

*Edited by Pulitzer Prize winner*

**A. SCOTT BERG**



# **WORLD WAR I AND AMERICA**

**1917 ★ WWIAMERICA.ORG ★ 2017**

Library of America  
Project Reader

**TOLD BY THE AMERICANS  
WHO LIVED IT**

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The readings presented here are drawn from *World War I and America: Told by the Americans Who Lived It*. Published to mark the centenary of the American entry into the conflict, *World War I and America* brings together 128 diverse texts—speeches, messages, letters, diaries, poems, songs, newspaper and magazine articles, excerpts from memoirs and journalistic narratives—written by scores of American participants and observers that illuminate and vivify events from the outbreak of war in 1914 through the Armistice, the Paris Peace Conference, and the League of Nations debate. The writers collected in the volume—soldiers, airmen, nurses, diplomats, statesmen, political activists, journalists—provide unique insight into how Americans perceived the war and how the conflict transformed American life. It is being published by The Library of America, a nonprofit institution dedicated to preserving America's best and most significant writing in handsome, enduring volumes, featuring authoritative texts. You can learn more about *World War I and America*, and about The Library of America, at [www.loa.org](http://www.loa.org).

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## Preface

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MANY AMERICANS do not appreciate the key role the United States played in deciding the outcome of World War I, the deep impact the war had on Americans who lived through it, or the profound ways in which it continues to resonate today. While the U.S. was a belligerent for only nineteen of the war's fifty-two months, and suffered a fraction of the losses of the other major combatants, in the climactic campaigns of the war Americans fought with ferocious intensity. In the five and a half months the American Expeditionary Forces were engaged in major fighting, the U.S. lost more than 50,000 men killed in action, a combat toll greater than that of the entire Vietnam War. Equally important, the war ushered in powerful and complex changes in American culture and society. The war helped women to finally win the vote and ushered in the permissive Jazz Age, but also led to Prohibition and a heightened fear of immigrants. Amid deadly racial violence and frustrated hopes for full citizenship for African Americans, it gave rise to the militant "New Negro" and began the Great Migration to the North. It made the United States the most powerful actor on the global stage, and brought about a dramatic debate over America's role in the world. And it called into question the traditional meanings of glory, honor, courage, causing many to believe, as Ernest Hemingway wrote, "There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity."

This Reader presents twenty-two selections by American participants in the conflict, written from 1915 to 1929. They are drawn from the Library of America volume *World War I and America: Told by the Americans Who Lived It*, and give a first-hand look at the war from different points of view. Understanding how Americans perceived the conflict at the time allows us to encounter World War I on its own terms and to draw connections with the experiences of Americans today, both combatants and civilians. The selections focus on seven

key themes. Each theme features an introduction by a distinguished scholar, questions for discussion, and suggestions for further reading. The reader is intended to help facilitate an informed and rewarding conversation about the war and its consequences.

## *Introduction*

### I. WHY FIGHT?

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THE AMERICAN people's views on the war ran the gamut in 1914 from indifference to support for the Allies to a desire for strict neutrality. A small minority expressed a desire for a German victory. By 1917, however, American opinion was almost entirely sympathetic to the Allies as German atrocities in Belgium, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and the massacre of the Armenians made the Central Powers seem like a threat not just to British and French values, but to American ones as well. Alan Seeger represents the significant group of Americans who believed deeply in the Allied cause from the war's very first days. They saw Belgium as an innocent victim of German aggression, and France and Britain as defenders of a democratic way of life and international order that Imperial Germany was trying to destroy. Tens of thousands of Americans joined the Allied armies or volunteered to serve the Allies as nurses, doctors, and aid workers. They served in the cause of democracy and freedom. Many, though by no means all, of them came from privileged backgrounds. Very few American citizens volunteered to serve the Central Powers, a clear indication of where American sympathies lay.

The resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917 and the decoded Zimmerman telegram, in which the Germans tried to enlist Mexico as an ally against the United States, made almost all Americans hostile to the German cause. Some were also motivated by the March 1917 revolution in Russia, which deposed Tsar Nicholas II in favor of a democratically-minded centrist provisional government. Nicholas's downfall made the war come into greater focus as a conflict between the world's autocracies and its democracies. In such a contest, many Americans saw themselves as having no choice but to side with the democracies. The promise, however brief it turned out to be, of democracy triumphing in Russia also held out the hope of something positive coming out of the war that might justify its enormous toll in human life.

Not all Americans were convinced. Socialists were divided on the war. Some supported American entry, but only if America would dedicate its power toward creating a more equitable and just world. They saw Britain and France as imperial oppressors not worthy of American assistance. Few socialists, however, saw in a German victory any hope for progress for Europe or the world. The authors of the Majority Report of April 1917 saw the war as a naked competition for power and profits among the world's capitalists. Such a war, they believed, did not deserve the support of workers anywhere, nor could it advance the cause of democracy. They were a small percentage of Americans, but their critical view of the conflict would prove influential both during and after the war.

President Woodrow Wilson laid out a justification for American entry in his address to Congress on April 2, 1917 asking for a declaration of war. Wilson believed deeply that wars were the products of avaricious and corrupt regimes, not the result of the will of people who had to fight them. From this core belief, Wilson concluded that America's enemy was not the German people, but Kaiser Wilhelm and his militaristic government. Replacing that government with a democratic and open one would give the German people the chance to determine their own, peaceful, future alongside their neighbors. Wilson also believed that economic exchange and open markets would give nations more incentive to cooperate with one another than to compete.

By entering the war, Wilson believed that the United States could reshape the world, making it more economically open, more democratic and less imperialist. With shared democratic values as a basis for the new world order, he hoped, there would be no reason for a second world war. Americans thus went to war led by a president determined both to protect his nation's freedom from the growing German threat, as represented by the Zimmermann Telegram and the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, and to bring about the reformation of the world.

Michael S. Neiberg  
*Professor of History,*  
*United States Army War College*



SECOND BATTLE OF CHAMPAGNE:  
FRANCE, SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 1915

*Alan Seeger: from a letter  
to Elsie Simmons Seeger*

Alan Seeger graduated from Harvard College in the remarkable class of 1910 that also produced T. S. Eliot, John Reed, and Walter Lippmann; and his life beyond Harvard Yard quickly became as artistic and bohemian and politically engaged as any of theirs. Trying his hand at poetry, he lived in Greenwich Village for the next two years and in Paris for two years after that. He enlisted in the French Foreign Legion in August 1914, along with fifty other Americans. By the fall he was serving in the trenches, and on December 8, he wrote to the *New York Sun*: "for the poor common soldier it is anything but romantic. His rôle is simply to dig himself a hole in the ground and to keep hidden in it as tightly as possible. Continually under the fire of the opposing batteries, he is yet never allowed to get a glimpse of the enemy. Exposed to all the dangers of war, but with none of its enthusiasms or splendid *élan*, he is condemned to sit like an animal in its burrow and hear the shells whistle over his head and take their little daily toll from his comrades." His first major battle experience came with the French offensive in Champagne, which began on September 25, 1915. Afterward he wrote to his mother.

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And now we are back in the far rear again, the battle is over, and in the peace of our little village we can sum up the results of the big offensive in which we took part. No one denies that they are disappointing. For we know, who heard and cheered the order of Joffre to the army before the battle, that it was not merely a fight for a position, but a supreme effort to pierce the German line and liberate the invaded country; we know the immense preparation for the attack, what confidence our officers had in its success, and what enthusiasm ourselves. True, we broke their first line along a wide front, advanced on an average of three or four kilometers, took numerous prisoners and cannon. It was a satisfaction at last to get out of the trenches, to meet the enemy face to face, and to see German

arrogance turned into suppliancy. We knew many splendid moments, worth having endured many trials for. But in our larger aim, of piercing their line, of breaking the long deadlock, of entering Vouziers in triumph, of course we failed.

This check, in conjunction with the serious turn that affairs have taken in the Balkans, makes the present hour a rather grave one for us. Yet it cannot be said to be worse than certain moments that arrived even much later in the course of our Civil War, when things looked just as critical for the North, though in the end of a similar *guerre d'usure* they pulled out victorious.

But perhaps you will understand me when I say that the matter of being on the winning side has never weighed with me in comparison with that of being on the side where my sympathies lie. This affair only deepened my admiration for, my loyalty to, the French. If we did not entirely succeed, it was not the fault of the French soldier. He is a better man, man for man, than the German. Any one who had seen the charge of the Marsouins at Souain would acknowledge it. Never was anything more magnificent. I remember a captain, badly wounded in the leg, as he passed us, borne back on a litter by four German prisoners. He asked us what regiment we were, and when we told him, he cried "Vive la Légion," and kept repeating "Nous les avons eus. Nous les avons eus." He was suffering, but oblivious of his wound, was still fired with the enthusiasm of the assault and all radiant with victory. What a contrast with the German wounded, on whose faces was nothing but terror and despair. What is the stimulus in their slogans of "Gott mit uns" and "für König und Vaterland" beside that of men really fighting in defense of their country? Whatever be the force in international conflicts of having justice and all the principles of personal morality on one's side, it at least gives the French soldier a strength that's like the strength of ten against an adversary whose weapon is only brute violence. It is inconceivable that a Frenchman, forced to yield, could behave as I saw German prisoners behave, trembling, on their knees, for all the world like criminals at length overpowered and brought to justice. Such men have to be driven to the assault, or intoxicated. But the Frenchman who goes up is possessed with a passion beside which any of the other forms of experi-

ence that are reckoned to make life worth while seem pale in comparison. The modern prototype of those whom history has handed down to the admiration of all who love liberty and heroism in its defense, it is a privilege to march at his side—so much so that nothing the world could give could make me wish myself anywhere else than where I am.

Most of the other Americans have taken advantage of the permission to pass into a regular French regiment. There is much to be said for their decision, but I have remained true to the Legion, where I am content and have good comrades. I have a pride particularly in the Moroccan division, whereof we are the first brigade. Those who march with the Zouaves and the Algerian *tirailleurs* are sure to be where there is most honor. We are *troupes d'attaque* now, and so will assist at all the big *coups*, but be spared the monotony of long periods of inactive guard in the trenches, such as we passed last winter.

I am glad to hear that Thwing has joined the English. I used to know him at Harvard. He refused to be content, no doubt, with lesser emotions while there are hours to be lived such as are being lived now by young men in Flanders and Champagne. It is all to his credit. There should really be no neutrals in a conflict like this, where there is not a people whose interests are not involved. To neutrals who have stomached what America has consented to stomach from Germany—whose ideals are so opposite to hers—who in the event of a German victory would be so inevitably embroiled, the question he put to himself and so resolutely answered will become more and more pertinent.

October 25, 1915

WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 1917

*Woodrow Wilson: from  
Address to Congress on War with Germany*

Wilson addressed Congress on February 26, asking for the authority to arm American merchant ships. The House of Representatives approved the measure by a vote of 403-13 on March 1, but a Senate filibuster led by Robert "Fighting Bob" La Follette, the progressive Republican from Wisconsin, blocked its passage before the 64th Congress adjourned on March 4. Enraged, Wilson denounced the "little group of willful men" who had "rendered the great Government of the United States helpless and contemptible" and imposed an executive order to arm the ships; but this new policy of armed neutrality failed to stop the Germans from sinking American vessels. On March 20 the cabinet unanimously recommended asking Congress for a declaration of war; and the next day Wilson requested that a joint session convene on April 2. The last president to write his own speeches, he toiled over multiple drafts right up until the morning of his address. On the evening of April 2, Wilson arrived at the Capitol to deliver one of the most important speeches in American history, contending that a war of choice had become one of necessity. Eight words embedded in his argument—"The world must be made safe for democracy"—have remained the cornerstone of American foreign policy for a century. The speech received thunderous approval, which depressed the President. "My message to-day was a message of death for our young men," he said to one of his advisers. "How strange it seems to applaud that." A moment later, Wilson laid his head on the Cabinet table and sobbed.

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2 April, 1917 8.30 P.M.

One of the things that has served to convince us that the Prussian autocracy was not and could never be our friend is that from the very outset of the present war it has filled our unsuspecting communities and even our offices of government with spies and set criminal intrigues everywhere afoot against our national unity of counsel, our peace within and without, our industries and our commerce. Indeed it is now evident

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that its spies were here even before the war began; and it is unhappily not a matter of conjecture but a fact proved in our courts of justice that the intrigues which have more than once come perilously near to disturbing the peace and dislocating the industries of the country have been carried on at the instigation, with the support, and even under the personal direction of official agents of the Imperial Government accredited to the Government of the United States. Even in checking these things and trying to extirpate them we have sought to put the most generous interpretation possible upon them because we knew that their source lay, not in any hostile feeling or purpose of the German people towards us (who were, no doubt as ignorant of them as we ourselves were), but only in the selfish designs of a Government that did what it pleased and told its people nothing. But they have played their part in serving to convince us at last that that Government entertains no real friendship for us and means to act against our peace and security at its convenience. That it means to stir up enemies against us at our very doors the intercepted note to the German Minister at Mexico City is eloquent evidence.

We are accepting this challenge of hostile purpose because we know that in such a government, following such methods, we can never have a friend; and that in the presence of its organized power, always lying in wait to accomplish we know not what purpose, there can be no assured security for the democratic governments of the world. We are now about to accept gauge of battle with this natural foe to liberty and shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power. We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretence about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience. The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions

of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.

Just because we fight without rancour and without selfish object, seeking nothing for ourselves but what we shall wish to share with all free peoples, we shall, I feel confident, conduct our operations as belligerents without passion and ourselves observe with proud punctilio the principles of right and of fair play we profess to be fighting for.

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It will be all the easier for us to conduct ourselves as belligerents in a high spirit of right and fairness because we act without animus, not in enmity towards a people or with the desire to bring any injury or disadvantage upon them, but only in armed opposition to an irresponsible government which has thrown aside all considerations of humanity and of right and is running amuck. We are, let me say again, the sincere friends of the German people, and shall desire nothing so much as the early re-establishment of intimate relations of mutual advantage between us,—however hard it may be for them, for the time being, to believe that this is spoken from our hearts. We have borne with their present government through all these bitter months because of that friendship,—exercising a patience and forbearance which would otherwise have been impossible. We shall, happily, still have an opportunity to prove that friendship in our daily attitude and actions towards the millions of men and women of German birth and native sympathy who live amongst us and share our life, and we shall be proud to prove it towards all who are in fact loyal to their neighbours and to the Government in the hour of test. They are, most of them, as true and loyal Americans as if they had never known any other fealty or allegiance. They will be prompt to stand with us in rebuking and restraining the few who may be of a different mind and purpose. If there should be disloyalty, it will be dealt with with a firm hand of stern repression; but, if it lifts its head at all, it will lift it only here and there and without countenance except from a lawless and malignant few.

It is a distressing and oppressive duty, Gentlemen of the

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Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts,—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.

OPPOSING CAPITALIST WAR:  
MISSOURI, APRIL 1917

*Majority Report of the  
St. Louis Socialist Convention*

The Socialist Party of America formed in 1901; and in the 1912 presidential election, its candidate, Eugene V. Debs, received 901,551 votes—6 percent of the popular vote. Immediately following the declaration of war, the Socialist Party held an emergency convention in St. Louis to consider its position. The party's minority report stated: "Having failed to prevent the war by our agitation, we can only recognize it as a fact and try to force upon the government, by pressure of public opinion, a constructive program." It called for securing peace on "democratic terms," continued freedom of speech and the press, a national referendum on conscription, and using the war to advance "democratic collectivism." Morris Hillquit, Charles Emil Ruthenberg, and Algernon Lee wrote the majority report, which flatly opposed the war; and by a subsequent vote of 22,345 to 2,752, the Socialist Party thus became the largest political organization to protest American participation.

