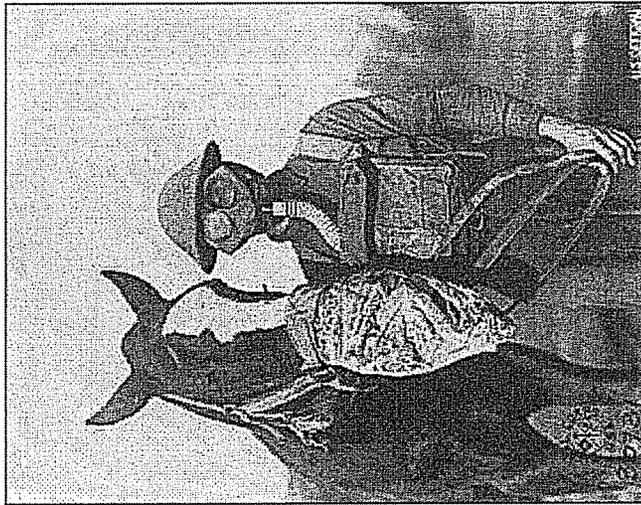


# Poison Gas

World War One was also the first war to use chlorine and mustard gas. Because of trench warfare, new tactics were needed. Poison gas is often mistaken for being first used by the Germans, but in fact it was first used by the French. Poison gas was feared throughout the war. The first gas attack was in 1914 by the French on German troops at the second battle of Ypres. Although the Germans were not the first to introduce poison gas, they definitely were the first to go into depth of experimentation and study of poison gas. At first, soldiers had not come across this before and assumed that it was a smoke screen. It has a distinctive smell - a mixture of pepper and pineapple - and they only realized they were being gassed when they started to have chest pains and a burning sensation in their throats! Death by gas is painful - you suffocate!

First used by the Germans, mustard gas was the most deadly biological weapon that was used in the trenches. It was odorless and took 12 hours to take effect! It was also very powerful, only small amounts needed to be added to shells to be effective and it remained active for several weeks when it landed in the soil! The nastiest thing about mustard gas is that it made the skin blister, the eyes sore and the victim would start to vomit. It would cause internal and external bleeding, and would target the lungs. It could take up to 5 weeks to die! By the end of the war, more than 1 million would die from poison gas.

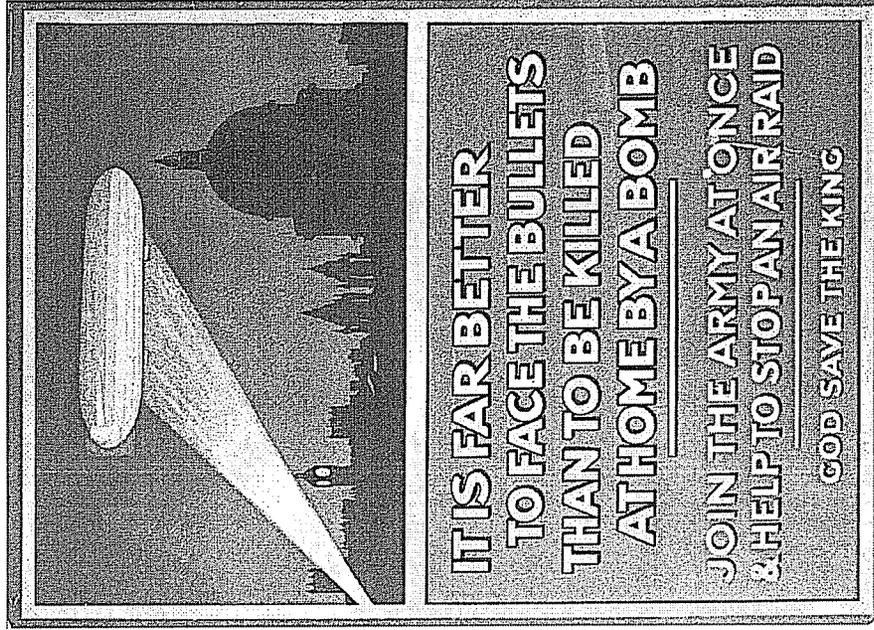
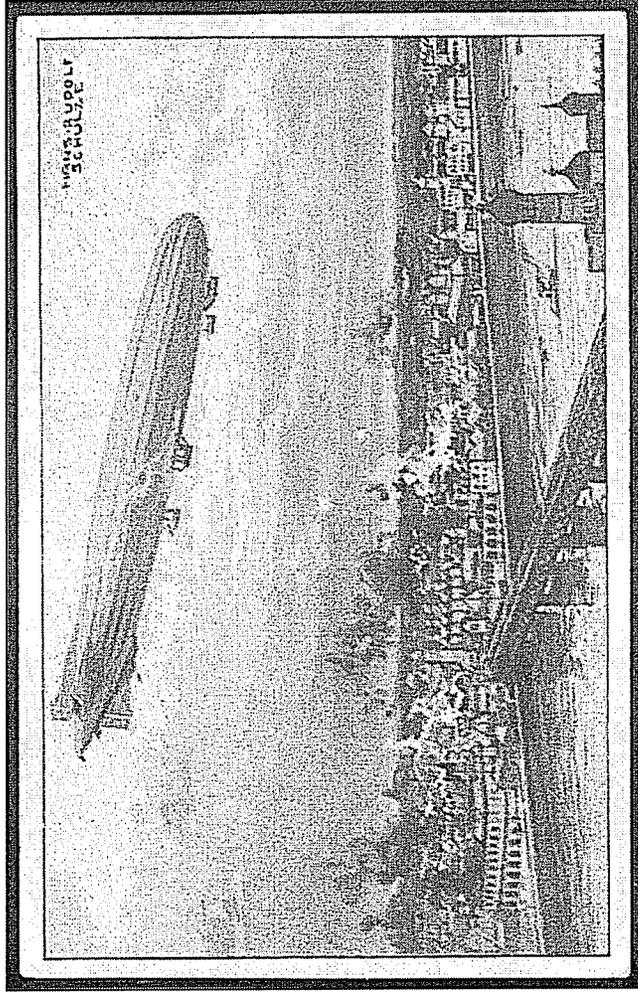


