also ceding its gains in the Caucasus back to the Ottoman Empire.

**Russian Civil War Begins (Oct, 1917):** Upon the Communist take over of Russia, opposition forces immediately formed to contest Lenin’s new government. The Bolsheviks (Communist Party) became known as the Red Army, while the opposition was named the White Movement. It was not a cohesive movement like the Communists. Instead, it was a collection of groups that merely shared a common enemy in the communists, such as those loyal to the Tsar, and those in favor of a democratic republic (including those that largely supported the Provisional Government before it was overthrown). The White Movement would be supported by the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary) from 1917-18, and the Allies from 1918-22. The Bolsheviks would achieve final victory in 1922.

**Ukrainian People’s Republic (1917):** When Russia ceded Ukraine to Germany upon its withdrawal, the Ukrainians declared itself a sovereign republic, although it largely remained under German control.

**Austria-Hungary Progress Against Italy (1917):** With the withdrawal of the Russians and the stabilization of the Eastern Front, the Austrians were able to send reinforcements to the Italian front. Germany was also able to lend troops to the Italian front. As a result, Austria-Hungary made modest gains in northeast Italy, forcing the Italians to retreat a bit.
**Allies Break Through Into South Serbia (1917):** Greece joins the Allies in 1917, enabling the British and French to launch attacks from Greece in support of the Serbs. They push the Bulgarians out of Macedonia, leading to the Bulgarian withdrawal from the war.

**Bulgaria Withdraws from War (1917):** Despite military victories in Macedonia and along the Romanian border to the north, the war effort proves to be too much of a hardship for the Bulgarian people, causing their withdrawal.

**Most of Romania Controlled by Central Powers (1917):** With the support of the French, the Romanians regroup in the NE, and successfully defend this portion of their nations from the German and Austria-Hungarian armies.

**Finland Independence from Russia (1917):** Finland asserted independence in the wake of the February Revolution in Russia. In its state of turmoil, Russia was unable to intervene. However, the battle for political power propelled Finland toward civil war, which would commence in 1918. The Social Democrats had gained the support of the majority of the Finnish citizens, with its left-wing, workers' rights agenda. The conservatives were headed by the traditional elite, who were primarily concerned with retaining their economic and political power.

**Arab revolt is a success, British capture Palestine from Ottomans (1917).**

**British forces finally capture Baghdad from Ottoman Empire (1917).**

**Due to Russian withdrawal, Ottomans regain territories lost earlier in war (1917).**

**German Unrestricted Submarine Warfare (1917):** Until 1917, the Germans had honored an agreement to avoid attacks against U.S. merchant vessels. The Germans complied with U.S. demands to prevent their entry into the war on the side of the Allies. By the beginning of 1917, the Germans realized that it was a matter of time before the U.S. would enter the war. Plus, most of their naval fleet was rendered useless due to the UK naval blockade. In which case, Germany resorted to unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917, where its U-boats indiscriminately targeted all Allied and U.S. vessels, whether they be military or commercial. This tactic brought the U.S. into the war, tilting the advantage toward the favor of the Allies. U-boat attacks also became much less devastating by the end of 1917, as the Allies and U.S. adopted the convoy mode of sea transportation. Also, naval destroyers became equipped with depth charges, so they were now capable of striking back against submarines.
**U.S. Joins the Allies (Nov, 1917):** The U.S. enters the war in 1917, provoked by German U-boat (submarine) attacks on commercial ships. German U-boat attacks were carried out to stop U.S. trade with the Allied nations in Europe, particularly UK and France. The U.S. found the civilian loss of life and economic damage from U-boat attacks to be unacceptable. As a highly industrialized nation, it relied heavily on exports to Europe. The U.S. had hoped to avoid war and remain isolationist, but the economic harm from interrupted Atlantic trade was too severe. The entry of the U.S. played a major part in tilting the advantage toward the Allies, especially from a naval standpoint, as the powerful U.S. navy was able to protect the Atlantic from the Germans’ unrestricted submarine warfare, enabling trans-Atlantic trade and military logistics.

**African Theater (1917):** German armies in Africa had all been defeated by 1917, with the exception of German East Africa, which was on the run from the Allies.