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The forces of capitalism which have led to the war in Europe are even more hideously transparent in the war recently provoked by the ruling class of this country.

When Belgium was invaded, the government enjoined upon the people of this country the duty of remaining neutral, thus clearly demonstrating that the "dictates of humanity," and the fate of small nations and of democratic institutions were matters that did not concern it. But when our enormous war traffic was seriously threatened, our government calls upon us to rally to the "defense of democracy and civilization."

Our entrance into the European war was instigated by the predatory capitalists in the United States who boast of the enormous profit of seven billion dollars from the manufacture and sale of munitions and war supplies and from the exportation of American food stuffs and other necessities. They are



also deeply interested in the continuance of war and the success of the allied arms through their huge loans to the governments of the allied powers and through other commercial ties. It is the same interests which strive for imperialistic domination of the Western Hemisphere.

The war of the United States against Germany cannot be justified even on the plea that it is a war in defense of American rights or American "honor." Ruthless as the unrestricted submarine war policy of the German government was and is, it is not an invasion of the rights of the American people, as such, but only an interference with the opportunity of certain groups of American capitalists to coin cold profits out of the blood and sufferings of our fellow men in the warring countries of Europe.

It is not a war against the militarist regime of the Central Powers. Militarism can never be abolished by militarism.

It is not a war to advance the cause of democracy in Europe. Democracy can never be imposed upon any country by a foreign power by force of arms.

It is cant and hypocrisy to say that the war is not directed against the German people, but against the Imperial Government of Germany. If we send an armed force to the battlefields of Europe, its cannon will mow down the masses of the German people and not the Imperial German Government.

Our entrance into the European conflict at this time will serve only to multiply the horrors of the war, to increase the toll of death and destruction and to prolong the fiendish slaughter. It will bring death, suffering and destitution to the people of the United States and particularly to the working class. It will give the powers of reaction in this country, the pretext for an attempt to throttle our rights and to crush our democratic institutions, and to fasten upon this country a permanent militarism.

The working class of the United States has no quarrel with the working class of Germany or of any other country. The people of the United States have no quarrel with the people of Germany or any other country. The American people did not want and do not want this war. They have not been consulted about the war and have had no part in declaring war. They

have been plunged into this war by the trickery and treachery of the ruling class of the country through its representatives in the National Administration and National Congress, its demagogic agitators, its subsidized press, and other servile instruments of public expression.

## *Introduction*

### II. THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR

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WAR TRANSFORMS whomever it touches. Soldiers and civilians, women and men, adults and children—no one is immune. Even descendants may find their own lives altered by the ripples of their ancestors' wartime experiences, sometimes after the passage of multiple generations. The Americans who experienced combat in World War I were changed permanently. Memories, some traumatic and others joyful or even transcendent, imparted to them perspectives that their friends and relatives struggled to comprehend. Veterans in turn often failed to understand how war had also impacted the millions of Americans who never saw the front lines. Frictions among these competing viewpoints would permanently remold American society.

There is no such thing as a "typical" war experience. This holds true even for World War I on the Western Front, which is often portrayed solely as an unending stalemate fought in a vast network of indistinguishable shell-blasted and mud-choked trenches. In reality, each participant entered the conflict with unique outlooks and preconceptions, and each endured or enjoyed experiences specific to themselves. Some knew the crash of artillery from the giving or receiving end; others soared in aircraft above the mud and shellfire and prayed that they would not plummet in flames to the earth, or labored in the claustrophobic confines of rattletrap tanks. Many struggled to survive the squalid trenches, but not a few, including many Americans in 1918, marched and fought without ever entering what British soldiers called the "troglodyte world." The vast majority of those who served were never wounded, and most of those who did receive injuries were not sent to a hospital. Many thousands of Americans did suffer severe wounds, however, or cared for those who did as doctors, nurses, orderlies, and stretcher-bearers.

If each participant's experience was unique, the consequences were equally varied. Historians, assuming that all

soldiers reacted to war in more or less the same way, used to construct war narratives around themes of naiveté and disillusionment. Careful studies of diaries, memoirs, questionnaires, and oral histories have since demonstrated the essential fallacy of this construct. If many veterans were traumatized by their experiences and rejected in consequence the political and religious ideologies on which they had been raised, many also felt uplifted by their war experiences and believed that they confirmed their prewar beliefs. In most cases these perspectives emerged regardless of combat's intensity; some who barely saw the front felt disillusioned while others who endured long periods in the front lines considered themselves uplifted. The vast majority of veterans, however, fell into neither category. For them, war was a mixture of good and bad that left a legacy of ambivalence.

The four excerpts presented here reveal a mere fraction of what it meant to be an American soldier in World War I. Readers will encounter varying measures of thrill and terror, purpose and bafflement. What these testimonials share in common is their honesty. Although the accounts by Hall and Williams were edited by their authors for publication and the others were not, all four are authentic and—unlike the hundreds of “memoirs” published for propaganda purposes—unremittingly stark. While they only provide glimpses of, for example, the long periods of boredom or leisure that intervened between battles, or the comradeship that only veterans understand, they do open windows into the minds of men experiencing for the first time the full measure of war in all its fury and hate.

Edward G. Lengel  
*Professor and Director of The Papers of George Washington,  
University of Virginia*

*James Norman Hall: Damaged Trenches*

On September 25, 1915, the French attacked in Champagne and the Artois while the British launched their largest offensive to date at Loos. All three offensives failed to break through the German defenses. By early November the French had lost 192,000 men killed, wounded, or missing, the British 50,000, and the Germans 135,000. Among those who survived was a pretender of sorts: James Norman Hall, a 1910 graduate of Grinnell College from Colfax, Iowa. He had worked in Boston as an agent for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children before vacationing in Britain in the summer of 1914. Swept away by the "spirit of adventure," Hall claimed to be Canadian so that he could enlist in the British army that August. Trained as a machine gunner, he served with the 9th Royal Fusiliers at Loos before being discharged in December 1915, when his true nationality was revealed. He returned to the United States, published his memoir, *Kitchener's Mob: The Adventures of an American in the British Army*, and then went back to France, where he would fly in the Lafayette Escadrille.

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Death comes swiftly in war. One's life hangs by a thread. The most trivial circumstance saves or destroys. Mac came into the half-ruined dugout where the off-duty machine gunners were making tea over a fire of splintered logs.

"Jamie," he said, "take my place at sentry for a few minutes, will you? I've lost my water-bottle. It's 'ere in the dugout somew'ere. I'll be only a minute."

I went out to the gun position a few yards away, and immediately afterward the Germans began a bombardment of our line. One's ear becomes exact in distinguishing the size of shells by the sound which they make in traveling through the air; and it is possible to judge the direction and the probable place of their fall. Two of us stood by the machine gun. We heard at the same time the sound which we knew meant danger, possibly death. It was the awful whistling roar of a high explosive. We dropped to the floor of the trench at once. The explosion blackened our faces with lyddite and half-blinded us.

The dugout which I had left less than a moment ago was a mass of wreckage. Seven of our comrades were inside.

One of them crawled out, pulling himself along with one arm. The other arm was terribly crushed and one leg was hanging by a tendon and a few shreds of flesh.

“My God, boys! Look wot they did to me!”

He kept saying it over and over while we cut the cords from our bandoliers, tied them about his leg and arm and twisted them up to stop the flow of blood. He was a fine, healthy lad. A moment before he had been telling us what he was going to do when we went home on furlough. Now his face was the color of ashes, his voice grew weaker and weaker, and he died while we were working over him.

High explosive shells were bursting all along the line. Great masses of earth and chalk were blown in on top of men seeking protection where there was none. The ground rocked like so much pasteboard. I heard frantic cries for “Picks and shovels!” “Stretcher-bearers! Stretcher-bearers this way, for God’s sake!” The voices sounded as weak and futile as the squeaking of rats in a thunderstorm.

When the bombardment began, all off-duty men were ordered into the deepest of the shell-proof dugouts, where they were really quite safe. But those English lads were not cowards. Orders or no orders, they came out to the rescue of their comrades. They worked without a thought of their own danger. I felt actually happy, for I was witnessing splendid heroic things. It was an experience which gave one a new and unshakable faith in his fellows.

The sergeant and I rushed into the ruins of our machine-gun dugout. The roof still held in one place. There we found Mac, his head split in two as though it had been done with an axe. Gardner’s head was blown completely off, and his body was so terribly mangled that we did not know until later who he was. Preston was lying on his back with a great jagged, blood-stained hole through his tunic. Bert Powel was so badly hurt that we exhausted our supply of field dressings in bandaging him. We found little Charlie Harrison lying close to the side of the wall, gazing at his crushed foot with a look of incredulity and horror pitiful to see. One of the men gave him first aid with all the deftness and tenderness of a woman.

The rest of us dug hurriedly into a great heap of earth at the other end of the shelter. We quickly uncovered Walter, a lad who had kept us laughing at his drollery on many a rainy night. The earth had been heaped loosely on him and he was still conscious.

“Good old boys,” he said weakly; “I was about done for.”

In our haste we dislodged another heap of earth which completely buried him again, and it seemed a lifetime before we were able to remove it. I have never seen a finer display of pure grit than Walter’s.

“Easy now!” he said. “Can’t feel anything below me waist. I think I’m ’urt down there.”

We worked as swiftly and as carefully as we could. We knew that he was badly wounded, for the earth was soaked with blood; but when we saw, we turned away sick with horror. Fortunately, he lost consciousness while we were trying to disentangle him from the fallen timbers, and he died on the way to the field dressing-station. Of the seven lads in the dug-out, three were killed outright, three died within half an hour, and one escaped with a crushed foot which had to be amputated at the field hospital.

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The worst of it was that we could not get away from the sight of the mangled bodies of our comrades. Arms and legs stuck out of the wreckage, and on every side we saw distorted human faces, the faces of men we had known, with whom we had lived and shared hardships and dangers for months past. Those who have never lived through experiences of this sort cannot possibly know the horror of them. It is not in the heat of battle that men lose their reason. Battle frenzy is, perhaps, a temporary madness. The real danger comes when the strain is relaxed. Men look about them and see the bodies of their comrades torn to pieces as though they had been hacked and butchered by fiends. One thinks of the human body as inviolate, a beautiful and sacred thing. The sight of it dismembered or disemboweled, trampled in the bottom of a trench, smeared with blood and filth, is so revolting as to be hardly endurable.

And yet, we had to endure it. We could not escape it. Whichever way we looked, there were the dead. Worse even

than the sight of dead men were the groans and entreaties of those lying wounded in the trenches waiting to be taken back to the dressing-stations.

"I'm shot through the stomach, matey! Can't you get me back to the ambulance? Ain't they *some* way you can get me back out o' this?"

"Stick it, old lad! You won't 'ave long to wite. They'll be some of the Red Cross along 'ere in a jiffy now."

"Give me a lift, boys, can't you? Look at my leg! Do you think it'll 'ave to come off? Maybe they could save it if I could get to 'ospital in time! Won't some of you give me a lift? I can 'obble along with a little 'elp."

"Don't you fret, sonny! You're a-go'n' to ride back in a stretcher presently. Keep yer courage up a little w'ile longer."

Some of the men, in their suffering, forgot every one but themselves, and it was not strange that they should. Others, with more iron in their natures, endured fearful agony in silence. During memorable half-hours, filled with danger and death, many of my gross misjudgments of character were made clear to me. Men whom no one had credited with heroic qualities revealed them. Others failed rather pitiably to live up to one's expectations. It seemed to me that there was strength or weakness in men, quite apart from their real selves, for which they were in no way responsible; but doubtless it had always been there, waiting to be called forth at just such crucial times.

During the afternoon I heard for the first time the hysterical cry of a man whose nerve had given way. He picked up an arm and threw it far out in front of the trenches, shouting as he did so in a way that made one's blood run cold. Then he sat down and started crying and moaning. He was taken back to the rear, one of the saddest of casualties in a war of inconceivable horrors. I heard of many instances of nervous breakdown, but I witnessed surprisingly few of them. Men were often badly shaken and trembled from head to foot. Usually they pulled themselves together under the taunts of their less susceptible comrades.

From *Kitchener's Mob* (1916)



“SOME SCARRED SLOPE”: FRANCE, WINTER 1916

*Alan Seeger:*  
*I Have a Rendezvous with Death*

Seeger probably wrote this poem in early 1916, in anticipation of renewed fighting later that year. That Fourth of July, during the first week of the Anglo-French offensive along the Somme River, Seeger's regiment of the Foreign Legion attacked the village of Belloy-en-Santerre. Struck several times by machine-gun fire, Seeger reportedly cheered on his comrades in their successful advance before he died. His *Poems* were published posthumously in December 1916, and his *Letters and Diaries* appeared in May 1917; some reviewers compared him to the Romantic English poet Rupert Brooke, who had died from blood poisoning in 1915 while serving with the Royal Navy in the Aegean. American supporters of the Allies lauded Seeger as a hero; his brother, Charles, a prominent musicologist (and future father of the folksinger Pete Seeger), became an outspoken opponent of intervention.

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I have a rendezvous with Death  
At some disputed barricade,  
When Spring comes back with rustling shade  
And apple-blossoms fill the air—  
I have a rendezvous with Death  
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand  
And lead me into his dark land  
And close my eyes and quench my breath—  
It may be I shall pass him still.  
I have a rendezvous with Death  
On some scarred slope of battered hill,  
When Spring comes round again this year  
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep  
Pillowed in silk and scented down,  
Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep,

Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,  
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .  
But I've a rendezvous with Death  
At midnight in some flaming town,  
When Spring trips north again this year,  
And I to my pledged word am true,  
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

“TO GO AGAIN”: WINTER 1917

*Robert Frost: Not to Keep*

Robert Frost had moved in 1912 to Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England, where he befriended the essayist, biographer, and critic Edward Thomas. With Frost's encouragement, Thomas began to write poetry, and the two men drew so close that they spoke of raising their families next to each other in America. Frost returned to New England in 1915, and Thomas became an artillery officer in the British army. His letters to Frost inspired this poem, which was published a few months before Thomas was killed in action on April 9, 1917, in the battle of Arras.

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They sent him back to her. The letter came  
Saying . . . and she could have him. And before  
She could be sure there was no hidden ill  
Under the formal writing, he was in her sight—  
Living.—They gave him back to her alive—  
How else? They are not known to send the dead—  
And not disfigured visibly. His face?—  
His hands? She had to look—to ask  
“What was it, dear?” And she had given all  
And still she had all—*they* had—they the lucky!  
Wasn't she glad now? Everything seemed won,  
And all the rest for them permissible ease.  
She had to ask “What was it, dear?”

“Enough,

Yet not enough. A bullet through and through,  
High in the breast. Nothing but what good care  
And medicine and rest—and you a week,  
Can cure me of to go again.” The same  
Grim giving to do over for them both.  
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes  
How was it with him for a second trial.  
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.  
They had given him back to her, but not to keep.

*The Yale Review*, January 1917

“THE HELLISH THING”:  
FRANCE, SEPTEMBER 1918

*Ashby Williams:*  
*from Experiences of the Great War*

The American Expeditionary Forces began its greatest battle of the war on September 26, 1918, attacking along a front extending from the Argonne Forest to the Meuse River. Lasting until the Armistice, the battle claimed the lives of 26,000 American soldiers and wounded another 95,000. A lawyer from Roanoke, Virginia, Major Ashby Williams commanded the First Battalion, 320th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division at St. Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne. While advancing to their jumping-off position on the night of September 25, Williams and his men came under artillery fire.