At the beginning of the war, one of the methods the German soldiers used to protect themselves against poison gas was soaking cotton pads in urine. The ammonia from the urine neutralized the chlorine from the gas and was held across the face until the soldiers were able to escape the area. Later on in 1915, gas masks were given to the soldiers. The masks had a rubber face piece and a removable filter.

# Zepplin

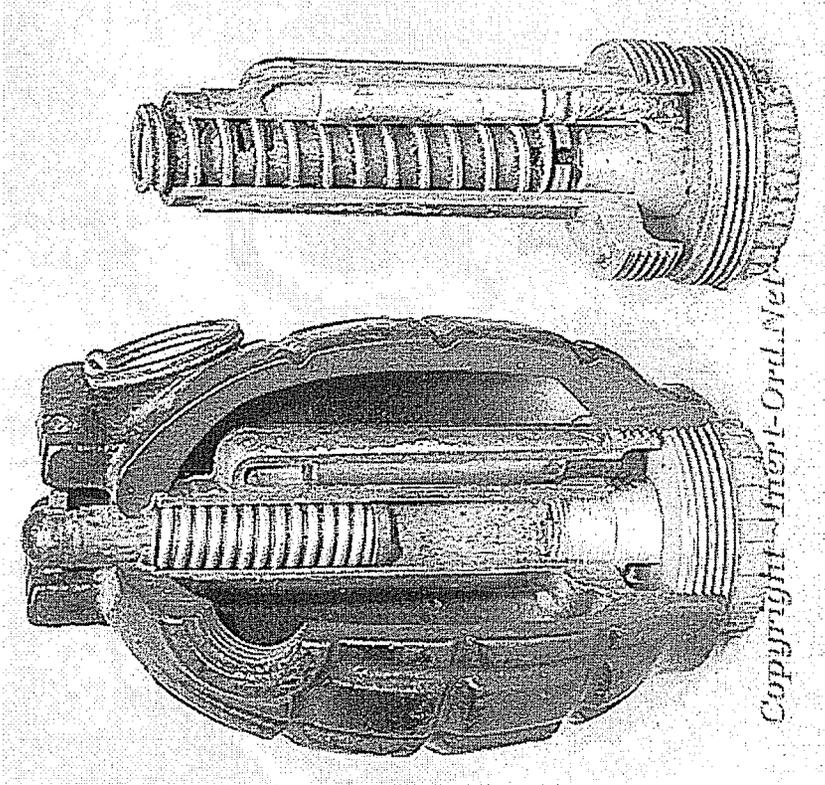
The Zeppelin, also known as blimp, was an airship that was used during the early part of The Great War in bombing raids by the Germans. They carried machine guns and bombs. However, they were abandoned because they were easy to shoot out of the sky.