**Beginning of Finnish Civil War (Jan, 1918):** The Red Guard was in favor of a Soviet-style communist government, with close leanings towards Lenin’s Soviet Union. The Whites were in favor of a democratic Republic. The Reds were supported by Russian (Soviet Union) troops, while the Whites were supported by the German Empire.

**Germany Occupies Finland (May, 1918):** After the Whites gained victory over the Reds in the Finnish Civil War in the same year fighting began (1918), they came under German control.

**German Offensive Halted by Allies on Western Front (May, 1918):** In early 1918, the Germans were able to reallocate a large number of soldiers from the eastern front to the western front, due to the withdrawal of the Russians from the war. By Spring, they had pushed the front lines 60 miles to the west, within shelling distance of Paris. However, by the May, the Americans were being incorporated into the front lines, halting the German advance.

**Allied Counter-Offensive on Western Front Breaks Germany (Aug-Nov, 1918):** Once the Americans were placed into battle (more than 2 million in number), the Allies outnumbered the Germans, and by summer, began routinely breaking the German lines, causing Germans to surrender in large numbers. In November, the Germans signed an armistice to end all fighting on the western front, due primarily to mounting losses on the battlefield, and lack of continued support for the war at home.

**Italy Defeats Austria (Nov 3, 1918):** After penetrating into NE Italy in 1917, the Austrians planned to break through Italian lines in order to capture key cities, such as Lombardy and Venice. The first effort in summer of 1918 was a terrible failure, resulting in the death of 100,000 Austrian troops. One final effort was made in October, which completely devastated the Austrian army, forcing them to end hostilities by signing an armistice, even though their front line was still inside the borders of Italy.
Germany Forced to Withdraw from Eastern European Countries (Nov, 1918): Upon ceding defeat due to its heavy losses on the Western Front, and the withdrawal of its own allies, Germany is forced to withdraw from Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, enabling each to assert their own independence.

German Revolution Begins (Nov, 1918): Before the signing of the armistice that ended the fighting in WWI, German sailors refused orders to engage in a naval battle against the British in the North Sea. The revolt spread throughout Germany, forcing the resignation of the Emperor in November. Immediately after, the interim government pulled Germany from the war. Political and civil strife, including armed conflicts would continue until the Weimar Republic was established in 1919. Small-scale armed rebellions would continue after that until as late as 1923.

German Interim Government Officially Withdraws from War (Nov 11, 1918): With the war effort taking a turn for the disastrous for Germany, the emperor resigns on Nov 9. Just two days later, the interim government signs an armistice to end fighting. Germany was doomed when the Allies gained the decisive upper hand on the Western Front, after all of its fellow Central Powers had withdrawn from fighting in the face of defeat.

Ottomans Cede Defeat, Occupied by Allies (Nov, 1918): In 1918, the Allies achieved a series of decisive victories against the Ottomans in Palestine and Arabia. Baghdad was captured in 1917. Toward the end of 1918, the British and French had forced the Ottoman armies into a full retreat, inside Anatolia (modern Turkey), forcing an Ottoman surrender. The Allies would proceed to occupy various parts of the Ottoman Empire, including areas in Anatolia, the heart of the empire. It was the intention of the Allies to subdivide the entire Ottoman Empire amongst themselves, ending the sovereignty of the Turks and its dependents. As 1918 came to an end, the Turks began to take part in passive and active resistance, a precursor to Turkish War of Independence that would begin in 1919.

Independent Democratic Republic in Finland (Dec, 1918): Upon their official defeat in WWI, Germany relinquished control of Finland, enabling the Finns to form a sovereign government for first time (democracy).

Great Poland Uprising Against German Occupiers (Dec, 1918): After acknowledging defeat in November of 1918, the Germans continued to occupy Poland. The Polish, badly desiring independence, knew that the Germans were weakened, and were suffering
from internal dissension. By December, the timing was right for an uprising. By early 1919, Polish rebel forces had overwhelmed German soldiers, taking control of their country, and becoming a sovereign republic.

**West Prussia & Posen Lost by Germany Due to Russian-Supported Polish Revolt (1918):** Awarded to Poland at the end of WWI. Poland gained part of this territory during the Great Poland Uprising, which began in 1918 and ended with the complete withdrawal of German troops in 1919. When it was clear to the Polish that the Germans were weakened from their defeat, and racked with internal strife, they were encouraged to revolt against their German occupiers. As a result, Germany's East Prussia was now separated from the rest of Germany.