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A HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE

AFTER THE MEN had had their coffee—I remember I drank a good swig of it, too—I gave directions that the men should get in shape to move out of the woods. Then followed one of the most horrible experiences of my whole life in the war, and one which I hope never to have to go through again. The Boche began to shell the woods. When the first one came over I was sitting under the canvas that had been still spread over the cart shafts. It fell on the up side of the woods. As I came out another one fell closer. I was glad it was dark because I was afraid my knees were shaking. I was afraid of my voice, too, and I remember I spoke in a loud voice so it would not tremble, and gave orders that Commanders should take their units to the dugouts which were less than a hundred yards away until the shelling was over, as I did not think it necessary to sacrifice any lives under the circumstances. Notwithstanding my precautions, some of the shells fell among the cooks and others who remained about the kitchens, killing some of them and wounding others.

In about twenty minutes I ordered the companies to fall in on the road by our area preparatory to marching out of the

woods. They got into a column of squads in perfect order, and we had proceeded perhaps a hundred yards along the road in the woods when we came on to one of the companies of the Second Battalion which we were to follow that night. We were held there perhaps forty-five minutes while the Second Battalion ahead of us got in shape to move out. One cannot imagine the horrible suspense and experience of that wait. The Boche began to shell the woods again. There was no turning back now, no passing around the companies ahead of us, we could only wait and trust to the Grace of God.

We could hear the explosion as the shell left the muzzle of the Boche gun, then the noise of the shell as it came toward us, faint at first, then louder and louder until the shell struck and shook the earth with its explosion. One can only feel, one cannot describe the horror that fills the heart and mind during this short interval of time. You know he is aiming the gun at you and wants to kill you. In your mind you see him swab out the hot barrel, you see him thrust in the deadly shell and place the bundle of explosives in the breach; you see the gunner throw all his weight against the trigger; you hear the explosion like the single bark of a great dog in the distance, and you hear the deadly missile singing as it comes towards you, faintly at first, then distinctly, then louder and louder until it seems so loud that everything else has died, and then the earth shakes and the eardrums ring, and dirt and iron reverberate through the woods and fall about you.

This is what you hear, but no man can tell what surges through the heart and mind as you lie with your face upon the ground listening to the growing sound of the hellish thing as it comes towards you. You do not think, sorrow only fills the heart, and you only hope and pray. And when the doubly-damned thing hits the ground, you take a breath and feel relieved, and think how good God has been to you again. And God was good to us that night—to those of us who escaped unhurt. And for the ones who were killed, poor fellows, some blown to fragments that could not be recognized, and the men who were hurt, we said a prayer in our hearts.

Such was my experience and the experience of my men that night in the Bois de Borrus, but their conduct was fine. I think, indeed, their conduct was the more splendid because they

knew they were not free to shift for themselves and find shelter, but must obey orders, and obey they did in the spirit of fine soldiers to the last man. After that experience I knew that men like these would never turn back, and they never did.

From *Experiences of the Great War* (1919)

THE "HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS" ATTACK:  
FRANCE, SEPTEMBER 1918

*Horace Pippin:*  
*from "Autobiography, First World War"*

A manual laborer with a love of drawing and little formal education, Horace Pippin had lived a hardscrabble life in upstate New York and New Jersey before enlisting in the 369th Infantry Regiment in 1917. During the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the "Harlem Hellfighters" were attached to the French 161st Division, and they fought in Champagne, apart from the main American army. On September 30, 1918, Pippin was shot in the shoulder, permanently disabling his right arm. After the war he learned to guide his wounded limb with his left hand and eventually became a widely exhibited painter. Pippin's unpublished manuscript from the 1920s includes this narrative of the fighting around Séchault.

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AT ONE O clock the artillery were in thir Position and Began to fire. The Germens air plaines were after us good and strong the end of this Day we got 14 machine guns 500 prisners and a town. Then we hel the line for the artillery to move up. Prisners were comeing throu our line. Goeine Back and every one were happy. That they were out of it. For they knew that, they would see home a gan some time. We onley hell the line that night. The machine guns were thick they kepted spiteing Bullets a cross our line on till the artillery came up, then that morneing. I got in, with Co I. I had notheing to eait for 3 Days. The Germens line were strong. And shells dropeing every where. Yet we were advancing sloley. I were in shell holes that were smokeing, and they were hot, the machine guns were in trees as well as in Bushess and in Housess and any thing they could get a machine gun in. They had it there. Wimens as well as men, ueseing a machine gun we were facing a nother hill. The snipers were thick all so, I seen a machine gun nest I got him. My Budy and I were after a nother one. Both of us were in the same shell hole. I were lookeing for a nother hole that would put me in [     ] of him. After I seen

one. I said to my comrad, you go one way, and Ill go the other, and one of us can get him. For we could not see him, from where we were at. For he were Back of a Rock. Now it were to get him in sight and to do that we hat to take a chance of one to get it. Both of us left the shell hole, at the same time, I got near the shell hole that I had pecked out. When he let me have it. I went Down in the shell hole. He cliped my neck and got me throu my shoulder and right arm. Yet I had notheing to eat yet and I onley had a little water in my canteen. I Began to plug up my wounds when my Budy came to me and did what he could for me. Then he tole me that he got the Germen and the gun. I were leyeing on my Back. I thought I could get up But I could not do so. I shook hands with him and I never seen him cents. Now the shells were comeing close to me. Piceses of shell would come in near me some times. Then the Germen sniper kepted after me all Day. His Bullets would clep the shell hole that hell me this were 8 o clock in the morning. Some time that after noon some French swipers came By. They look for Germen that is left Back so he seen me layeing there. When he did so. He stoped to say sometheing to me. But he never got it out for just then a Bullet past throu his head. And he sank on me. I seen him comeing on But I could not move. I were just that weeke. So I hat to take him. I were glad to get his water and all so Bread. I took my left hand and I got some coffee. After some hird time geteing it from him, after that I felt good and I trided to get up a gan. But I were to week to do so. Night were comeing on. And it Began to Rain. Then I tried to get the Blanked from my Dead comrad. That I could not do. And I could not get him of off me. The Rain came more and more ontill I were in water yet I were groweing weaker and weaker all the time and I went to sleep. I cant say how long I slep. But two Boyes came and I woke up. They took the French men of off me and then took me out of the shell hole for some Distens where there were more wonded ones. I were left there the Rest of the night. Every time I would get in a sleep I would Be woken up By the French troops goeing to the line. On tell near morning four French took me in to a Dugout and then to a nother on till they found a Dr. Then he did somtheing, I do not no aney more that night. When I woke up, it were Day. Then I were caryed out



of the Dugout I seen then that it were full of shot up men like my self some wirst then I. I layed out there for some time in the Rain waiteing for my tirn to be taken Down to the Road to the amblance. Over the hell came some Germen prisners with a French officer and they took me to the Road. It were all they could do, were to stand up under me goeing Down the hell. They had me over thir heads. And I thought that I would Roal of. A shell or two came close to us. But they made the Road. I seen the artillery were Hobe to Hobe and all at work. I were shoved in the amblance with 5 others made 6 in all and shells foloed us ontell we got to the feel Hospital. When I got there it were all I could do, to tell them ho I were. So I pointed to my shirt I had Riten down like this 101127 Horace Pippin Co. K. 369. Inf, I new no more. On tell I were taken to the table to see what were Rong with me. They gave me some dop and that did put me a way for good. I cant say how long I were in it. After I came out of it I were not there long. They took me to a nother Hospital Bace I in leon.

RETURNING HOME:  
GERMANY AND THE ATLANTIC, MARCH-APRIL 1919

*Vernon E. Kniptash:*  
*Diary, March 30-April 1, and April 18-19, 1919*

An architectural draftsman from Indianapolis, Vernon Kniptash served as a radio operator in the 150th Field Artillery Regiment, 42nd (Rainbow) Division, and had seen action in Champagne and the Meuse-Argonne. The spring of 1919 found him on occupation duty at Bad Neuenahr in the Rhineland, waiting to go home.

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*Mar. 30, 1919* Sunday and baked 'em all day. Got restless after dinner, and Skinner and I walked around town. Had the blues pretty bad. Monotony gets me going. Played solitaire this evening. Such is Sunday in the A. of O.

*Mar. 31, 1919* We got 'em. Had 'em all day. Can't shake 'em. Damn Blues.

*April 1, 1919* Had a parade this morning. Gen. Gately pinned a ribbon on our standard, and then we Passed in Review before him. Col. Bob then made a speech. He talked to us once before at St. Nazaire in 1917. Made a fairly good speech this time. Told us what a Hell of a good regiment we were, etc., etc. He's trying pretty hard to get back on speaking terms with the boys. Not much of a job after a month under that Heth. He's a welcomed visitor, believe me. He said during his speech that the Regiment had taken part in eleven different battles; two of them were major operations, and nine were minor. It's quite a record, and one that few Regiments can boast.—There's an indescribable restlessness springing up among the American soldiers and the German people now. When we first came here they treated us like Kings, and we couldn't understand it. We were too glad to leave the cave man life and get back to civilization to try to dope out their friendliness. I savvy it now. It's their damn propaganda again. They had hopes that Wilson would make things easy for them at the peace table, and treated us accordingly. Now that Wilson is sitting on them

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as hard as the rest they are getting ugly. They are poor losers in the first place, and then to lose their final bet is too much for them. They're forgetting who came out on the short end of this war, and are trying to order us around. See where they killed an American soldier in Coblenz. They better watch their step and not carry things too far. I've lost patience with them, and I venture to say I'm not the only one. Damn Dutch square-heads. I loathe every last one of them. Everything they do is underhanded and sneaking. Dirtiest fighters in the world, and they have lost none of their habits since they've gotten back into civil life. Lord, how I hate this race. I don't want any Kaiser lover in the States to get sassy with me. Might lose my temper and get mad. Germany will never be the same again, I'm afraid. Too many Americans have seen her the way she really is. Sure be glad when we leave here. Am sick of it all.

## *Introduction*

### III. RACE AND WORLD WAR I

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THE UNITED STATES in April of 1917 was a nation divided by race. Calls for unconditional loyalty and “One Hundred Percent Americanism” by the federal government and civilian groups alike stemmed from deep anxieties about the racial composition of the country’s population. The imperatives of forging a unified war mobilization effort clashed with deeply ingrained ideas about race that informed how Americans viewed both the German enemy and each other. At home and abroad, Americans fought a war within the war that had race as its defining characteristic.

African Americans experienced this tension more profoundly than any other group. Wartime economic opportunities sparked the Great Migration of thousands of black southerners to the urban North. However, as racial oppression remained unrelenting, African Americans approached America’s entry into the war and Woodrow Wilson’s call to make the world “safe for democracy” with understandable skepticism. Black Socialists like A. Philip Randolph openly opposed the war, while large numbers of African Americans, especially in the South, found ways to avoid the draft. However, the vast majority of black people, encouraged by the black press and leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois, came to support the war effort and were determined to do their part, as both soldiers and civilians, to aid their country in its time of need.

Racial violence and institutionalized discrimination tested black people’s patriotic resolve. On July 2, 1917, a racial pogrom erupted in East St. Louis, Illinois, that left entire neighborhoods in ashes and at least thirty-nine—and possibly three times as many—African Americans dead. The following month, on the night of August 23, a contingent of black soldiers of the 24th Infantry, frustrated and angered by weeks of racist abuse and fearing attack by a lynch mob, shot and killed sixteen white residents and police officers in Houston, Texas. As it worked to raise an army virtually from scratch, the United

States government remained committed to preserving the color-line. "There is no intention on the part of the War Department to undertake at this time to settle the so-called race question," Secretary of War Newton Baker declared in a November 30, 1917, memo. Official Jim Crow policies, from the administration of the draft to the final demobilization process, shaped the experience of African American servicemen through the entire course of America's participation in the war.

In spite of tremendous obstacles, African Americans made an important contribution to the Allied victory. Some 380,000 black men ultimately served in the United States army, with over 200,000 sent to France. Although the army relegated the vast majority of African American troops to labor duties, two black divisions did see action on the Western Front. The 92nd Division, composed of draftees and black junior officers and sergeants like Charles Isum, suffered from systemic racism and poor leadership from its white commanders, many of whom despised the very idea of black men serving in combat. By contrast, the 93rd Division, made up largely of black National Guard regiments and assigned to the French army, established a distinguished fighting record, highlighted by the exploits of the 369th Infantry Regiment, which became known as the "Harlem Hellfighters."

Based on their sacrifice and loyalty, African Americans greeted the end of the war with hope that the country would reward them with greater democratic rights and opportunity. Instead, race relations across the country worsened. Racial violence erupted throughout the nation in 1919, demonstrating that the end of the war had brought anything but peace, or democracy. Race riots broke out in several cities, most notably Washington, D.C., and Chicago. Fearing an uprising by black sharecroppers, whites in Phillips County, Arkansas, aided by U.S. troops, massacred more than one hundred, and possibly more than two hundred, African Americans. The number of lynchings leapt to eighty-three, including at least eleven returned black servicemen.

Many African Americans, both emboldened and disillusioned by their war experience and its aftermath, determined to fight even harder for their civil and human rights. The war created a "New Negro," characterized by a spirit of resistance

that W. E. B. Du Bois powerfully captured in his *Crisis* editorial “Returning Soldiers.” In the ensuing postwar years, African Americans would take the lessons learned from their war experiences and apply them to renewed struggle against racism and white supremacy.

Chad Williams  
*Professor of African and Afro-American Studies,  
Brandeis University*

“THE CRISIS OF THE WORLD”:  
NEW YORK, JULY 1918

*W.E.B. Du Bois: “Close Ranks”*

The first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was the most prominent black intellectual in America. Teacher, sociologist, historian, writer, and political activist, he was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the editor of its monthly magazine, *The Crisis*. Since the spring of 1917, Du Bois had pronounced support for the war while continuing to denounce racial discrimination and violence. In June 1918 he met with his friend Joel Spingarn, a wealthy literary critic, educator, and the chairman of the NAACP board. Spingarn, then serving as a major in military intelligence, offered Du Bois a commission as an army captain and an assignment to a special intelligence bureau investigating racial problems. While considering the offer, Du Bois wrote this editorial, invoking black Americans to “forget our special grievances” for the duration of the war. His change of position and willingness to serve in the army drew intense criticism within the NAACP, and the offer of a military commission was withdrawn in late July.

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THIS IS the crisis of the world. For all the long years to come men will point to the year 1918 as the great Day of Decision, the day when the world decided whether it would submit to military despotism and an endless armed peace—if peace it could be called—or whether they would put down the menace of German militarism and inaugurate the United States of the World.

We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills.

*The Crisis*, July 1918

RETURNING TO "A SHAMEFUL LAND":  
NEW YORK, MAY 1919

*W.E.B. Du Bois: "Returning Soldiers"*

Du Bois had traveled to France in December 1918 to investigate for the NAACP the treatment of black soldiers. While in Paris he helped organize a pan-African Congress, held in February 1919, which called on the peace conference to protect the rights of Africans living under colonial rule. He returned to the United States in April with material for "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man in the Great War," published in *The Crisis* in June, and with documentation of the attempts by the U.S. military to prevent black soldiers from fraternizing with French civilians. "Documents of the War" appeared in the May number along with the editorial "Returning Soldiers." Postmaster General Burleson considered withholding mailing privileges from the magazine, but he relented. The May 1919 *Crisis* sold 106,000 copies, its highest circulation ever.

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WE ARE returning from war! *The Crisis* and tens of thousands of black men were drafted into a great struggle. For bleeding France and what she means and has meant and will mean to us and humanity and against the threat of German race arrogance, we fought gladly and to the last drop of blood; for America and her highest ideals, we fought in far-off hope; for the dominant southern oligarchy entrenched in Washington, we fought in bitter resignation. For the America that represents and gloats in lynching, disfranchisement, caste, brutality and devilish insult—for this, in the hateful upturning and mixing of things, we were forced by vindictive fate to fight, also.

