

The First World War: A Timeline of Hostilities

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Actions by the United States are highlighted in **dark blue**.

The deaths of servicemen from Arlington are marked in **red**.

Events specific to Arlington are colored **purple**.

Comments are in **green**, and other events are in black.

1914

June 28: A Serbian assassin kills Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

July 23: Austria-Hungary demands concessions from Serbia. Serbia grants many, but not all of the demands.

July 28: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia. Russia mobilizes to protect Serbia.

July 31: Germany warns Russia to stop mobilizing.

August 1: Germany, allied with Austria-Hungary, declares war on Russia. Germany signs secret treaty with Ottoman Empire.

August 3: Germany declares war on Russia's ally, France

August 4: Germany invades Belgium to bypass French defenses. Britain declares war on Germany. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa follow suit. **The US declares its neutrality.**

August 6: **First Lady Ellen Axson Wilson dies in the White House of kidney disease.** Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia. Serbia declares war on Germany.

August 11: France declares war on Austria-Hungary.

August 12: Britain declares war on Austria-Hungary.

August 23: Japan (a British ally) declares war on Germany.

August 25: Japan declares war on Austria-Hungary.

August 28: Austria-Hungary declares war on Japan.

The Allies (Britain, France, Russia, their allies and colonies) are now at war with the Central Powers (Germany, its allies and its colonies). Both sides have empires spread across most of the globe. Already fighting has spread to Belgium, northern France, eastern Europe, parts of Africa, several Pacific islands including New Guinea, the Indian Ocean, and German-held areas of China.

October 29: The Ottoman Empire attacks Russia.

November 1: Russia declares war on the Ottoman Empire.

November 5: Britain and France declare war on the Ottoman Empire.

November 22: Trench lines now extend across France and Belgium from the Swiss border to the English Channel.

December 24-25: "Christmas Truce" between British and German forces in France.

1915

January 31: Chemical weapons introduced by Germany on the Western Front.

February 5: Germany begins unrestricted submarine warfare against ships approaching the British and French coasts.

March 23: **Wilson meets wealthy DC widow Edith Bolling Galt, an "accidental" meeting arranged by Wilson's family to relieve the widowed president's loneliness.**

May 5: **The British liner *Lusitania* is sunk by a German U-boat off the Irish Coast. More than 1200 are killed, including more than 120 Americans. Wilson begins a series of diplomatic notes to Germany protesting its use of submarines.**

May 23: Italy enters the war on the side of the Allies.

July 2: **German agent (and former Harvard professor) Erich M \ddot{u} nter sets a bomb off in the US Capitol Building to protest US arms sales to the Allies. There are no injuries.**

September 1: **Germany suspends unrestricted submarine warfare rather than risk the US entering the war.**

October 15: Bulgaria enters the war allied with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire.

December 18: **Wilson marries Mrs. Edith Galt in a small family ceremony at her townhouse on 20th Street NW, DC.**

1916

March 9: Portugal enters war on side of the Allies against Germany. That same day Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa attacks the town of Columbus, New Mexico. Eighteen Americans are killed. Some historians argue that Villa was encouraged to do so by German agents to distract the US from the European War.

March 15: General John “Blackjack” Pershing leads three regiments of US troops into Mexico to capture Villa.

April 24: The Easter Revolt begins the Irish struggle for Independence.

June 5: The Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule begins.

June 10: Republican Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes is nominated as the next president of the United States. The former governor of New York, Hughes is favored to win.

June 16: President Wilson receives the Democratic Party’s nomination as President under the slogan, “He Kept Us Out of War,” a slogan Wilson dislikes.

June 21: A detachment of US troops is defeated at the Battle of Carrizal by the regular Mexican Army. War between the US and Mexico seems imminent.

July 30: German and Austria-Hungarian saboteurs set off an explosion among 2,000,000 pounds of munitions waiting shipment to the Allies on Black Tom Island in New York Harbor. The explosion is heard as far away as Maryland.