Example of a propaganda poster from Britain during WWI, aimed at recruiting men to join the Army and fight against the Germans.

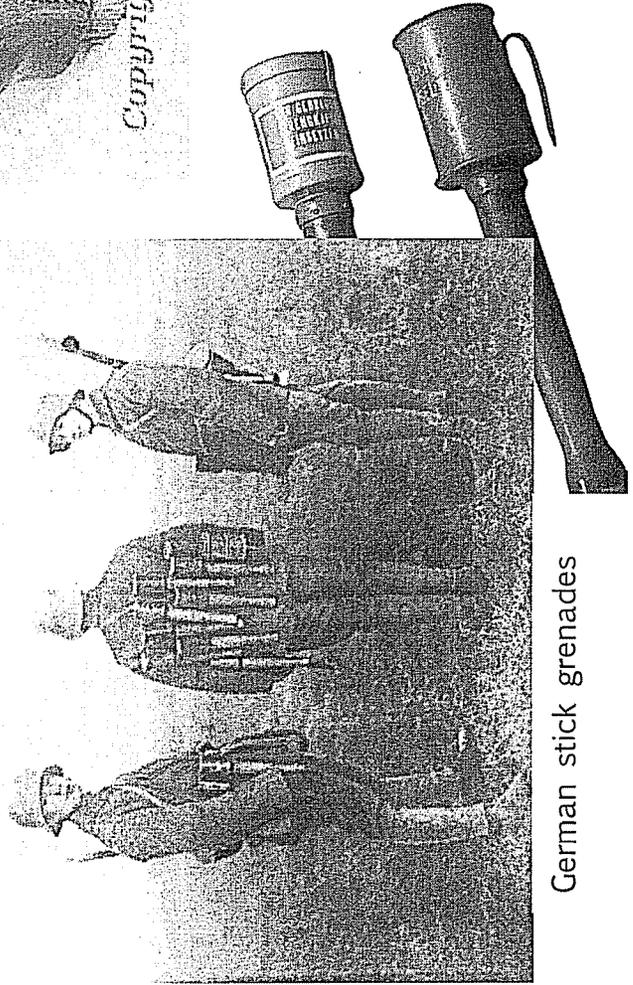


# Hand Grenades

A hand grenade is any small bomb that can be thrown by hand. Early in The Great War, both sides only had small grenades that were simple in design. For example, in Italy, the Besozzi grenade had a five-second fuse with a match-tip that was ignited by striking a ring on the soldier's hand. These were replaced when manufactured versions such as the Mills bomb, the first modern fragmentation grenade, became available to British front-line troops. The Mills bomb was developed at the Mills Munitions Factory in Birmingham, England and was described as the first "safe grenade."