But today we return! We return from the slavery of uniform which the world's madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land.

It *lynches*.

And lynching is barbarism of a degree of contemptible



nastiness unparalleled in human history. Yet for fifty years we have lynched two Negroes a week, and we have kept this up right through the war.

It *disfranchises* its own citizens.

Disfranchisement is the deliberate theft and robbery of the only protection of poor against rich and black against white. The land that disfranchises its citizens and calls itself a democracy lies and knows it lies.

It encourages *ignorance*.

It has never really tried to educate the Negro. A dominant minority does not want Negroes educated. It wants servants, dogs, whores and monkeys. And when this land allows a reactionary group by its stolen political power to force as many black folk into these categories as it possibly can, it cries in contemptible hypocrisy: "They threaten us with degeneracy; they cannot be educated."

It *steals* from us.

It organizes industry to cheat us. It cheats us out of our land; it cheats us out of our labor. It confiscates our savings. It reduces our wages. It raises our rent. It steals our profit. It taxes us without representation. It keeps us consistently and universally poor, and then feeds us on charity and derides our poverty.

It *insults* us.

It has organized a nation-wide and latterly a world-wide propaganda of deliberate and continuous insult and defamation of black blood wherever found. It decrees that it shall not be possible in travel nor residence, work nor play, education nor instruction for a black man to exist without tacit or open acknowledgment of his inferiority to the dirtiest white dog. And it looks upon any attempt to question or even discuss this dogma as arrogance, unwarranted assumption and treason.

This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which we fought! But it is *our* fatherland. It was right for us to fight. The faults of *our* country are *our* faults. Under similar circumstances, we would fight again. But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land.

*We return.*

*We return from fighting.*

*We return fighting.*

Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE:  
LOS ANGELES, MAY 1919

*Charles R. Isum to W.E.B. Du Bois*

A bookbinder from Los Angeles, Sergeant Charles Isum served with the medical detachment of the 365th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division, in the Meuse-Argonne and in the Marbache Sector, where he treated wounded and gassed men under artillery fire during the final days of the war. Isum himself was gassed the day before the Armistice but remained in the field. In his letter to Du Bois he related his experiences with the army anti-fraternization policies described in the May number of *The Crisis*. In 1922 Charles and Zellee Isum had a daughter, Rachel, who later became a nurse; in 1946 she would marry the baseball player Jackie Robinson.

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1343 Lawrence Street,  
Los Angeles, California,  
May 17, 1919.

Hon. W.E.B. DuBois,  
Editor of *The Crisis*,  
70 Fifth Avenue, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

I have just finished reading the May issue of *The Crisis* and have enjoyed it immensely. I am indeed pleased to note that someone has the nerve and backbone to tell the public the unvarnished facts concerning the injustice, discrimination and southern prejudices practiced by the white Americans against the black Americans in France.

I am a recently discharged Sergeant of the Medical Detachment, 365th. Infantry, 92nd. Division, and I take this opportunity to relate one of my personal experiences with the southern rednecks who were in command of my division, brigade and regiment.

On or about December 26, 1918 General Order No. 40 was issued from the headquarters of the 92nd. Division. I cannot recall the exact wording of the part of the order which was of

a discriminating nature, but it read something to this effect, "Military Police will see that soldiers do not address, carry-on conversation with or accompany the female inhabitants of this area." At the time this order was issued we were billeted in the village of Ambrieres, Mayenne. There were white soldiers also billeted in the same village but they did not belong to the 92nd. Division and the order did not affect them, hence it was an order for Colored soldiers only. It was not an A.E.F. order. It was a divisional order for Colored soldiers. We were living in the same houses with the French people and under the terms of this order we were forbidden to even speak to the people with whom we lived, while the white soldiers of the 325th. Baking Co. and the Subsupply Depot #10 were allowed to address, visit or accompany these same people where and whenever they desired.

On Jan. 21, 1919 Mademoiselle Marie Meziere, the eldest daughter of Monsieur Charles Meziere, a merchant tailor of Ambeieres was married to Monsieur Maurice Barbe, a French soldier. I was invited to be a guest at the wine party, to accompany the bridal party on the marriage promenade and to be a guest at the supper, which was to take place at 8:30 P.M. I attended the wine party with four other Colored soldiers from the Medical Detachment. No whites were invited but Capt. Willis (white) of the Supply Company "butted in". He spoke miserable french and the members of the party called on the Colored soldiers to interpret for him. Willis became enraged and turned his back on the Colored boys and told the French people that it was improper for them to associate with the black soldiers. The French people paid no attention to what he said and we all left him sitting in the cafe alone. His temperature at this time was at about 104 degrees. The other Colored soldiers returned to the Infirmary and I accompanied the bridal party on the promenade out on the boulevard. There were seven persons in the party; the bride and groom, the bride's sister, the groom's brother and sister, a French soldier and myself. I was the only American. As we reached town on returning from the stroll Colonel George McMaster, Commanding Officer of our regiment accosted me and demanded, "Who are you. What are you doing with these people" I told him and he called a Military Police and ordered me taken to

the Adjutant with orders for the Adjutant to prefer charges against me for accompanying white people. On arriving at the Adjutant's hotel we found Capt. Willis there evidently waiting for me to be brought in. The Adjutant asked only two questions, "Was he with a girl?", "What is your name and to what company do you belong?". Then he said, "Put him in the guard house."

The following afternoon I was ordered to appear for trial. At 1:15 P.M. I was taken through the streets to the Town Major's office by an armed guard who was a private soldier—my rank was not respected. I was called into the room and was surprised to find there was no one present but Major Paul Murry. He read the charges which had me charged with violating the 96th. Article of War and with disobeying General Order No. 40. After reading the charges he asked for my plea. I told him that I did not care to plea that I would exercise my right as a non-commissioned officer to refuse trial in a Summary Court. This was a complete surprise to him. He had no idea that I was aware of my rights. He looked it up in the Manual of Army Court Martials and said that it was my right but I was very foolish to use it. I told him that from the appearance of things there had been no intention of giving me a fair trial. The prosecuting witness was not present, the members of the board were absent and I had not been given an opportunity to call witnesses or secure counsel. At first he tried to frighten and intimidate me by saying that if I were given a General Court Martial trial I would be left in France awaiting trial after my regiment had gone home. He also said that I might get six months in Leavenworth if I should be found guilty. (Can you imagine it—six months for walking on the street with white people). After he saw that he could not intimidate me he assumed the air of comradeship and used all his presuasive powers to entice me to submit to a speedy quiet trial in his kangaroo court but I stood pat. He said that I was trying to play martyr and was trying to make a big fuss out of a little incident, but I claimed that I was standing for a principle, that I had been unjustly treated, that the G.O. was unconstitutional, undemocratic and in direct opposition to principles for which we had fought. I asked that General Pershing be given a copy of the General Order and also a copy of the charges against me. He

laughed at this request and said that the General was too busy for such small matters. He gave me a half an hour to think the matter over and stated that I might get some advice from the officers present. There were only two present. They had come in during the argument. One was Capt. Willis and the other Capt. Benj. Thomas. I took the matter up with Capt. Thomas and in the meantime my Detachment Commander, Major E.B. Simmons (white), of Massachusetts came in and I told him my story. He became indignant and told me to fight it to the last ditch and he would do all in his power to help me. I returned to the court room, and demanded a General Court Martial Trial and a release from the guard house pending trial. Major Murry said that I was making a great mistake and reluctantly gave me a release from the guard house.

That night I visited some of my French friends and found that the whole town was in an uproar over my case. M. Meziere had been to prevail on the Town Mayor in my behalf and was informed that nothing could be done as the Americans had charge of the town. M. Meziere had also called on Brig. Gen Gehardt our Brigade Commander, another Negro-hater of the meanest type. He refused to even give M. Meziere a civil audience. M. Meziere then went to the Town Mayor and swore to an affidavit that my character was of the best, that I was a respected friend of the family and was their invited guest. Mme. Emil Harmon, my landlady also made an affidavit of character in my behalf. I now have both affidavits in my possession.

The following day I was rearrested at my billet and placed in the guard house, contrary to military rules. The Manual of Army Court Martials states that a non-commissioned officer shall not be confined in a guard house with privates but no attention was paid to that rule. No charges were given and no explanation made except that it was Colonel McMaster's orders. I was released that night and sent to my Detachment under "arrest in quarters" Nothing more has been said about the case to this day except at New York when I asked Major Murry when I was going have my trial and he said that the best thing to do was to keep quiet about it.

On March 22, 1919 I was given an honorable discharge from the army, with character grade Excellent and rank of Sergeant M.D. No mention of the case was made on my Service Record.

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If I had comitted an offense sufficient to cause me to be arrested twice and placed in the guard house, why was I given an honorable discharge with and Excellent grade character and a non-commissioned officer's rank?

If space would permit I could quote other instances where our boys were shamefully mistreated by the white Americans while in France.

Respectfully yours,

Charles R. Isum

Formerly Sergeant Medical Detachment, 365th. Inf.

P.S. If you should desire a copy of G.O. #40 write to Sergeant-Major Clarence Lee, 3426 Vernon Ave., Chicago, Ill.

## *Introduction*

### IV. AMERICAN WOMEN AT WAR

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WATCHING loved ones depart, uncertain if they would return—this was an experience that women around the world shared during the Great War. Women sending men off to fight was a familiar, timeless ritual in most western societies, one that reinforced the notion that while men fight, women stay home and wait. A tremendous amount of wartime propaganda urged women to send their men off bravely. U.S. propaganda posters pictured voluptuous women encouraging men to enlist and gray-haired mothers stoically telling sons to make them proud. Yet the demands of total war and the desire of some women to break free of traditional gender roles enlarged the ways that women eventually contributed to the war effort both at home and overseas.

Even before the United States entered the war, American women had responded to the plight of Belgian and French civilian refugees by taking on leadership roles in groups like the Red Cross that coordinated humanitarian aid efforts. Once the nation was at war, more than eight million female volunteers “did their bit” by knitting socks for the troops and preparing surgical dressings. As millions of men went into uniform, women also began working in munitions plants and taking new jobs as streetcar conductors, elevator operators, and railroad workers. They were, of course, expected to leave these jobs once men returned home.

The United States was a major food producer for the Allies, and the Food Administration launched a massive campaign urging women to conserve staples like wheat, meat, and sugar so troops would be better fed. Women who signed a pledge card agreeing to abide by Food Administration guidelines received a pamphlet with suggested recipes. They also got a sign to hang in their windows to advertise their compliance to neighbors. “If you have already signed, pass this on to a friend,” the pledge card instructed. In “Roll Call on the Prairies,” Willa Cather offers some insights into how female peer-pressure



changed the social dynamics of small-town America during the war.

Rather than simply waiting for loved ones to return and normal routines to resume, many women chose to put on uniforms. Approximately 16,500 women served in France with the American Expeditionary Forces as nurses, telephone operators, clerks, and as welfare workers serving soldiers in canteens and rest areas. In the heroic spirit of Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton, women volunteered to serve in medical units as nurses. Mary Borden and Shirley Millard struggled to save lives in French field hospitals where the horror of war often overwhelmed them. Memories of their personal encounters with death stayed with them, prompting them to publish accounts of their experiences. In this respect, they may have had more in common with male soldiers than with women who stayed home. But gender equality still remained elusive. Male doctors and orderlies often refused to recognize nurses' authority, and it required constant vigilance to deflect unwanted advances or physical assaults from male patients.

Personal sacrifice, therefore, was a common thread that connected women's experiences on both sides of the Atlantic. The reliance on female labor (voluntary and paid) and the willingness of women to travel overseas and share in the hardships of war, begged the question of why most states continued to deny women the vote. The suffrage movement was divided on the best strategy for securing an amendment to the Constitution. The moderate wing issued calls for the nation to thank women for their wartime work with the vote. Radical suffragists engaged in street protests, picketing the White House with signs that turned President Woodrow Wilson's wartime rhetoric against him. "We, the Women of America, tell you that America is not a democracy," read one sign. Enraged spectators, accusing them of disloyalty, regularly attacked the protesters. Refusing to be silenced, this generation of female activists left their mark. First Wilson and then a two-thirds majority in Congress announced support of female suffrage. Finally, on August 26, 1920 (almost two years after the war ended) the Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote was added to the Constitution.

What are we to make of these varied experiences? Is there a

“women’s experience of war”? And how much has changed since World War I in the roles that women play during times of national conflict? Is their support as essential on the home front as it was in World War I? Finally, is war a transformative force in women’s lives?

Jennifer D. Keene  
*Professor of History,  
Chapman University*

BROKEN AND MENDED:  
BELGIUM AND FRANCE, 1915-1916

*Mary Borden: from The Forbidden Zone*

A Chicago-born heiress and Vassar graduate, Mary Borden had married George Douglas Turner, a Scottish missionary, in 1908. Already the mother of three children, the author of two pseudonymous novels, and a committed suffragist, Borden funded and managed the French military hospital at Rousbrugge, Belgium, which began operations in July 1915 with a staff of seventeen, including the American nurse Ellen N. La Motte. Borden became the director of another military hospital at Bray-sur-Somme in August 1916, treating the wounded from the ongoing Somme campaign. In 1929 she published *The Forbidden Zone*, a collection of sketches and poems drawn from her wartime experiences.

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CONSPIRACY

IT IS ALL carefully arranged. Everything is arranged. It is arranged that men should be broken and that they should be mended. Just as you send your clothes to the laundry and mend them when they come back, so we send our men to the trenches and mend them when they come back again. You send your socks and your shirts again and again to the laundry, and you sew up the tears and clip the ravelled edges again and again, just as many times as they will stand it. And then you throw them away. And we send our men to the war again and again, just as long as they will stand it; just until they are dead, and then we throw them into the ground.

It is all arranged. Ten kilometres from here along the road is the place where men are wounded. This is the place where they are mended. We have all the things here for mending, the tables and the needles, and the thread and the knives and the scissors, and many curious things that you never use for your clothes.

We bring our men up along the dusty road where the bushes grow on either side and the green trees. They come by in the mornings in companies, marching with strong legs, with firm

steps. They carry their knapsacks easily. Their knapsacks and their guns and their greatcoats are not heavy for them. They wear their caps jauntily, tilted to one side. Their faces are ruddy and their eyes bright. They smile and call out with strong voices. They throw kisses to the girls in the fields.

We send our men up the broken road between bushes of barbed wire and they come back to us, one by one, two by two in ambulances, lying on stretchers. They lie on their backs on the stretchers and are pulled out of the ambulances as loaves of bread are pulled out of the oven. The stretchers slide out of the mouths of the ambulances with the men on them. The men cannot move. They are carried into a shed, unclean bundles, very heavy, covered with brown blankets.

We receive these bundles. We pull off a blanket. We observe that this is a man. He makes feeble whining sounds like an animal. He lies still; he smells bad; he smells like a corpse; he can only move his tongue; he tries to moisten his lips with his tongue.

This is the place where he is to be mended. We lift him on to a table. We peel off his clothes, his coat and his shirt and his trousers and his boots. We handle his clothes that are stiff with blood. We cut off his shirt with large scissors. We stare at the obscene sight of his innocent wounds. He allows us to do this. He is helpless to stop us. We wash off the dry blood round the edges of his wounds. He suffers us to do as we like with him. He says no word except that he is thirsty and we do not give him to drink.

We confer together over his body and he hears us. We discuss his different parts in terms that he does not understand, but he listens while we make calculations with his heart beats and the pumping breath of his lungs.

We conspire against his right to die. We experiment with his bones, his muscles, his sinews, his blood. We dig into the yawning mouths of his wounds. Helpless openings, they let us into the secret places of his body. We plunge deep into his body. We make discoveries within his body. To the shame of the havoc of his limbs we add the insult of our curiosity and the curse of our purpose, the purpose to remake him. We lay odds on his chances of escape, and we combat with Death, his saviour.