August 27: Romania enters war on the side of the Allies. Romania’s armies will be defeated in just a few weeks.

September 6: Talks between the US and Mexico to avert a war begin.

November 7: Woodrow Wilson is reelected President, capturing 49.2% of the vote to Hughes' 46.1% and 277 electoral votes to 254. The winner is not known for several days as votes are hand counted.

November 21: Austria-Hungarian Emperor Frank Joseph, on the throne since 1848, dies. His nephew, Charles, succeeds him.

1917

January 16: German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann sends a cable to the German Ambassador in Mexico City proposing a German-Mexican alliance in a war against the US. He promises that once the war is over, Mexico will regain Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, lost to the US in 1848. The British intercept and decode the message.

January 18: Wilson orders General Pershing to withdraw from Mexico. Villa remains at large.

January 31: Germany announces unrestricted submarine warfare to begin, believing they can win the war before the US can intervene. The US breaks diplomatic relations with Germany.

February 23: The Zimmermann Telegram is shown to President Wilson.

February 28: The text of the Zimmermann Telegram is released to the American public.

March 15: Russian Czar Nicholas II abdicates and the elected DUMA (legislature) forms a provisional government.

April 2: In an evening speech to both houses of Congress, Wilson asks them to declare war on Germany. That afternoon, Wilson and his wife Edith relax with a drive through rural Arlington.

April 6: Congress passes the declaration of war against Germany. President Wilson issues an executive order requiring all males 14 or older born in Germany that were not citizens of the US to register.

May 21: The first Liberty loan campaign begins in Arlington. It lasts until June 14.

June 5: The first draft registration day. All male US citizens between ages 21-31 must register for the draft.

June 25: The first American troops land in France.

June 30: Greece declares war on Germany and its allies.

August 9: Local military officials deny a rumor that a German saboteur was shot for poisoning horses in Arlington Camp Alsph.

August 14: The Republic of China declares war on Germany.

October 24: “Bond Day” is the highlight of the Second Liberty Loan campaign. Arlington school kids march in the parade in Alexandria.

November 7: The Bolshevik Coup in Russia begins.

November 16: A second declaration by President Wilson further restricts the activities of German-born males who are not citizens of the US. They are required to leave Washington, D.C., cannot own wireless sets, and must receive local police permission before moving a residence. About 2,000 Germans will be interned during the war in the US. In 1918 the same restrictions apply to German women. DC schools (which many Arlington students attended) almost completely stop teaching the German language.

December 7: The US declares war on Austria-Hungry.

December 31: Harry Grafton Smallwood, Supply Company 313, dies at Camp Lee, Petersburg, Virginia.

1918

January 8: Wilson issues his 14 Points, including a proposed League of Nations.

March 3: The Russian Communist government signs a peace treaty with Germany.

March 15: Private Harry Emory Vermillion, 318th Regiment, 80th Division, dies of a burst appendix at Camp Lee, Petersburg, Virginia.

March 21: Germany begins their spring offensive. They will gain ground but lose over 500,000 men.

April 5: The Third Liberty Loan campaign begins. Arlington is divided into three zones and a committee for each zone goes door-to-door selling the bonds.

April 29: Arlington residents march in a parade as part of the Third Liberty loan campaign.

May 4: Arlington residents have purchased \$71,600 in Liberty Bonds, well over the county quota of \$20,000. The county is awarded an "Honor Flag" to mark the campaign's success.

May 10: Taxi driver John Werres picks up three passengers in DC, two soldiers and a young woman. The soldiers murder the driver after they cross into Arlington and dump his body in Bon Air. Caught, they were tried and sentenced to life in prison.

May 25: Private Edward J. Smith, Battery A, 110th Field Artillery, dies at Camp McLennan, Alabama.

June 5: The second draft registration day. All male US citizens who turned 21 in the past year must register for the draft.