Mills bomb



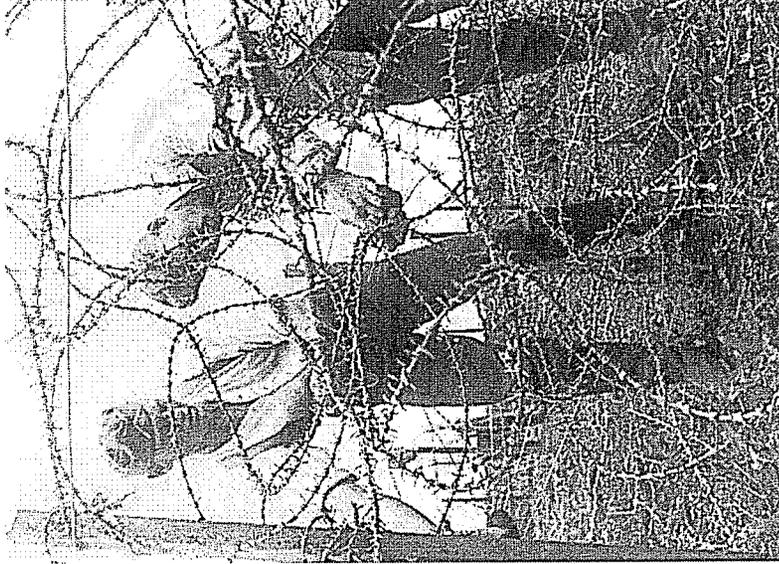
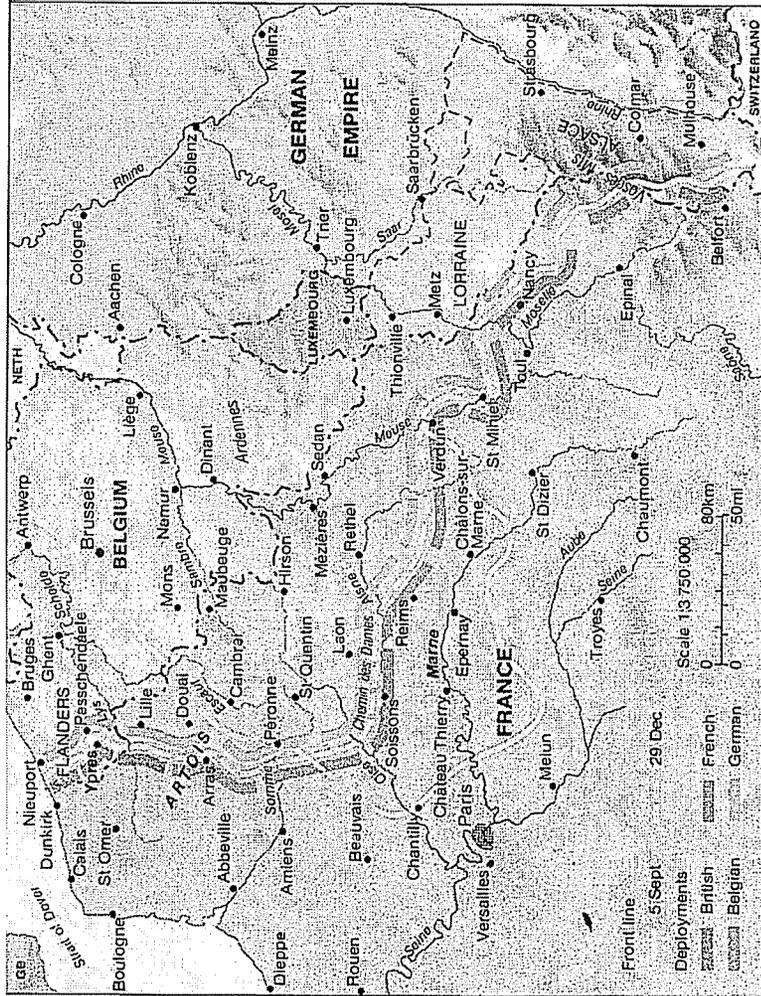
German stick grenades

*Copyright - Inert - Ordn. Net. 1911*

The German Model 24 Stielhandgranate stick grenade was introduced in 1915 and the design developed throughout World War I. This simple design continued to evolve throughout the First and Second World Wars, with the Model 24 grenade (popularly known as the "potato masher") becoming one of the most easily recognized of all small arms, and carried by all German soldiers.

# Barbed Wire

During The Great War, the trenches stretched from the coast of France all the way to Switzerland. This was known as the Western Front of the war.



At their peak, WWI trenches reached a length of over 400 miles. Each side was always looking for methods to protect the trenches from the enemy. Thus both sides looked at using barbed wire to slow enemy soldiers from getting into their trench. As the world became more industrialized before World War One, mass production of barbwire for cattle farms was underway. The military use of barbwire was quickly adapted. By making barbs longer and sharper the wire provided greater protection from the enemy.

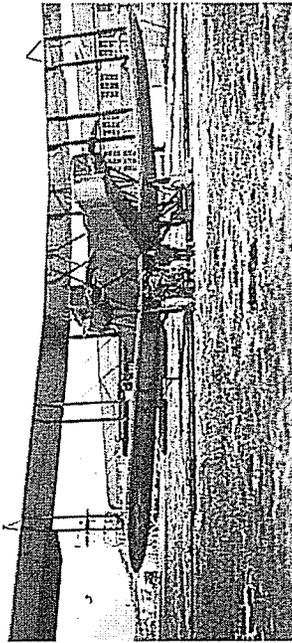
The only time it was safe to lay the wire was at night. Soldiers had to be very quiet so that the enemy would not think that they were launching an attack, and begin shooting at them. Special construction equipment was developed by the men to limit the noise that occurred while laying the barbed wire.