**Ottomans Defeat Armenians in the Caucasus Region (1918):** Russia cedes territories gained in NE Anatolia as part of its withdrawal from the war. Armenians take the mantle though, and declare war on the Ottoman Empire, in an effort to carve out an independent Armenian nation. They are initially successful, before being overpowered by the Ottomans.

**African Theater (1918):** A small German army continued to fight against Allies in East Africa until the armistice was signed by Germany to end all fighting in November of 1918. Upon receiving word, the small army left for Germany, as Germany had ceded any and all claims in Africa. This German armed unit never lost a battle, but it was too small to hold ground, and was continually on the move until the end of the war.

**Romania Liberated from German Control (1918):** Romania had been forced into a peace treaty with Germany in 1917, since it was surrounded by enemy forces with the retreat and withdrawal of Russia. In 1918, after Austria-Hungary withdrew from the war, and Germany was at its breaking point, Romania officially re-entered the war on the side of the Allies, just one day before Germany would concede defeat to the Allies. German forces were quickly withdrawn, liberating Romania just as the war ended, while also invalidating the peace treaty which awarded portions of Romania to the Central Powers.

**Bessarabia Awarded to Romania at Expense of Russia (1918):** This traditionally Romanian region opted to leave Russia and become enjoined with Romania during the 1917 Communist Revolution. This was reaffirmed by the victorious Allies at the end of the war.

**Transylvania Gained by Romania from Hungary (1918):** The Romanians claimed Transylvania upon the end of the war, due to its majority Romanian population. Transylvania also contained a substantial Hungarian population, but the Allies preferred to award the region to Romania, a fellow ally.
Territory Ceded by Austria to Poland (1918): Polish-dominated region ceded to Poland from Austria-Hungary at the end of the war, at the urging of the Allies.

Alsace-Lorraine Lost to France at End of War (1918): As a concession to end the war, the Germans would cede Alsace-Lorraine to France. This region was traditionally French, but was gained by Prussia during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. It was a strategic territory with abundant coal deposits and a strong industrial infrastructure, which played a major role in the German build-up to WWI.

Allied-Mandated Separation of Austria and Hungary (1918): The Allies mandated that Austria and Hungary separate according to traditional territorial divisions. It was also mandated that Austria not combine with its fellow Germans of the newly-reconstituted German Empire, even though most Austrians favored unification with Germany.

Formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes Upon Break-Up of Austria-Hungary (1918): As fervent nationalism took much of Europe by storm during the 1800s, the South Slav nations had their own dreams of consolidating. This became more realistic as the Serbs escaped Ottoman rule, but the dream was blocked by Austria-Hungarian control of the Slovenes, Croats and Bosnians. Efforts to free Slavs under Austrian control contributed to the start of WWI. As WWI approached conclusion, and it was evident that Austria-Hungary would be defeated, the plans for a South Slav state were set into motion. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (which also included Bosnians, Montenegrins and Macedonians) was officially formed on Dec. 1, 1918, just weeks after the fighting came to an end.

Czechs and Slovaks Unite for Form Czechoslovakia (1918): Both were repressed regions in the Austria-Hungary. Both also had a strong Slav heritage (Czech mixed with German, and Slovak mostly Slavic), each identifying more with Slav heritage. The Czechs had a greater capability of self-government in place. Hungary wanted to retain Slovakia, which was far less ready to govern itself. The Slovaks were far more inclined to join the Czechs than to remain with the repressive Hungarians, so the Czechs, with the permission of the Allies, moved in to occupy Slovakia. Hungary was unable to do anything about it after having just been thoroughly defeated in WWI. Thus, the new state of
Czechoslovakia was formed. Naturally, the state was dominated by the Czechs. Despite being unified, ethnic differences would remain, eventually leading to a peaceful split in 1992, resulting in the successor states of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

**Irish War of Independence (vs United Kingdom) Begins (1919):** Ireland desired autonomous rule within the United Kingdom, which was postponed due to the outbreak of WWI. A revolt was attempted in 1916 during the war, but was brutally suppressed by the British, souring Irish public opinion of its place in the UK. Revolts would break out in 1919, escalating into a full-scale war of independence. Irish independence would be achieved in 1921, although the northern portion of the island would remain part of the revised UK.