It is our business to do this. He knows and he allows us to do it. He finds himself in the operating room. He lays himself out. He bares himself to our knives. His mind is annihilated. He pours out his blood, unconscious. His red blood is spilled and pours over the table onto the floor while he sleeps.

After this, while he is still asleep, we carry him into another place and put him to bed. He awakes bewildered as children do, expecting, perhaps, to find himself at home with his mother leaning over him, and he moans a little and then lies still again. He is helpless, so we do for him what he cannot do for himself, and he is grateful. He accepts his helplessness. He is obedient. We feed him, and he eats. We fatten him up, and he allows himself to be fattened. Day after day he lies there and we watch him. All day and all night he is watched. Every day his wounds are uncovered and cleaned, scraped and washed and bound up again. His body does not belong to him. It belongs to us for the moment, not for long. He knows why we tend it so carefully. He knows what we are fattening and cleaning it up for; and while we handle it he smiles.

He is only one among thousands. They are all the same. They all let us do with them what we like. They all smile as if they were grateful. When we hurt them they try not to cry out, not wishing to hurt our feelings. And often they apologise for dying. They would not die and disappoint us if they could help it. Indeed, in their helplessness they do the best they can to help us get them ready to go back again.

It is only ten kilometres up the road, the place where they go to be torn again and mangled. Listen; you can hear how well it works. There is the sound of cannon and the sound of the ambulances bringing the wounded, and the sound of the tramp of strong men going along the road to fill the empty places.

Do you hear? Do you understand? It is all arranged just as it should be.

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## THE BEACH

The beach was long and smooth and the colour of cream. The woman sitting in the sun stroked the beach with the pink palm of her hand and said to herself, 'The beach is perfect, the sun

is perfect, the sea is perfect. How pretty the little waves are, curling up the beach. They are perfectly lovely. They are like a lace frill to the beach. And the sea is a perfectly heavenly blue. It is odd to think of how old the beach is and how old the sea is, and how much older that old, old fellow, the fiery sun. The face of the beach is smooth as cream and the sea today is a smiling infant, twinkling and dimpling, and the sun is delicious; it is burning hot, like youth itself. It is good to be alive. It is good to be young.'

But she could not say this aloud so she said to the man beside her in the wheelchair: 'How many millions of years has it taken to make the beach? How many snails have left their shells behind them, do you think, to make all this fine powdery sand? A million billion?' She let the sand run through her strong white fingers and smiled, blinking in the sun and looked away from the man in the invalid chair beside her toward the horizon.

The man wriggled and hitched himself clumsily up in his chair; an ugly grimace pulled his pale face to one side. He dared not look down over the arm of his wheelchair at the bright head of the woman sitting beside him. Her hair burned in the sunlight; her cheeks were pink. He stole a timid, furtive look. Yes, she was as beautiful as a child. She was perfectly lovely. A groan escaped him, or was it only a sigh?

She looked up quickly. 'What is it, darling? Are you in pain? Are you tired? Shall we go back?' Her voice sounded in the immense quiet of the beach like a cricket chirping, but the word 'darling' went on sounding and sounding like a little hollow bell while she searched his features, trying to find his old face, the one she knew, trying to work a magic on him, remove and replace the sunken eyes, the pinched nose, the bloodless wry mouth. 'He's not a stranger,' she said to herself. 'He's not.' And she heard the faint mocking echo, 'Darling, darling,' ringing faraway as if a bell buoy out on the water were saying, 'Darling, darling,' to make the little waves laugh.

'It's only my foot, my left foot. Funny, isn't it, that it goes on throbbing. They cut it off two months ago.' He jerked a hand backward. 'It's damn queer when you think of it. The old foot begins the old game, then I look down and it's not there any more, and I'm fooled again.' He laughed. His laughter was

such a tiny sound in the great murmur of the morning that it might have been a sandfly laughing. He was thinking, 'What will become of us? She is young and healthy. She is as beautiful as a child. What shall we do about it?' And looking into her eyes he saw the same question, 'What shall we do?' and looked quickly away again. So did she.

She looked past him at the row of ugly villas above the beach. Narrow houses, each like a chimney, tightly wedged together, wedges of cheap brick and plaster with battered wooden balconies. They were new and shabby and derelict. All had their shutters up. All the doors were bolted. How stuffy it must be in those deserted villas, in all those abandoned bedrooms and kitchens and parlours. Probably there were sandshoes and bathing dresses and old towels and saucepans and blankets rotting inside them with the sand drifting in. Probably the window panes behind the shutters were broken and the mirrors cracked. Perhaps when the aeroplanes dropped bombs on the town, pictures fell down and mirrors and the china in the dark china closets cracked inside these pleasure houses. Who had built them?

'Cowards built them,' he said in his new bitter, rasping voice, the voice of a peevish, irritable sandfly. 'Built them to make love in, to cuddle in, to sleep in, hide in. Now they're empty. The blighters have left them to rot there. Rotten, I call it, leaving the swanky *plage* to go to the bad like that, just because there's a war on. A little jazz now and a baccarat table would make all the difference, wouldn't it? It would cheer us up. You'd dance and I'd have a go at the tables. That's the casino over there, that big thing; that's not empty, that's crowded, but I don't advise you to go there. I don't think you'd like it. It's not your kind of a crowd. It's all right for me, but not for you. No, it wouldn't do for you—not even on a gala night.

'They've a gala night in our casino whenever there's a battle. Funny sort of place. You should watch the motors drive up then. The rush begins about ten in the evening and goes on till morning. Quite like Deauville the night of the Grand Prix. You never saw such a crowd. They all rush there from the front, you know—the way they do from the racecourse—though, to be sure, it is not quite the real thing—not a really smart crowd. No, not precisely, though the wasters in Deauville

weren't much to look at, were they? Still, our crowd here aren't precisely wasters. Gamblers, of course, down and outs, wrecks—all gone to pieces, parts of 'em missing, you know, tops of their heads gone, or one of their legs. When they take their places at the tables, the croupiers—that is to say, the doctors—look them over. Come closer, I'll whisper it. Some of them have no faces.'

'Darling, don't.' She covered her own face, closed her ears to his tiny voice and listened desperately with all her minute will to the large tranquil murmur of the sea. 'Darling, darling,' far out the bell buoy was sounding.

'Bless you,' said the thin, sharp, exasperated sandfly voice beside her. 'Little things like that don't keep us away. If we can't walk in we get carried in. All that's needed is a ticket. It's tied to you like a luggage label. It has your name on it in case you don't remember your name. You needn't have a face, but a ticket you must have to get into our casino.'

'Stop, darling—darling, stop!'

'It's a funny place. There's a skating rink. You ought to see it. You go through the baccarat rooms and the dance hall to get to it. They're all full of beds. Rows of beds under the big crystal chandeliers, rows of beds under the big gilt mirrors, and the skating rink is full of beds, too. The sun blazes down through the glass roof. It's like a hothouse in Kew Gardens. There's that dank smell of a rotting swamp, the smell of gas gangrene. Men with gas gangrene turn green, you know, like rotting plants.' He laughed. Then he was silent. He looked at her cowering in the sand, her hands covering her face, and looked away again.

He wondered why he had told her these things. He loved her. He hated her. He was afraid of her. He did not want her to be kind to him. He could never touch her again and he was tied to her. He was rotting and he was tied to her perfection. He had no power over her any more but the power of infecting her with his corruption. He could never make her happy. He could only make her suffer. His one luxury now was jealousy of her perfection, and his one delight would be to give in to the temptation to make her suffer. He could only reach her that way. It would be his revenge on the war.

He was not aware of these thoughts. He was too busy with



other little false thoughts. He was saying to himself, 'I will let her go. I will send her away. Once we are at home again, I will say goodbye to her.' But he knew that he was incapable of letting her go.

He closed his eyes. He said to himself, 'The smell of the sea is good, but the odour that oozes from the windows of the casino is bad. I can smell it from here. I can't get the smell of it out of my nose. It is my own smell,' and his wasted greenish face twitched in disgust.

She looked at him. 'I love him,' she said to herself. 'I love him,' she repeated. 'But can I go on loving him?' She whispered, 'Can I? I must.' She said, 'I must love him, now more than ever, but where is he?'

She looked round her as if to find the man he once had been. There were other women on the beach, women in black and old men and children with buckets and spades, people of the town. They seemed to be glad to be alive. No one seemed to be thinking of the war.

The beach was long and smooth and the colour of cream. The beach was perfect; the sun perfectly delicious; the sea was perfectly calm. The man in the wheelchair and the woman beside him were no bigger than flies on the sand. The women and children and old men were specks.

Far out on the sea there was an object; there were two objects. The people on the beach could scarcely distinguish them. They peered through the sunshine while the children rolled in the sand, and they heard the sound of a distant hammer tapping.

'They are firing out at sea,' said someone to someone.

How perfect the beach is. The sea is a perfectly heavenly blue. Behind the windows of the casino, under the great crystal chandeliers, men lie in narrow beds. They lie in queer postures with their greenish faces turned up. Their white bandages are reflected in the sombre gilt mirrors. There is no sound anywhere but the murmur of the sea and the whispering of the waves on the sand, and the tap tap of a hammer coming from a great distance across the water, and the bell buoy that seems to say, 'Darling, darling.'

“HOW CAN I BE GLAD?”: FRANCE, MAY 1918

*Shirley Millard: from I Saw Them Die*

In her diary and memoir, Millard wrote about the personal interactions, both welcome and unwelcome, that she and her fellow nurses experienced with French doctors. After the war, Millard returned home and married her American fiancé, who had served in France with the AEF.

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*May 13th*

*One of the girls just brought up the mail and tossing me a letter, said: “Here’s one from Romeo.” It was postmarked Brest, but no hint of where he is going from there. It is thrilling to know he is so near but what good will it do? The war will have to last a long time for me to save up enough leave to make it worth while. Let’s see—twelve hours every two months. With luck and good management I should be able to take off about three days by the fall.*

*It is still quiet here, but I have noticed a strange tension in the air and several things have happened that make me realize doctors are definitely human beings. Today as I was coming through the corridor in the officers’ ward with a tray in my hands, I met Dr. Girard. I hardly know him; he has been in the theatre, as they call the surgery, almost constantly since I arrived. He stared at me in an odd sort of way and would not let me pass. Then he took the tray from my hands, set it on the window ledge and without further ado, grabbed me in his arms and kissed me vigorously. I struggled free with some difficulty, and he gravely handed me the tray again and began walking along beside me as if nothing had happened. I was quite upset because someone might have come along, but thank goodness no one did. I thought his behavior very undignified and silly and told him so. I tried to hurry away from him but he deliberately kept step with me and although he looked exactly as if we were discussing medical matters, he was calling me all sorts of French pet names and asking me when I would go to Paris with him. I said: “Absolument jamais!” and ducked*

*into a ward. I don't think Absolutement jamais is very good French but I hope he knew I meant it.*

*Why doesn't Doctor Le Brun notice me once in a while? Yesterday I saw him in the ward sitting on the bed beside Hansen, a big gawky Swede from Minneapolis who has lost his right arm. Le B. was showing him how easy it is to write with the left hand. Le B. is left handed, does all his operating with his left hand. When he had gone I saw Hansen scribbling away, practicing cheerfully with his tongue tucked out of the corner of his mouth.*

*If Le B. asked me to go to Paris with him, I'm not so sure I would say Absolutement jamais! He is a dear. So good to all the men. Pats them and calls them Mon Petit and Mon Vieux. Not like the cold-blooded, goateed Moreau whom we all dislike, and who works like a mechanical man, without one spark of feeling. One of the surgery nurses told me he began operating the other day before the ether had taken effect.*

*May 16th*

*Dr. Le Brun noticed me today. As I was coming out of the surgery with an armful of bottles he smiled at me and said: "Bien fait, bébé, bien fait." Good work, baby, or words to that effect. It may not be exactly an impassioned speech but it is a lot coming from Dr. Le B. He isn't young, must be thirty-five, and he probably has a wife and children—or at least a fiancée down in Lyons. But I hope not.*

*I seldom have time to think of Ted these days, but when I do get 'round to it, I love him dearly, and perhaps it is best to stick to one's own nationality. I must write to him tonight.*

The little contretemps in the corridor with Dr. Girard was only one of the incidents which marked that period of comparative inactivity. Immediately after a big drive, everyone appeared to relax from accumulated fatigue. But after having rested a bit, our heroic doctors would begin looking about them, and it was natural that they should observe and admire the fresh vigor of the American unit. Nearly all of us had some similar adventure to report, and I am bound to confess that some of

us were not above flirting outrageously with these not indifferent and altogether interesting males who were naturally somewhat woman-conscious after a long period of grim duty and military segregation. But apart from a normal amount of: "He said and I said . . ." and highly exaggerated accounts of being: "Scared to death, he looked so strange and wouldn't let me go . . ." I think we all emerged from our experiences none the worse, except for an increased opinion of our own seductiveness.

“LIVING IN THE WAR”: NEBRASKA, JULY 1919

*Willa Cather: from  
“Roll Call on the Prairies”*

Although she was born in Virginia and spent most of her life in New York City, Willa Cather had spent much of her early years in Nebraska and set some of her most powerful fiction on its prairies. Her cousin G. P. Cather was killed at Cantigny in May 1918. That summer, Cather returned to the family home in Red Cloud, where she read his letters and began plotting her novel *One of Ours*, published in 1922. Her essay about the effect of the war on the American heartland appeared in *The Red Cross Magazine*.

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Not only was the cookery changed in my town and in all other little towns like it, but the whole routine of housekeeping was different from what it used to be. When a woman worked three afternoons a week at the Red Cross rooms, and knitted socks and sweaters in the evening, her domestic schedule had to be considerably altered. When I first got home I wondered why some of my old friends did not come to see me as they used to. How could they? When they were not at the Red Cross rooms, they were at home trying to catch up with their housework. One got used to such telephone messages as this:

“I will be at Surgical Dressings, in the basement of the Court House, until five. Can’t you come over and walk home with me?”

That was the best one could do for a visit. The afternoon whist club had become a Red Cross sewing circle, and there were no parties but war parties. There were no town band concerts any more, because the band was in France; no football, no baseball, no skating rink. The merchants and bankers went out into the country after business hours and worked late into the night, helping the farmers, whose sons were gone, to save their grain.

Wherever I went out in the country, among the farms, the women met at least once a week at some appointed farmhouse

to cut out garments, get their Red Cross instructions and materials, and then take the garments home to sew on them whenever they could. It went on in every farmhouse—American women, Swedish women, Germans, Norwegians, Bohemians, Canadian-French women, sewing and knitting. An old Danish grandmother, well along in her nineties, was knitting socks; her memory was failing and half the time she thought she was knitting for some other war, long ago. A bedridden woman who lived down by the depot begged the young girls who went canvassing to bring garments to her, so that she could work buttonholes, lying on her back. One Sunday at the Catholic church I saw an old woman crippled with rheumatism and palsy who had not risen during the service for years. But when the choir sang “The Star Spangled Banner” at the close of the mass she got to her feet and, using the shoulder of her little grandson for a crutch, stood, her head trembling and wobbling, until the last note died away.

From memory I cannot say how many hundreds of sweaters, drawers, bed jackets, women’s blouses, mufflers, socks came out of our county. Before the day of shipment they were all brought to town and piled up in the show-windows of the shoe store—more than any one could believe, and next month there would be just as many. I used to walk slowly by, looking at them. Their presence there was taken as a matter of course, and I didn’t wish to seem eccentric. Bales of heavy, queer-shaped chemises and blouses made for the homeless women of northern France, by the women on these big, safe, prosperous farms where there was plenty of everything but sons. When a people really speaks to a people, I felt, it doesn’t speak by oratory or cablegrams; it speaks by things like these.