# Aircraft

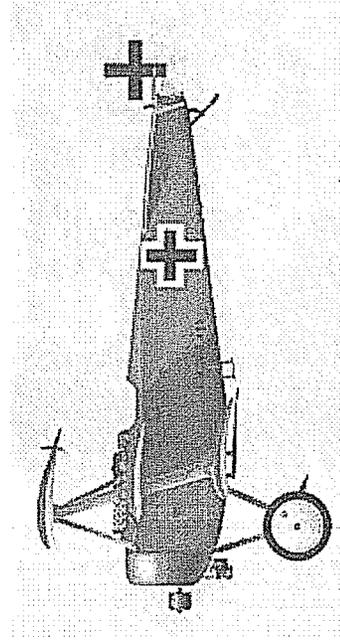
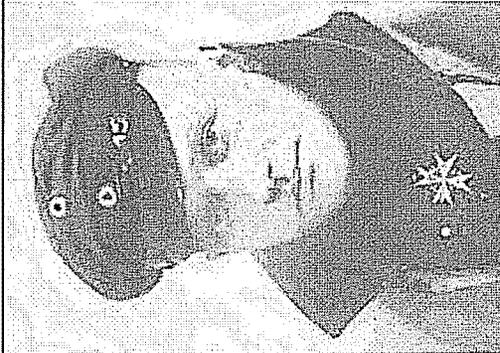
At the start of World War One, aircraft were very basic. Initially aircraft were thought to be of little combat use. One unknown British general commented, "*The airplane is useless for the purposes of war.*" At the start of the war, bomb aiming was inaccurate. The pilot, or co-pilot simply dropped a small bomb over the side of the aircraft in the general direction of a target. If a bomb dropped anywhere near a target it was thought to be good luck. By the time The Great War had ended, aircraft had become far more sophisticated and had differentiated into fighters, bombers and long-range bombers. Long range bombers had a very specific job, to accurately hit a target with as many bombs as possible. The Germans had the Gotha bomber while the British had the Handley Page bomber.

Aircraft technology was only 10 years old at the start of World War I, but within a few years it had developed at an extraordinary pace. Great Britain's first heavy bomber, the Handley Page O/100, entered service in 1916 as a means of attacking the German Zeppelin bases that were causing huge damage to London.

After the war, the Handley was converted and formed the staple flying machine for the first civilian airlines in Europe.

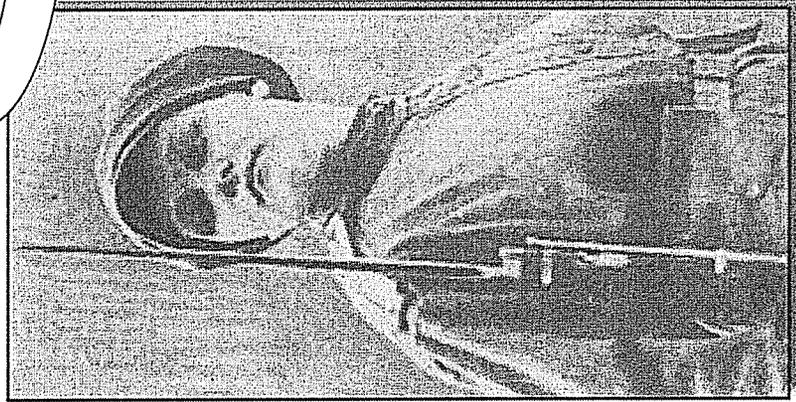
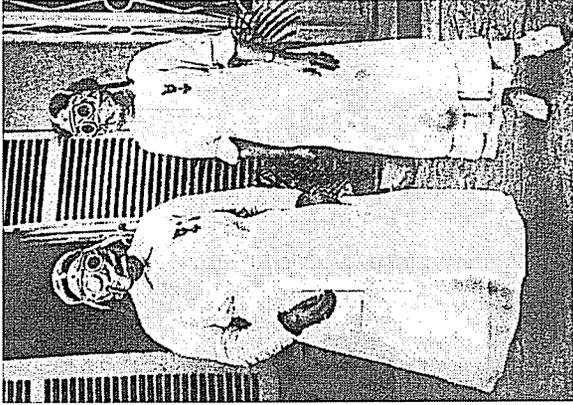


One of the most famous fighter pilots of World War I was Baron Manfred von Richthofen, known as the "Red Baron". He liked to fly in a blazing red airplane and shoot down plane after plane. His achievements made him both a German hero and a propaganda tool. With 80 credited victories, he defied the odds and became a legend in the air.



