The World Gone Mad
A First World War Military History
End & Beginning 1918
“ONE DEATH IS A TRAGEDY, A MILLION DEATHS IS A STATISTIC”

STALIN
# 1917 Attrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arras</th>
<th>2d Aisne (Nivelle Offensive)</th>
<th>3d Ypres</th>
<th>Cambrai</th>
<th>La Malmaison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allied</strong></td>
<td>150K</td>
<td>270K</td>
<td>300K(?)</td>
<td>45K</td>
<td>14K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>German</strong></td>
<td>130K</td>
<td>165K</td>
<td>300K(?)</td>
<td>45K</td>
<td>50K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals:**
- German – 700,000
- Allied – 783,000
(Essentially a 1:1 ratio)
Situation in January 1918

- Central Powers no longer exists
- Britain has created another army
- France has recovered its moral
- Allied Strategy:
  - Mark time
  - Wait for America to build up
  - Major Offensive ≈ Spring 1919
Situation in January (2)

- Germany continues to execute it’s final plan

  **DISPITE:**
  - U-Boat war has been lost
  - 100+ divisions still needed in the East
  - Americans @ 250,000 by March &
    - arriving at 200,000 per month thereafter

- 40 Divisions have been moved west
  - Retrained & reequipped
  - Germans now have numerical superiority
  - Was 2 to 3; now 4 to 3
America Arrives

- In 19 months (April 1917 to Nov 1918)
  - Created a 4 million man army
  - Moved 2 million of them to France
  - Got 1 million of them into combat

- An American army under an American flag
  - No amalgamation
  - Wilson / Pershing

- How important was the American Army?
  - Conflicting opinions
Another huge German gamble (the 4th)
5 major attacks between March & July
- No coherent strategy
- But, excellent tactics
- Moved the front some 40 miles
- Threatened the Channel Ports & Paris (again)
- Much bending but no one breaks
1. Michael: 3/21- 4/6
   • Picardy
2. Georgette: 4/10-4/29
   • Lys (4th Ypres)
   • 3d Aisne
   • Matz
5. Marne-Rheims 7/15-7/18
   • 2d Marne
7. Belleau Wood 6/6 - 6/26
Kaiser Schacht (2)
(Ludendorff's Spring Offensive)

- Allies select a Supreme Commander
  - Allied Reserves
- Strategic threats but no strategic gains
- Artillery, exhaustion, reserves & supplies
  - Allied supply dumps
- Completely exhausted the German Army
Chateau Thierry

- 6 June – 26 June
- American Forces take lead
- USMC takes Belleau Wood
  - Very heavy casualties
  - Changed hands 6 times
  - 1st major US fight and victory
- No longer any doubt about US commitment
American Combat Capability

- German report on Marines at Belleau Wood
  - Vigorous, self-confident, & remarkable marksmen
  - Aggressive to the point of recklessness
  - Absolutely no idea what they are doing tactically
- However, the US simply refused to accept French and British tactical advice
  - IDR – 1917: “Open Combat”
I apologize for all these numbers but they are crucial to understanding how the war came to an end.
German Manpower (July)

- **Loses in** Kaiser Schacht – 690K
  - Allied losses – 850K
- Needed to continue - 200K per month
- Available for rest of 1918 – 300K
- Meanwhile, Allies have >3M new men available to bring in 1918
- Germany has hit the bottom of the manpower barrel & has lost the war of attrition.
Diagram 45.—Rifle strength of allied and German armies on the western front.
From 18 July, the Allies conducted several preparatory attacks (line straightening).

- French & Americans clear the Chateau Thierry salient in the Battle of Soissons (7/18-7/22)
- Casualties: 168000 Germans 107000 Allied
Final Western Front Battles

- On 8 August, Foch commences a series of major offensives (the “100 days”)
- British push from Amiens (13000 prisoners the 1st day) (the “Black Day of the German Army”)
- Canadians break through the “Hindenburg Line”
- The end of trench warfare on the western front
- September & October: continuous pushed by British, French, & American forces
First Major American Offensive

- St. Mihiel
- 9/12 – 9/16
- 650,000 vs. 50,000
- 7000 casualties each (+15000 POW)
- This would cost 10’s of thousands of American casualties in the Argonne.
Germany’s Allies Collapse

- Salonika breakout finally
  - Bulgaria/Allies armistice (29 Oct)

- Damascus falls (1 Oct)
  - Turkey/Allies armistice (30 Oct)

- Vittorio Veneto
  - Austrian/Italian armistice (3 Nov)

- Germany still fighting in the belief that the allies are tiring. (True)
Meuse-Argonne

- Largest and bloodiest battle in American history.
- 1.2M US & 250K French vs. 450K Germans
- German Casualties: 122K (+70 French) vs. 126K
- The US Army was simply not ready for prime time.
Note: Not a single allied soldier is on German soil!
German Army Collapses

- Prisoners taken from 18 July to 11 Nov.
  - 188,000 by British
  - 140,000 by French
  - 44,000 by Americans
  - 14,000 by Belgians
- 7000 guns captured
- Killed & Wounded ??? (unknown)