July 15: The last German offensive begins on the Western Front.

July 17: Former Russian Czar Nicholas II and his family are murdered by Bolsheviks in Russia.

August 8: The Allied "100 Days Offensive" begins. British, Canadian, American, and French forces advance. It includes the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the largest and bloodiest battle of the war for the American military.

August 19: Captain Oscar Lloyd Housel, 38th Engineering Corps dies of disease, possibly in the influenza epidemic, in Bordeaux, France.

September 12: The third draft registration day. All male US citizens between 18 and 45 who had not yet registered for the draft must do so.

September 28: The Fourth Liberty Loan campaign begins but the scheduled parade for Arlington and Alexandria is cancelled due to the influenza epidemic.

September 30: Bulgaria signs an armistice with the Allies. Yeoman 3^d Class Archie Walters Williams dies in the influenza epidemic at the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia.

October 1: The influenza epidemic prompts the county to close six schools, Fort Myer Heights, Clarendon, Barcroft, Columbia Pike, Ballston, and Cherrydale.

October 7: Apprentice Seaman Frederick Wallis Schutt dies of pneumonia in the naval hospital at Hampton Roads, Virginia.

October 12: Private Harry R. Stone, 162^d Infantry Division, dies in France of unknown causes.

October 15: Captain John Lyon, 116th Infantry, 29th Division, is killed while trying to rescue a fellow wounded soldier on the battlefield. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

October 28: Corporal Frank Edward Dunkin, 54th Infantry Regiment, 6th Division was killed in combat.

October 29: Germany's navy in port rises in mutiny against the war.

October 30: The Ottoman Empire signs an armistice. The empire quickly falls apart.

November 2: Second Lieutenant Irving Thomas Chapman Newman, Aviation Corps, US Army Signal Corps, is killed in a flight training incident at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas.

November 9: Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates. Germany becomes a republic.

November 10: Austria-Hungarian Emperor Charles I abdicates. The Austria-Hungarian Empire dissolves.

November 11: At 6:00 am, Germany signs an armistice to go in effect at 11:00 am local time. Fighting continues and about 2,700 Allied soldiers die the final hours of the war. Sgt. Henry Gunther of Baltimore is the last American casualty, killed charging a German machine gun at 10:59 am.

November 25: The last German army, fighting in east Africa, surrenders.

December 3: Private Arthur C. Morgan, 550th Engineer Service Battalion dies of unknown causes in France.

December 23: Corporal Robert Bruce, 2^d Cavalry Regiment dies of unknown causes, probably in France.

Ralph Lowe, of the United States Army, dies during the war, but the details, including the date of his death and what role he served in the war are unknown.

1919

January 18: The peace conference at Versailles begins. The final treaty will be largely written by four men, American President Woodrow Wilson, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, and French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau.

June 28: Five years to the day after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Treaty of Versailles is signed by a resentful Germany.

September 3: With the Senate refusing to ratify the Versailles Treaty as written, Wilson embarks on a nation-wide tour to rally public opinion.

October 2: Having just returned to Washington exhausted from his speaking tour, Wilson suffers a stroke, incapacitating him for the rest of his term. The Senate will never ratify the Versailles Treaty.

1920

December 10: President Woodrow Wilson receives the Nobel Peace Prize for creating the League of Nations.

1921

March 4: Wilson leaves office, replaced by Republican Warren Harding. Wilson and his wife Edith live in northwest DC and continue to enjoy car rides through Arlington. They stop at least once at the Little Tea House on Arlington Ridge Road.

August 25: The US and Germany sign the Treaty of Berlin officially ending the war between the two nations.

November 11: The Tomb of the Unknown is dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery. President Warren G. Harding and former President Woodrow Wilson are in attendance.

1931

November 11: A memorial to the county's dead from the First World War is officially dedicated at the County Courthouse. The Arlington War Memorial was later moved near the spot where the Clarendon Metro Stop now stands.