# Women in the War

Nursing was the most common way for women to be involved at the front lines and experience the war. The picture to the right shows American nurses in gas masks near the front lines

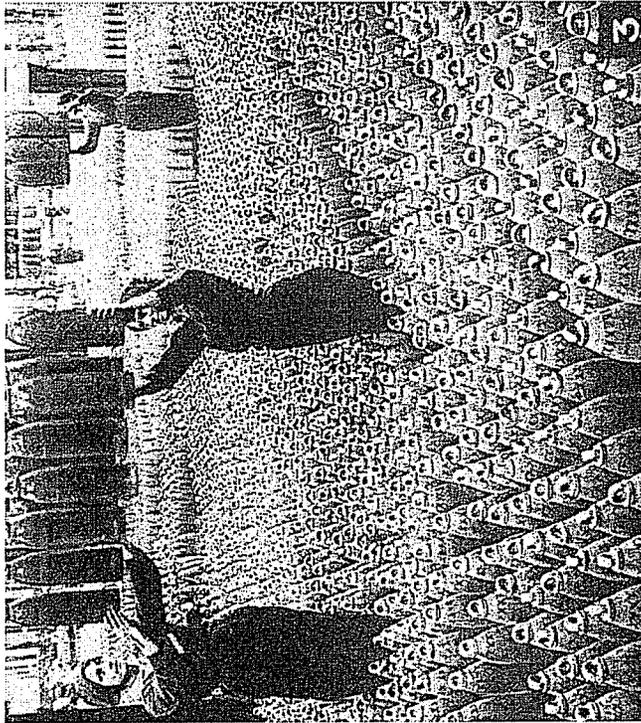


More than 12,000 women enlisted in the United States Navy and Marine Corps during the First World War. About 400 of them died in the war.

Russia was the only country to deploy female combat troops in substantial numbers. Its few women's battalions fought well in 1917, but failed to impact the war as much as the Russians had hoped, and were disbanded before the end of the year. In the later Russian Revolution the Bolsheviks would also employ women infantry.

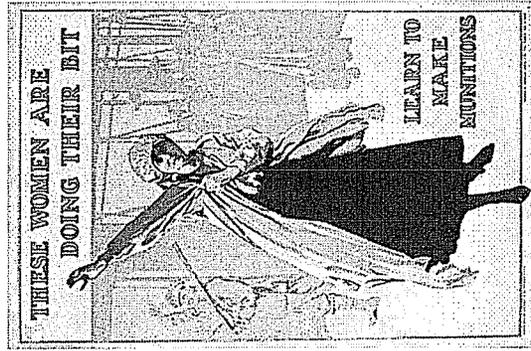
# Women at Home

Before the Great War most women did not work outside of the home. Those that did were usually domestic servants, nurses, teachers, or worked as secretaries. Shortly after the war began there was a shell (ammunition) shortage, and factories needed more employees to meet the demand of the war. Many of the men who had worked in factories were off at war, so factories agreed to hire women for the duration of the war.



Many women were hired in munitions factories, where ammunition and weapons were manufactured. There were two main dangers to women munitions workers. The first was explosions from all of the ammunition. The second was from TNT (an explosive). TNT turned women's skin yellow, and their hair orange. The rumor was that after leaving the factory and drinking milk you would go back to 'normal'. The reality was that TNT was very dangerous and many women remained sick for long periods of time.

Other jobs for women during the war included knitting socks for the soldiers on the front lines, and serving at the Red Cross. Many women also encouraged the sale of war bonds and planted victory gardens (there was a shortages of food, so growing your own helped the war effort!).