Up in the French settlement, in the north part of our county, the boys had been snatched away early—not to training camps or to way-stations, but rushed through to France. They all spoke a little household French, which was just what the American college boy who had been reading Racine and Victor Hugo could not do. So our French boys were given a few weeks of instruction and scattered among the American Expeditionary Force at the front wherever they were most needed.

Sarka Herbkova, Professor of Slavonic Languages at the

University of Nebraska, did invaluable work in organizing not only the women of her own people, but all the women of Nebraska, American born and foreign born. She went about over the state a great deal for the Women's Council for National Defense and saw what sacrifices some of the farmers' wives made. She told a story of a Bohemian woman, living in one of the far western counties, who had saved fifty dollars of her egg money to buy a new winter dress and a warm coat. A Liberty Bond canvasser rode up to her door and presented her arguments. She heard the canvasser through, then brought her fifty dollars and put it down on the table and took the bond, remarking, "I guess I help fight Austria in my same clothes anyhow!"

Letters from the front usually reached our town on Saturday nights. The "foreign mail" had become a feature of life in Kansas and Nebraska. The letters came in bunches; if one mother heard from her son, so did half a dozen others. One could hear them chatting to each other about what Vernon thought of Bordeaux, or what Roy had to say about the farming country along the Oise, or how much Elmer had enjoyed his rest leave in Paris. To me, knowing the boys, nearly all of these letters were remarkable. The most amusing were those which made severe strictures upon American manners; the boys were afraid the French would think us all farmers! One complained that his comrades talked and pushed chairs about in the Y hut while the singers who came to entertain them were on the platform. "And in this country, too, the Home of Politeness! Some yaps have no pride," he wrote bitterly. I can say for the boys from our town that they wanted to make a good impression.

## *Introduction*

### V. THE HOME FRONT: SELLING UNITY, SUPPRESSING DISSENT

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AMERICA was not prepared for war in April 1917. This was certainly true militarily. The United States army consisted of a mere 200,000 soldiers, roughly the same number as French casualties in the recent Battle of the Somme. The nation's lack of readiness translated to the homefront as well. Most Americans before the spring of 1917 hoped to avoid becoming directly involved in the European maelstrom. Indeed, Woodrow Wilson had won reelection in 1916 on a platform of American neutrality. The Zimmerman telegram and Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare shifted public opinion and compelled Wilson to change course. His framing of America's participation in the war as a progressive cause to make the world "safe for democracy" tapped into cherished ideals at the heart of the nation's identity. The nation, however, was far from unified as the United States entered the war. Victory would require not just defeating a fearsome German adversary, but also overcoming, by persuasion and, if necessary, by coercion, the racial, ethnic and ideological divisions of a diverse American population.

Responsibility for selling the war effort to the American public rested on the shoulders of George Creel. Woodrow Wilson appointed the former muckraking journalist to serve as chairman of the Committee on Public Information (CPI), established just seven days after America's entry into the war. In heading the CPI, Creel saw his principle duty to promote "the justice of America's cause" and fight for the "hearts and minds" of the public to unconditionally support the war and embrace "One Hundred Percent Americanism."

The CPI used every tool at its disposal to promote a vast propaganda effort. Its Division of Pictorial Publicity employed hundreds of the country's most talented artists to produce posters, often in multiple languages, that inspired both patriotism and fear by casting the German enemy as an existential



(and often bestial) threat to civilization and the American way of life. While Creel asserted that the CPI was in no degree “an agency of censorship,” it did issue guidelines for “voluntary censorship” to the press, believing it was far better “to have the desired compulsions proceed from within than to apply them from without.” The CPI made use of 75,000 “Four-Minute Men” to deliver patriotic speeches across the country, and worked closely with other government agencies, such as the Treasury Department, to promote the selling of Liberty Bonds, and the Food Administration, led by Herbert Hoover, to encourage Americans to conserve food and grow “war gardens.” Eager to use the newest form of mass communication, it collaborated with movie studios to produce films such as *Pershing’s Crusaders*, *The Prussian Cur*, and *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin*.

Nonetheless, the United States government recognized that propaganda alone would not be enough to create uniform support for the war. In his April 2, 1917 address asking for a declaration of war, Woodrow Wilson promised that: “If there should be disloyalty, it will be dealt with with a firm hand of stern repression.” He was true to his word. At Wilson’s behest, Congress passed the Espionage Act on June 15, 1917, making attempts to cause “insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny” in the armed forces, or to “obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States” a crime punishable by up to twenty years in prison. The Sedition Act, an amendment to the Espionage Act passed by Congress on May 16, 1918, placed additional restrictions on speech criticizing the government. By a 7–2 majority, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the convictions of five anarchists under the Sedition Act in *Abrams v. United States* (1919). Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, however, offered a powerful dissent, joined by Justice Louis Brandeis, that cast the ruling as an infringement on America’s First Amendment traditions.

The war marked the birth of the modern national security state. With the unbridled power of the law at their disposal, U.S. Attorney General Thomas Watt Gregory and other government and military officials set out to crush any and all dissent. Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson used the powers given him under the Espionage Act to ban newspapers and magazines he deemed subversive from the mail. Opponents of

the war, ranging from ordinary citizens to the Woman's Peace Party in New York City, faced constant surveillance by a rapidly expanded government intelligence apparatus that was assisted by civilian groups like the American Protective League. Federal prosecutors arrested, tried and imprisoned more than a thousand antiwar activists, most notably the Russian-born anarchist Emma Goldman and the chairman of the Socialist Party of America, Eugene Debs. A newly constituted Military Intelligence Division actively investigated signs of disloyalty or resistance to the war effort both in and outside of the army, while J. Edgar Hoover, a young attorney in the Justice Department, would play a leading role in the government campaign against subversion that followed the signing of the Armistice. The legacies of this period would reverberate throughout the post-war period and into the twenty-first-century.

Chad Williams  
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*George Creel: The "Second Lines"*

After earning his stripes as a reform-minded journalist in Kansas City and Denver, George Creel had worked on Wilson's reelection campaign in 1916; and upon America's entry into the war, Wilson appointed Creel as the chairman of the Committee on Public Information, a controversial organization created by executive order to spread the "Gospel of Americanism" to all corners of the country and the world. Creel considered his work "propaganda" only in the sense of the propagation of faith. The CPI kindled support for the war and then fanned the flames through articles, pamphlets, speakers ("Four Minute Men"), motion pictures, and posters. While Creel insisted that the CPI existed to share information, not impose censorship, all of the agency's actions fell somewhere between morale-building and manipulation. One of Creel's subordinates, Edward Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud, would later become a pioneer in the field of public relations.

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AS SECRETARY BAKER points out, the war was not fought in France alone. Back of the firing-line, back of armies and navies, back of the great supply-depots, another struggle waged with the same intensity and with almost equal significance attaching to its victories and defeats. It was the fight for the *minds* of men, for the "conquest of their convictions," and the battle-line ran through every home in every country.

It was in this recognition of Public Opinion as a major force that the Great War differed most essentially from all previous conflicts. The trial of strength was not only between massed bodies of armed men, but between opposed ideals, and moral verdicts took on all the value of military decisions. Other wars went no deeper than the physical aspects, but German *Kultur* raised issues that had to be fought out in the hearts and minds of people as well as on the actual firing-line. The approval of the world meant the steady flow of inspiration into the trenches; it meant the strengthened resolve and the renewed determination of the civilian population that is a nation's second line. The condemnation of the world meant the destruction of morale

and the surrender of that conviction of justice which is the very heart of courage.

The Committee on Public Information was called into existence to make this fight for the "verdict of mankind," the voice created to plead the justice of America's cause before the jury of Public Opinion. The fantastic legend that associated gags and muzzles with its work may be likened only to those trees which are evolved out of the air by Hindu magicians and which rise, grow, and flourish in gay disregard of such usual necessities as roots, sap, and sustenance. *In no degree was the Committee an agency of censorship, a machinery of concealment or repression. Its emphasis throughout was on the open and the positive. At no point did it seek or exercise authorities under those war laws that limited the freedom of speech and press.* In all things, from first to last, without halt or change, it was a plain publicity proposition, a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world's greatest adventure in advertising.

Under the pressure of tremendous necessities an organization grew that not only reached deep into every American community, but that carried to every corner of the civilized globe the full message of America's idealism, unselfishness, and indomitable purpose. We fought prejudice, indifference, and disaffection at home and we fought ignorance and falsehood abroad. We strove for the maintenance of our own morale and the Allied morale by every process of stimulation; every possible expedient was employed to break through the barrage of lies that kept the people of the Central Powers in darkness and delusion; we sought the friendship and support of the neutral nations by continuous presentation of facts. We did not call it propaganda, for that word, in German hands, had come to be associated with deceit and corruption. Our effort was educational and informative throughout, for we had such confidence in our case as to feel that no other argument was needed than the simple, straightforward presentation of facts.

There was no part of the great war machinery that we did not touch, no medium of appeal that we did not employ. The printed word, the spoken word, the motion picture, the telegraph, the cable, the wireless, the poster, the sign-board—all these were used in our campaign to make our own people and all other peoples understand the causes that compelled Amer-

ica to take arms. All that was fine and ardent in the civilian population came at our call until more than one hundred and fifty thousand men and women were devoting highly specialized abilities to the work of the Committee, as faithful and devoted in their service as though they wore the khaki.

While America's summons was answered without question by the citizenship as a whole, it is to be remembered that during the three and a half years of our neutrality the land had been torn by a thousand divisive prejudices, stunned by the voices of anger and confusion, and muddled by the pull and haul of opposed interests. These were conditions that could not be permitted to endure. What we had to have was no mere surface unity, but a passionate belief in the justice of America's cause that should weld the people of the United States into one white-hot mass instinct with fraternity, devotion, courage, and deathless determination. The *war-will*, the will-to-win, of a democracy depends upon the degree to which each one of all the people of that democracy can concentrate and consecrate body and soul and spirit in the supreme effort of service and sacrifice. What had to be driven home was that all business was the nation's business, and every task a common task for a single purpose.

“FREE TRADE IN IDEAS”:  
WASHINGTON, D. C., NOVEMBER 1919

*Oliver Wendell Holmes: from  
Dissenting Opinion in Abrams v. United States*

In March 1919 the Supreme Court ruled 9–0 to uphold the constitutionality of the 1917 Espionage Act in *Schenck v. United States*. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who had been appointed to the Court by Theodore Roosevelt in 1902, wrote the opinion. In his article “Freedom of Speech in War Time,” published in June 1919, Harvard Law School professor and First Amendment scholar Zechariah Chafee Jr. criticized Justice Holmes for having done “nothing to emphasize the social interest behind free speech, and show the need of balancing even in war time” in his *Schenck* opinion. In November the Court upheld the convictions of several radicals prosecuted under the 1918 Sedition Act in *Abrams v. United States*; but this time Holmes dissented, joined by Justice Louis Brandeis, whom President Wilson had appointed in 1916.

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In this case sentences of twenty years imprisonment have been imposed for the publishing of two leaflets that I believe the defendants had as much right to publish as the Government has to publish the Constitution of the United States now vainly invoked by them. Even if I am technically wrong and enough can be squeezed from these poor and puny anonymities to turn the color of legal litmus paper; I will add, even if what I think the necessary intent were shown; the most nominal punishment seems to me all that possibly could be inflicted, unless the defendants are to be made to suffer not for what the indictment alleges but for the creed that they avow—a creed that I believe to be the creed of ignorance and immaturity when honestly held, as I see no reason to doubt that it was held here, but which, although made the subject of examination at the trial, no one has a right even to consider in dealing with the charges before the Court.

Persecution for the expression of opinions seems to me perfectly logical. If you have no doubt of your premises or your power and want a certain result with all your heart you

naturally express your wishes in law and sweep away all opposition. To allow opposition by speech seems to indicate that you think the speech impotent, as when a man says that he has squared the circle, or that you do not care whole-heartedly for the result, or that you doubt either your power or your premises. But when men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out. That at any rate is the theory of our Constitution. It is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year if not every day we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon imperfect knowledge. While that experiment is part of our system I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country. I wholly disagree with the argument of the Government that the First Amendment left the common law as to seditious libel in force. History seems to me against the notion. I had conceived that the United States through many years had shown its repentance for the Sedition Act of 1798, by repaying fines that it imposed. Only the emergency that makes it immediately dangerous to leave the correction of evil counsels to time warrants making any exception to the sweeping command, “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech.” Of course I am speaking only of expressions of opinion and exhortations, which were all that were uttered here, but I regret that I cannot put into more impressive words my belief that in their conviction upon this indictment the defendants were deprived of their rights under the Constitution of the United States.

MR. JUSTICE BRANDEIS concurs with the foregoing opinion.

*November 10, 1919*

## *Introduction*

### VI. AMERICA ON THE WORLD STAGE

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PRESIDENT Woodrow Wilson and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, articulated two very different visions of how to make permanent America's ascendancy on the world stage and how to use America's new power to create a lasting global peace. The two men disagreed ideologically and, to make matters worse, they also hated one another personally. The Republican Lodge was angry at Wilson, a Democrat, for not having included any prominent Republicans in the American delegation to the Paris Peace Conference that produced the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Furthermore, under the Constitution, the president has the authority to negotiate treaties, but the Senate must approve them by a two-thirds majority. Lodge did not believe that he or his fellow senators had any obligation to approve the Treaty of Versailles simply because the president wanted them to do so. Nor did opponents of the League of Nations believe that the Constitution permitted them to cede the critical congressional power to declare war to an international organization. The two men shared a vision of America as an exceptional and indispensable part of the world order, but they clashed over how America might best exercise its power and authority in the postwar world.

Wilson's Senate opponents during the treaty debate were divided into groups that became known as the Irreconcilables and the Reservationists. The Irreconcilables were opposed to ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, which they saw as fatally flawed, under any circumstances, while the Reservationists were willing to consider a modified version of the treaty if it protected American rights, such as the ability to dominate affairs in Latin America, a right enshrined, they argued, in the Monroe Doctrine. Lodge proposed fourteen reservations that Wilson found unacceptable. Had the Constitution only required a simple majority for ratification, it is possible that



Wilson would have had the votes. The Irreconcilables and the Reservationists, however, had enough supporters to prevent passage of the treaty unless Wilson was willing to go back to the British and French and ask for changes. He was not, both because of the impossibility of reopening the tense negotiations in Paris and his belief that the treaty's opponents were fundamentally in the wrong.

The core disagreement between Lodge and Wilson centered on the role of the United States in the post-war world. Wilson wanted the United States to join the League of Nations and work through international bodies dedicated to peace and economic development. He argued that the war had resulted from dysfunctions in the international state system. The modern world, with its many globalized connections, needed some kind of governance structure above the state. A League of Nations could also promote democracy and freedom. Wars, he felt, were the result of autocratic regimes. Democratic states, Wilson argued, were by their nature more peaceful because democratic peoples would not vote for aggressive wars. Integrated economic systems would also give peoples and states more incentives to cooperate than to compete. Thus a more interconnected world would be a more peaceful one. These ideas remain powerful today, encapsulated in a concept in international relations known as the Democratic Peace Theory.

Lodge did not disagree with Wilson's aim of promoting peace and democracy worldwide, but he thought Wilson's approach to the problem was both naive and dangerous. States, he believed, naturally pursued their own interests. Tying American interests to an international organization was therefore a recipe for disaster, especially since the League of Nations made no distinctions at all between large states and small states. The League would therefore level the global playing field, granting small states a vote in how America behaved on the world stage. They could either vote against American action in a future conflict the United States saw as necessary or force the United States to take part in a war that Americans did not see as in their interests. Lodge thought that America, and the world, would be best served if the United States had the greatest possible flexibility in its dealings with the world. This debate

has remained at the core of American foreign policy discussions ever since, giving us yet another reason to look back a century ago to the contest between Wilson and Lodge.