**Polish-Soviet War (1919):** In 1919, the British established a theoretical border between the Russians and Polish. However, neither side was satisfied, so war was sparked. The war was largely fought to a stalemate, with the Russians suing for peace in 1920. Both sides agreed upon a border that closely approximated the British-drawn border.

**Polish-Ukraine War Ending in Poland Victory and Territorial Increase (1919):** The Allies did not specify how the former Austrian territory of Galacia would be split. It primarily consisted of substantial Polish and Ukraine communities. In reality, it was split, with West Galacia coming under Polish control, and East Galacia under control of the Ukraine People's Republic. In the ensuing war, the Polish proved victorious, annexing all of Galacia.

**Internal Strife & Instability in Germany (1919):** Various factions battled for control of Germany following the emperor’s resignation in November of 1918, and the civil strife (including outbreaks of armed conflict) continued throughout much of 1919 until a new democratic was established in August of 1919. The new democratic government was unable to end Germany's dismal state of affairs, as the post-war economy continued to suffer mightily, and violent demonstrations and revolts commonly occurred.

**Soviet Union Formation (1919):** As the Communist Bolsheviks (Red Army) gain the upper hand in the Russian Civil War against the White Army, their new Soviet Republic becomes the de facto government. In 1919, the organized and cohesive Communist movement continued to build steam, overwhelming the disjointed White Army, which consisted of a variety of ideologies. The UK, France and the U.S. would all withdraw from the war in 1919, supporting the Whites with finances and supplies only. Although the Whites were able to menace Communist strongholds, they could not seriously threaten Soviet rule, which now covered all the important population centers throughout Russia.
Organization of the Turkish Resistance Preceding Turkish War of Independence Against Allies (1919): The Sultan and his government were completely subordinate to the British. By early 1919, as the government began passing along Allied orders, officials organized resistance groups to defy the Allied-controlled sultan. When the British became aware of such revolutionary activities, they increased troops throughout Anatolia (modern Turkey). The tension would continue to build, culminating into armed conflict in 1920, which would ultimately result in the independence of Turkey and the eviction of the allied forces.

Greco-Turkish War Begins (1919): Part of the Turkish War of independence. Greek troops landed on the western coast of Anatolia in 1919 in order to assert the territorial gains promised by the Allies. The Greek occupation would provoke counter attacks by Turkish revolutionaries. The fighting would continue through 1922, when the Greek would be forced out of Anatolia, losing its temporary gains as well as the lands on the European side of Turkey gained by Greece at the end of WWI.

United Kingdom Loses Afghanistan (1919): Afghanistan had long been weary of British rule, and finally revolted in 1919. The United Kingdom fought the Afghans to a stalemate, but ceded control of the country rather than continue fighting, as it was war-fatigued from WWI.

Allies Transfer North Schleswig From Germany to Denmark: Allies award to Denmark in 1920, based on referendum, where most voters preferred to be part of Denmark.

A Further Understanding of World War I

New Type of Warfare:
A new terrible type of warfare was born with the onset of the Great War (WWI), fueled by new technologies, an increase in competing superpowers, and rising urbanization as populations became more dense. As a result, more devastating weapons (technology) were brought to population centers, rather than empty fields (population density), resulting in a greater number of deaths, especially in terms of civilian deaths.

Peace Treaties:
The Central Powers had ceded defeat, and agreed to end combat by November of 1918. Treaties with Germany, Austria and Bulgaria would not be finalized until 1919, while the peace treaty with Hungary would not be signed until 1920. The Ottoman Empire would also sign a peace treaty in 1920, but its government would be overthrown as part of the Turkish Wars of Independence, requiring a new peace treaty after the end of this war in 1923. All
the defeated parties would lose large amounts of territory to Allied nations and newly-created nations.

**Treaty of Versailles:**

Germany agrees to peace treaty which made it financially responsible for all damage caused during the war. They also agreed to reduce their army to a mere 100,000 troops, and their navy to 15,000. The Germans also lost most of their pre-war export business, along with valuable territories which supplied essential raw materials. The Alsace-Lorraine (ceded to the French) provided much of its coal used to operate its manufacturing plants. Many other critical raw materials were lost with its African colonies.