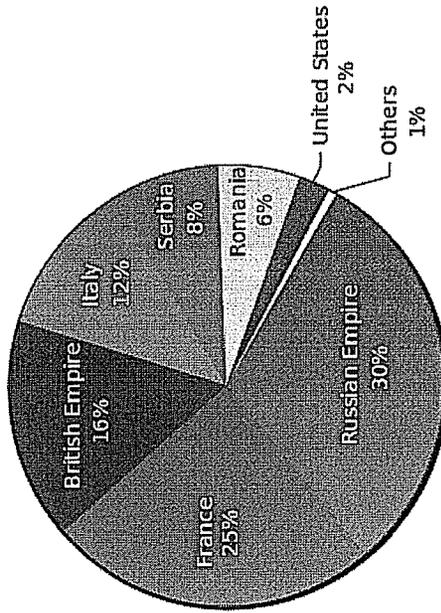


Although millions of women were employed in what were considered men's jobs during the war, when men returned home the women were forced to give up their jobs. Some women remained employed as secretaries, teachers, and nurses, but the majority returned to duties at home. Women's lives did change in other ways. One lasting change was that woman earned the right to vote (known as suffrage). British, German, Austrian, Hungarian, Canadian, and Russian women gained the right to vote in 1918. American women gained suffrage in 1920.

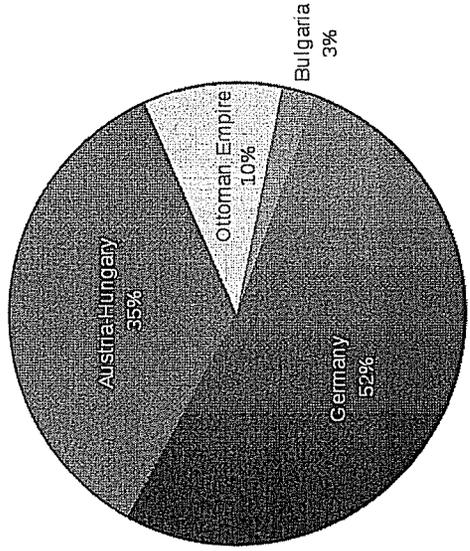
# Death Tolls

When World War I was declared, there were street celebrations in most of Europe's capital cities. Many believed the Great War would be the war to end all wars, and would be over quickly. That is not what happened. One way to understand the devastation that occurred during the Great War is to examine the number of casualties, or deaths. The weapons of the first modern war left nearly 10 million dead, 21 million injured, and 7.7 million missing and/or captured. The world had never seen such a devastating war. That is, until World War II occurred.

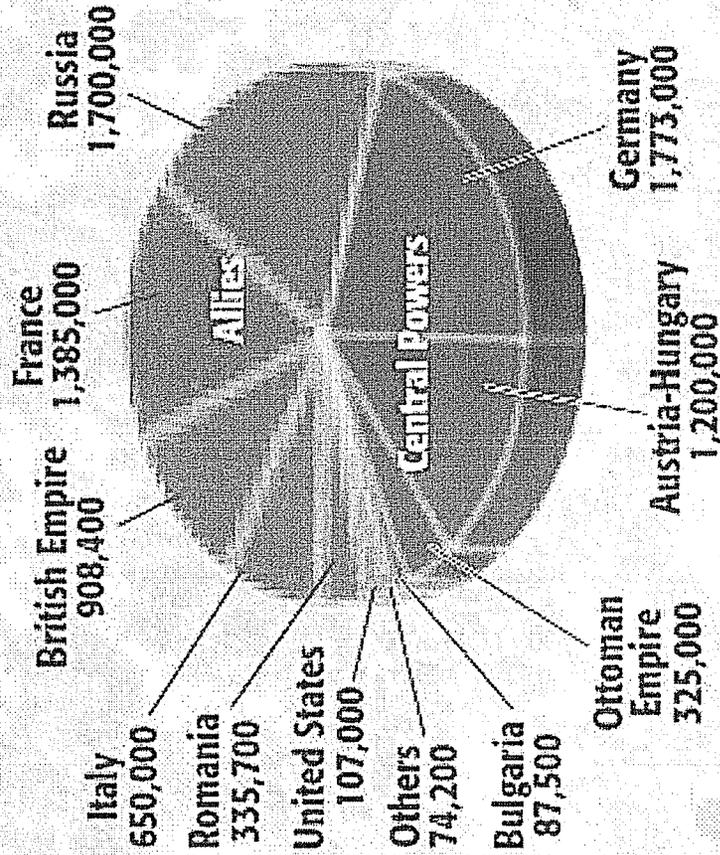
**World War I Military Deaths  
(Entente Powers)**



**World War I Military Deaths  
(Central Powers)**



**World War I Military Deaths\***



\* Figures are approximate

Modern wars are very deadly wars.