Michael S. Neiberg  
*Professor of History,*  
*United States Army War College*

WASHINGTON, D. C., JULY 1919

*Woodrow Wilson: from  
Address to the Senate on the League of Nations*

In early March 1919, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge had issued a statement signed by thirty-nine Republican senators pledging their opposition to the draft covenant of the League of Nations. Nonetheless, on June 28 the peace treaty with Germany—complete with the League covenant—was signed in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles. “As no one is satisfied,” Wilson said of the treaty to Edith, “it makes me hope we have made a just peace.” The Wilsons landed in New Jersey on July 8, and two days later, the President entered the Senate chamber carrying the treaty. He received a standing ovation from everyone on the floor and in the public galleries, though the Republicans withheld their applause. Wilson realized Senate passage of the treaty would be an uphill battle, of which this speech was the opening salvo.

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It was universally recognized that all the peoples of the world demanded of the Conference that it should create such a continuing concert of free nations as would make wars of aggression and spoliation such as this that has just ended forever impossible. A cry had gone out from every home in every stricken land from which sons and brothers and fathers had gone forth to the great sacrifice that such a sacrifice should never again be exacted. It was manifest why it had been exacted. It had been exacted because one nation desired dominion and other nations had known no means of defence except armaments and alliances. War had lain at the heart of every arrangement of the Europe,—of every arrangement of the world,—that preceded the war. Restive peoples had been told that fleets and armies, which they toiled to sustain, meant peace; and they now knew that they had been lied to: that fleets and armies had been maintained to promote national ambitions and meant war. They knew that no old policy meant anything else but force, force,—always force. And they knew that it was intolerable. Every true heart in the world, and every

enlightened judgment demanded that, at whatever cost of independent action, every government that took thought for its people or for justice or for ordered freedom should lend itself to a new purpose and utterly destroy the old order of international politics. Statesmen might see difficulties, but the people could see none and could brook no denial. A war in which they had been bled white to beat the terror that lay concealed in every Balance of Power must not end in a mere victory of arms and a new balance. The monster that had resorted to arms must be put in chains that could not be broken. The united power of free nations must put a stop to aggression, and the world must be given peace. If there was not the will or the intelligence to accomplish that now, there must be another and a final war and the world must be swept clean of every power that could renew the terror. The League of Nations was not merely an instrument to adjust and remedy old wrongs under a new treaty of peace; it was the only hope for mankind. Again and again had the demon of war been cast out of the house of the peoples and the house swept clean by a treaty of peace; only to prepare a time when he would enter in again with spirits worse than himself. The house must now be given a tenant who could hold it against all such. Convenient, indeed indispensable, as statesmen found the newly planned League of Nations to be for the execution of present plans of peace and reparation, they saw it in a new aspect before their work was finished. They saw it as the main object of the peace, as the only thing that could complete it or make it worth while. They saw it as the hope of the world, and that hope they did not dare to disappoint. Shall we or any other free people hesitate to accept this great duty? Dare we reject it and break the heart of the world?

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There can be no question of our ceasing to be a world power. The only question is whether we can refuse the moral leadership that is offered us, whether we shall accept or reject the confidence of the world.

The war and the Conference of Peace now sitting in Paris seem to me to have answered that question. Our participation in the war established our position among the nations and

nothing but our own mistaken action can alter it. It was not an accident or a matter of sudden choice that we are no longer isolated and devoted to a policy which has only our own interest and advantage for its object. It was our duty to go in, if we were indeed the champions of liberty and of right. We answered to the call of duty in a way so spirited, so utterly without thought of what we spent of blood or treasure, so effective, so worthy of the admiration of true men everywhere, so wrought out of the stuff of all that was heroic, that the whole world saw at last, in the flesh, in noble action, a great ideal asserted and vindicated, by a nation they had deemed material and now found to be compact of the spiritual forces that must free men of every nation from every unworthy bondage. It is thus that a new role and a new responsibility have come to this great nation that we honour and which we would all wish to lift to yet higher levels of service and achievement.

The stage is set, the destiny disclosed. It has come about by no plan of our conceiving, but by the hand of God who led us into this way. We cannot turn back. We can only go forward, with lifted eyes and freshened spirit, to follow the vision. It was of this that we dreamed at our birth. America shall in truth show the way. The light streams upon the path ahead, and nowhere else.

*July 10, 1919*

“THIS MURKY COVENANT”:  
WASHINGTON, D. C., AUGUST 1919

*Henry Cabot Lodge: from Speech in the  
U.S. Senate on the League of Nations*

Few political rivalries in American politics can match the enmity between Woodrow Wilson and Henry Cabot Lodge. The Constitution required that the treaty receive two-thirds approval of the Senate; and Lodge—Boston patrician, intimate of the recently deceased Theodore Roosevelt, chairman of the Republican Senate conference and of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—was hell-bent on defeating it. He hung most of his arguments on Article X, which established a collective security arrangement among members of the League. Lodge asserted that Article X would impinge upon Congress's constitutional power to declare war; and for the next few months, he would place every political obstacle that he could in the way of the treaty's passage. He would eventually offer a series of amendments and reservations, knowing full well that his idealistic adversary would never offer a single significant concession.

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I am as anxious as any human being can be to have the United States render every possible service to the civilization and the peace of mankind, but I am certain we can do it best by not putting ourselves in leading strings or subjecting our policies and our sovereignty to other nations. The independence of the United States is not only more precious to ourselves but to the world than any single possession. Look at the United States to-day. We have made mistakes in the past. We have had shortcomings. We shall make mistakes in the future and fall short of our own best hopes. But none the less is there any country to-day on the face of the earth which can compare with this in ordered liberty, in peace, and in the largest freedom? I feel that I can say this without being accused of undue boastfulness, for it is the simple fact, and in making this treaty and taking on these obligations all that we do is in a spirit of unselfishness and in a desire for the good of mankind. But it is

well to remember that we are dealing with nations every one of which has a direct individual interest to serve and there is grave danger in an unshared idealism. Contrast the United States with any country on the face of the earth to-day and ask yourself whether the situation of the United States is not the best to be found. I will go as far as anyone in world service, but the first step to world service is the maintenance of the United States. You may call me selfish if you will, conservative or reactionary, or use any other harsh adjective you see fit to apply, but an American I was born, an American I have remained all my life. I can never be anything else but an American, and I must think of the United States first, and when I think of the United States first in an arrangement like this I am thinking of what is best for the world, for if the United States fails the best hopes of mankind fail with it. I have never had but one allegiance—I cannot divide it now. I have loved but one flag and I cannot share that devotion and give affection to the mongrel banner invented for a league. Internationalism, illustrated by the Bolshevik and by the men to whom all countries are alike provided they can make money out of them, is to me repulsive. National I must remain, and in that way I, like all other Americans, can render the amplest service to the world. The United States is the world's best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will destroy her power for good and endanger her very existence. Leave her to march freely through the centuries to come as in the years that have gone. Strong, generous, and confident, she has nobly served mankind. Beware how you trifle with your marvelous inheritance, this great land of ordered liberty, for if we stumble and fall, freedom and civilization everywhere will go down in ruin.

We are told that we shall "break the heart of the world" if we do not take this league just as it stands. I fear that the hearts of the vast majority of mankind would beat on strongly and steadily and without any quickening if the league were to perish altogether. If it should be effectively and beneficently changed the people who would lie awake in sorrow for a single night could be easily gathered in one not very large room, but those who would draw a long breath of relief would reach to millions.

We hear much of visions and I trust we shall continue to have visions and dream dreams of a fairer future for the race. But visions are one thing and visionaries are another, and the mechanical appliances of the rhetorician designed to give a picture of a present which does not exist and of a future which no man can predict are as unreal and shortlived as the steam or canvas clouds, the angels suspended on wires, and the artificial lights of the stage. They pass with the moment of effect and are shabby and tawdry in the daylight. Let us at least be real. Washington's entire honesty of mind and his fearless look into the face of all facts are qualities which can never go out of fashion and which we should all do well to imitate.

Ideals have been thrust upon us as an argument for the league until the healthy mind, which rejects cant, revolts from them. Are ideals confined to this deformed experiment upon a noble purpose, tainted as it is with bargains, and tied to a peace treaty which might have been disposed of long ago to the great benefit of the world if it had not been compelled to carry this rider on its back? "*Post equitem sedet atra cura,*" Horace tells us, but no blacker care ever sat behind any rider than we shall find in this covenant of doubtful and disputed interpretation as it now perches upon the treaty of peace.

No doubt many excellent and patriotic people see a coming fulfillment of noble ideals in the words "league for peace." We all respect and share these aspirations and desires, but some of us see no hope, but rather defeat, for them in this murky covenant. For we, too, have our ideals, even if we differ from those who have tried to establish a monopoly of idealism. Our first ideal is our country, and we see her in the future, as in the past, giving service to all her people and to the world. Our ideal of the future is that she should continue to render that service of her own free will. She has great problems of her own to solve, very grim and perilous problems, and a right solution, if we can attain to it, would largely benefit mankind. We would have our country strong to resist a peril from the West, as she has flung back the German menace from the East. We would not have our politics distracted and embittered by the dissensions of other lands. We would not have our country's vigor exhausted or her moral force abated by everlasting meddling and muddling in every quarrel, great and small, which afflicts the



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world. Our ideal is to make her ever stronger and better and finer, because in that way alone, as we believe, can she be of the greatest service to the world's peace and to the welfare of mankind. [Prolonged applause in the galleries.]

*August 12, 1919*

## *Introduction*

### VII. AT HOME/COMING HOME: THE TOLL OF WAR

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**A**MERICAN soldiers returned home victorious, and communities across the nation welcomed them back with parades, speeches, and eventually, monuments. Proud of having served their country, returning servicemen flocked to join the American Legion, founded by World War I veterans in 1919. Legion halls soon became more than places where veterans could relax with former comrades-in-arms, as the organization emerged as a strong lobbyist on behalf of veterans' causes.

The nation had been ill-prepared for war, and was even less ready for peace. Nearly 200,000 wounded men returned, a number that grew when veterans with shell shock and gas-related tuberculosis flooded hospital wards in the 1920s. Scrambling to cure these patients, the Veteran's Bureau (the predecessor of today's Veterans Administration) built a new federally-managed veterans' hospital system. Doctors treating veterans confronted new and often confusing medical conditions. Psychologists such as Norman Fenton, who had served at a hospital for "war neurosis" cases in France, compiled lengthy descriptions of men's symptoms, often in their own words, to gain a better understanding the long-term impact of combat on veterans' mental health.

Even healthy veterans found the return home rocky during the post-war recession of 1919. Many veterans had hoped to use military service as a stepping stone into a better life. The army had promised as much by touting the physical and education benefits of military service. Millions of soldiers had contributed to army-sponsored savings accounts, hoping to accumulate start-up funds for a home or business. Scarce jobs forced many veterans to use that money to survive. With few government benefits available to them, veterans began to complain vociferously about the mismanaged homecoming.

Not everyone was sympathetic to veterans' financial and medical difficulties, questioning whether their predicament

was truly a result of the war or just the consequence of poor individual decisions. The response was generally the latter whenever black veterans applied for the minimal health services or occupational training programs available. Both white and black veterans, however, confronted a government bureaucracy primarily concerned with limiting the drain on public funds.

Responding to veterans' rising frustration, the Legion took the lead in pressing forward a claim for adjusted compensation. The adjusted compensation campaign targeted industrialists' war profits, arguing that it was unjust for the war to make civilians rich and soldiers poor. In 1924, all veterans received an adjusted compensation bond (also known as "the bonus") redeemable in 1945. The exact amount an individual received depended on how long a man had served. For many the bonus was close to \$1,200. Veterans ultimately received the bonus in 1936, nine years early, after the Depression triggered several mass demonstrations in Washington D.C. known as the Bonus Marches.

Financial security was not the answer to every difficulty veterans encountered after coming home. Talking about what they had experienced was hard. "Before I reached home," one soldier recalled in his memoir, "I decided that I must clear my mind of all the terrible experiences of the past two years, as much as possible." It would be unjust, this soldier felt, "to make my family and friends sad and uncomfortable by inflicting upon them the horrors in which they had no part." Ernest Hemingway captured the difficulties of readjusting to civilian life in his 1925 short story, "Soldiers' Home." Individual families might have wanted veterans to put the war behind them, but collectively Americans demonstrated a strong desire to publically honor veterans' patriotism. Throughout the 1920s, towns and cities dedicated thousands of statues, memorial halls, athletic stadiums, and parks to the wartime generation.

To memorialize the more than 4,400 American "unknown dead"—men who were buried in unidentified graves in military cemeteries or at sea, or whose remains were never found—the United States interred one unidentified soldier in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier located in Arlington Cemetery, Virginia. President Warren Harding presided over the solemn

ceremony, and reassured veterans that the nation acknowledged their generation's sacrifice. After the Unknown Soldier was laid to rest, the nation collectively observed two minutes of silence to honor the fallen warrior and pray for a peaceful future. Some writers mocked the ceremony as an empty gesture filled with piety that protected listeners from confronting the reality of war. Flowery, patriotic speeches would only seduce the next generation of naïve young men into believing that war was a glorious adventure.

Veterans lined up on both sides of this cultural debate over how to remember the Great War. Was it a just and noble cause? Was it a rich man's war, poor man's fight? Were the nation's interests really served best by fighting? American society ponders these timeless questions each time veterans return home from war.

Jennifer D. Keene  
*Professor of History,*  
*Chapman University*

ARLINGTON, NOVEMBER 1921

*Warren G. Harding: Address at the  
Burial of an Unknown American Soldier*

Warren G. Harding's election resoundingly repudiated Woodrow Wilson's idealistic vision of the League of Nations. The United States and Germany signed a separate peace treaty in August 1921, officially concluding the state of war that had lasted four years. In his final minutes in office, Wilson had authorized the exhumation of an unidentified American soldier from a cemetery in France and his entombment in a new marble sarcophagus at the National Cemetery, where he would represent all of the soldiers whose remains could not be identified. On November 11, 1921, the third anniversary of the Armistice, a great procession accompanied the casket of the Unknown Soldier from the Capitol to Arlington. The physically disabled Wilson rode with Edith in the parade only as far as the White House before returning to their new home nearby, while the rest of the cortege proceeded to the vast graveyard across the Potomac. Thousands gathered to hear the President's speech, Marshal Foch and Medal of Honor winners among them; and hundreds of thousands more heard his message, as it was carried on telephone lines to public-address speakers in cities around the country. With these remarks, the curtain descended on the World War.

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MR. SECRETARY OF WAR AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: We are met to-day to pay the impersonal tribute. The name of him whose body lies before us took flight with his imperishable soul. We know not whence he came, but only that his death marks him with the everlasting glory of an American dying for his country.

He might have come from any one of millions of American homes. Some mother gave him in her love and tenderness, and with him her most cherished hopes. Hundreds of mothers are wondering to-day, finding a touch of solace in the possibility that the Nation bows in grief over the body of one she bore to live and die, if need be, for the Republic. If we give rein to fancy, a score of sympathetic chords are touched, for in this body there once glowed the soul of an American, with the

aspirations and ambitions of a citizen who cherished life and its opportunities. He may have been a native or an adopted son; that matters little, because they glorified the same loyalty, they sacrificed alike.

We do not know his station in life, because from every station came the patriotic response of the five millions. I recall the days of creating armies, and the departing of caravels which braved the murderous seas to reach the battle lines for maintained nationality and preserved civilization. The service flag marked mansion and cottage alike, and riches were common to all homes in the consciousness of service to country.

We do not know the eminence of his birth, but we do know the glory of his death. He died for his country, and greater devotion hath no man than this. He died unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in his heart and hope on his lips, that his country should triumph and its civilization survive. As a typical soldier of this representative democracy, he fought and died, believing in the indisputable justice of his country's cause. Conscious of the world's upheaval, appraising the magnitude of a war the like of which had never horrified humanity before, perhaps he believed his to be a service destined to change the tide of human affairs.

In the death gloom of gas, the bursting of shells and rain of bullets, men face more intimately the great God over all, their souls are aflame, and consciousness expands and hearts are searched. With the din of battle, the glow of conflict, and the supreme trial of courage, come involuntarily the hurried appraisal of life and the contemplation of death's great mystery. On the threshold of eternity, many a soldier, I can well believe, wondered how his ebbing blood would color the stream of human life, flowing on after his sacrifice. His patriotism was none less if he craved more than triumph of country; rather, it was greater if he hoped for a victory for all human kind. Indeed, I revere that citizen whose confidence in the righteousness of his country inspired belief that its triumph is the victory of humanity.

This American soldier went forth to battle with no hatred for any people in the world, but hating war and hating the purpose of every war for conquest. He cherished our national rights, and abhorred the threat of armed domination; and in

the maelstrom of destruction and suffering and death he fired his shot for liberation of the captive conscience of the world. In advancing toward his objective was somewhere a thought of a world awakened; and we are here to testify undying gratitude and reverence for that thought of a wider freedom.

On such an occasion as this, amid such a scene, our thoughts alternate between defenders living and defenders dead. A grateful Republic will be worthy of them both. Our part is to atone for the losses of heroic dead by making a better Republic for the living.

Sleeping in these hallowed grounds are thousands of Americans who have given their blood for the baptism of freedom and its maintenance, armed exponents of the Nation's conscience. It is better and nobler for their deeds. Burial here is rather more than a sign of the Government's favor, it is a suggestion of a tomb in the heart of the Nation, sorrowing for its noble dead.

To-day's ceremonies proclaim that the hero unknown is not unhonored. We gather him to the Nation's breast, within the shadow of the Capitol, of the towering shaft that honors Washington, the great father, and of the exquisite monument to Lincoln, the martyred savior. Here the inspirations of yesterday and the conscience of to-day forever unite to make the Republic worthy of his death for flag and country.

Ours are lofty resolutions to-day, as with tribute to the dead we consecrate ourselves to a better order for the living. With all my heart, I wish we might say to the defenders who survive, to mothers who sorrow, to widows and children who mourn, that no such sacrifice shall be asked again.

It was my fortune recently to see a demonstration of modern warfare. It is no longer a conflict in chivalry, no more a test of militant manhood. It is only cruel, deliberate, scientific destruction. There was no contending enemy, only the theoretical defense of a hypothetic objective. But the attack was made with all the relentless methods of modern destruction. There was the rain of ruin from the aircraft, the thunder of artillery, followed by the unspeakable devastation wrought by bursting shells; there were mortars belching their bombs of desolation; machine guns concentrating their leaden storms; there was the infantry, advancing, firing, and falling—like men with souls

sacrificing for the decision. The flying missiles were revealed by illuminating tracers, so that we could note their flight and appraise their deadliness. The air was streaked with tiny flames marking the flight of massed destruction; while the effectiveness of the theoretical defense was impressed by the simulation of dead and wounded among those going forward, undaunted and unheeding. As this panorama of unutterable destruction visualized the horrors of modern conflict, there grew on me the sense of the failure of a civilization which can leave its problems to such cruel arbitrament. Surely no one in authority, with human attributes and a full appraisal of the patriotic loyalty of his countrymen, could ask the manhood of kingdom, empire, or republic to make such sacrifice until all reason had failed, until appeal to justice through understanding had been denied, until every effort of love and consideration for fellow men had been exhausted, until freedom itself and inviolate honor had been brutally threatened.

I speak not as a pacifist fearing war, but as one who loves justice and hates war. I speak as one who believes the highest function of government is to give its citizens the security of peace, the opportunity to achieve, and the pursuit of happiness.

The loftiest tribute we can bestow to-day—the heroically earned tribute—fashioned in deliberate conviction, out of unclouded thought, neither shadowed by remorse nor made vain by fancies, is the commitment of this Republic to an advancement never made before. If American achievement is a cherished pride at home, if our unselfishness among nations is all we wish it to be, and ours is a helpful example in the world, then let us give of our influence and strength, yea, of our aspirations and convictions, to put mankind on a little higher plane, exulting and exalting, with war's distressing and depressing tragedies barred from the stage of righteous civilization.

There have been a thousand defenses justly and patriotically made; a thousand offenses which reason and righteousness ought to have stayed. Let us beseech all men to join us in seeking the rule under which reason and righteousness shall prevail.

Standing to-day on hallowed ground, conscious that all America has halted to share in the tribute of heart and mind and soul to this fellow American, and knowing that the world



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is noting this expression of the Republic's mindfulness, it is fitting to say that his sacrifice, and that of the millions dead, shall not be in vain. There must be, there shall be, the commanding voice of a conscious civilization against armed warfare.

As we return this poor clay to its mother soil, garlanded by love and covered with the decorations that only nations can bestow, I can sense the prayers of our people, of all peoples, that this Armistice Day shall mark the beginning of a new and lasting era of peace on earth, good will among men. Let me join in that prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## *Ernest Hemingway: "Soldier's Home"*

Nowhere were the changes in American life seen more vividly than in its fiction, not in just the substance but also in the style; and nobody epitomized that literary readjustment—with his stark staccato sentences—more than Ernest Hemingway. Severely wounded in 1918 while serving as a Red Cross volunteer in Italy, he returned home in early 1919. That summer he visited Michigan's Upper Peninsula, which, coupled with his remembrances of war, would inspire several of the works included in *In Our Time* (1925), his first collection of short stories. A job with the *Toronto Star* allowed him to return to Europe in 1921 and become part of the expatriate literary world in Paris. Over the next decade, the war permeated his writing, most especially his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), which his experiences in Italy inspired.

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KREBS WENT to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas. There is a picture which shows him among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing exactly the same height and style collar. He enlisted in the Marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine in the summer of 1919.

There is a picture which shows him on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture.

By the time Krebs returned to his home town in Oklahoma the greeting of heroes was over. He came back much too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over.

At first Krebs, who had been at Belleau Wood, Soissons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel and in the Argonne did not want to talk about the war at all. Later he felt the need to talk but no one wanted to hear about it. His town had heard too many atrocity stories to be thrilled by actualities. Krebs found that to

be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he had done this twice he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it. A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told. All of the times that had been able to make him feel cool and clear inside himself when he thought of them; the times so long back when he had done the one thing, the only thing for a man to do, easily and naturally, when he might have done something else, now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves.

His lies were quite unimportant lies and consisted in attributing to himself things other men had seen, done or heard of, and stating as facts certain apocryphal incidents familiar to all soldiers. Even his lies were not sensational at the pool room. His acquaintances, who had heard detailed accounts of German women found chained to machine guns in the Argonne forest and who could not comprehend, or were barred by their patriotism from interest in, any German machine gunners who were not chained, were not thrilled by his stories.

Krebs acquired the nausea in regard to experience that is the result of untruth or exaggeration, and when he occasionally met another man who had really been a soldier and they talked a few minutes in the dressing room at a dance he fell into the easy pose of the old soldier among other soldiers: that he had been badly, sickeningly frightened all the time. In this way he lost everything.

During this time, it was late summer, he was sleeping late in bed, getting up to walk down town to the library to get a book, eating lunch at home, reading on the front porch until he became bored and then walking down through the town to spend the hottest hours of the day in the cool dark of the pool room. He loved to play pool.

In the evening he practiced on his clarinet, strolled down town, read and went to bed. He was still a hero to his two young sisters. His mother would have given him breakfast in bed if he had wanted it. She often came in when he was in bed and asked him to tell her about the war, but her attention always wandered. His father was non-committal.

Before Krebs went away to the war he had never been allowed to drive the family motor car. His father was in the real estate business and always wanted the car to be at his command

when he required it to take clients out into the country to show them a piece of farm property. The car always stood outside the First National Bank building where his father had an office on the second floor. Now, after the war, it was still the same car.

Nothing was changed in the town except that the young girls had grown up. But they lived in such a complicated world of already defined alliances and shifting feuds that Krebs did not feel the energy or the courage to break into it. He liked to look at them, though. There were so many good-looking young girls. Most of them had their hair cut short. When he went away only little girls wore their hair like that or girls that were fast. They all wore sweaters and shirt waists with round Dutch collars. It was a pattern. He liked to look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street. He liked to watch them walking under the shade of the trees. He liked the round Dutch collars above their sweaters. He liked their silk stockings and flat shoes. He liked their bobbed hair and the way they walked.

When he was in town their appeal to him was not very strong. He did not like them when he saw them in the Greek's ice cream parlor. He did not want them themselves really. They were too complicated. There was something else. Vaguely he wanted a girl but he did not want to have to work to get her. He would have liked to have a girl but he did not want to have to spend a long time getting her. He did not want to get into the intrigue and the politics. He did not want to have to do any courting. He did not want to tell any more lies. It wasn't worth it.

He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live along without consequences. Besides he did not really need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl. Nearly everybody did that. But it wasn't true. You did not need a girl. That was the funny thing. First a fellow boasted how girls mean nothing to him, that he never thought of them, that they could not touch him. Then a fellow boasted that he could not get along without girls, that he had to have them all the time, that he could not go to sleep without them.

That was all a lie. It was all a lie both ways. You did not need a girl unless you thought about them. He learned that in the

army. Then sooner or later you always got one. When you were really ripe for a girl you always got one. You did not have to think about it. Sooner or later it would come. He had learned that in the army.

Now he would have liked a girl if she had come to him and not wanted to talk. But here at home it was all too complicated. He knew he could never get through it all again. It was not worth the trouble. That was the thing about French girls and German girls. There was not all this talking. You couldn't talk much and you did not need to talk. It was simple and you were friends. He thought about France and then he began to think about Germany. On the whole he had liked Germany better. He did not want to leave Germany. He did not want to come home. Still, he had come home. He sat on the front porch.

He liked the girls that were walking along the other side of the street. He liked the look of them much better than the French girls or the German girls. But the world they were in was not the world he was in. He would like to have one of them. But it was not worth it. They were such a nice pattern. He liked the pattern. It was exciting. But he would not go through all the talking. He did not want one badly enough. He liked to look at them all, though. It was not worth it. Not now when things were getting good again.

He sat there on the porch reading a book on the war. It was a history and he was reading about all the engagements he had been in. It was the most interesting reading he had ever done. He wished there were more maps. He looked forward with a good feeling to reading all the really good histories when they would come out with good detail maps. Now he was really learning about the war. He had been a good soldier. That made a difference.

One morning after he had been home about a month his mother came into his bedroom and sat on the bed. She smoothed her apron.

"I had a talk with your father last night, Harold," she said, "and he is willing for you to take the car out in the evenings."

"Yeah?" said Krebs, who was not fully awake. "Take the car out? Yeah?"

"Yes. Your father has felt for some time that you should be

able to take the car out in the evenings whenever you wished but we only talked it over last night.”

“I’ll bet you made him,” Krebs said.

“No. It was your father’s suggestion that we talk the matter over.”

“Yeah. I’ll bet you made him,” Krebs sat up in bed.

“Will you come down to breakfast, Harold?” his mother said.

“As soon as I get my clothes on,” Krebs said.

His mother went out of the room and he could hear her frying something downstairs while he washed, shaved and dressed to go down into the dining-room for breakfast. While he was eating breakfast his sister brought in the mail.

“Well, Hare,” she said. “You old sleepyhead. What do you ever get up for?”

Krebs looked at her. He liked her. She was his best sister.

“Have you got the paper?” he asked.

She handed him the Kansas City *Star* and he shucked off its brown wrapper and opened it to the sporting page. He folded the *Star* open and propped it against the water pitcher with his cereal dish to steady it, so he could read while he ate.

“Harold,” his mother stood in the kitchen doorway, “Harold, please don’t muss up the paper. Your father can’t read his *Star* if it’s been mussed.”

“I won’t muss it,” Krebs said.

His sister sat down at the table and watched him while he read.

“We’re playing indoor over at school this afternoon,” she said. “I’m going to pitch.”

“Good,” said Krebs. “How’s the old wing?”

“I can pitch better than lots of the boys. I tell them all you taught me. The other girls aren’t much good.”

“Yeah?” said Krebs.

“I tell them all you’re my beau. Aren’t you my beau, Hare?”

“You bet.”

“Couldn’t your brother really be your beau just because he’s your brother?”

“I don’t know.”

“Sure you know. Couldn’t you be my beau, Hare, if I was old enough and if you wanted to?”

“Sure. You’re my girl now.”

“Am I really your girl?”

“Sure.”

“Do you love me?”

“Uh, huh.”

“Will you love me always?”

“Sure.”

“Will you come over and watch me play indoor?”

“Maybe.”

“Aw, Hare, you don’t love me. If you loved me, you’d want to come over and watch me play indoor.”

Krebs’s mother came into the dining-room from the kitchen. She carried a plate with two fried eggs and some crisp bacon on it and a plate of buckwheat cakes.

“You run along, Helen,” she said. “I want to talk to Harold.”

She put the eggs and bacon down in front of him and brought in a jug of maple syrup for the buckwheat cakes. Then she sat down across the table from Krebs.

“I wish you’d put down the paper a minute, Harold,” she said.

Krebs took down the paper and folded it.

“Have you decided what you are going to do yet, Harold?” his mother said, taking off her glasses.

“No,” said Krebs.

“Don’t you think it’s about time?” His mother did not say this in a mean way. She seemed worried.

“I hadn’t thought about it,” Krebs said.

“God has some work for everyone to do,” his mother said. “There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom.”

“I’m not in His Kingdom,” Krebs said.

“We are all of us in His Kingdom.”

Krebs felt embarrassed and resentful as always.

“I’ve worried about you so much, Harold,” his mother went on. “I know the temptations you must have been exposed to. I know how weak men are. I know what your own dear grandfather, my own father, told us about the Civil War and I have prayed for you. I pray for you all day long, Harold.”

Krebs looked at the bacon fat hardening on his plate.

“Your father is worried, too,” his mother went on. “He thinks you have lost your ambition, that you haven’t got a

definite aim in life. Charley Simmons, who is just your age, has a good job and is going to be married. The boys are all settling down; they're all determined to get somewhere; you can see that boys like Charley Simmons are on their way to being really a credit to the community."

Krebs said nothing.

"Don't look that way, Harold," his mother said. "You know we love you and I want to tell you for your own good how matters stand. Your father does not want to hamper your freedom. He thinks you should be allowed to drive the car. If you want to take some of the nice girls out riding with you, we are only too pleased. We want you to enjoy yourself. But you are going to have to settle down to work, Harold. Your father doesn't care what you start in at. All work is honorable as he says. But you've got to make a start at something. He asked me to speak to you this morning and then you can stop in and see him at his office."

"Is that all?" Krebs said.

"Yes. Don't you love your mother, dear boy?"

"No," Krebs said.

His mother looked at him across the table. Her eyes were shiny. She started crying.

"I don't love anybody," Krebs said.

It wasn't any good. He couldn't tell her, he couldn't make her see it. It was silly to have said it. He had only hurt her. He went over and took hold of her arm. She was crying with her head in her hands.

"I didn't mean it," he said. "I was just angry at something. I didn't mean I didn't love you."

His mother went on crying. Krebs put his arm on her shoulder.

"Can't you believe me, mother?"

His mother shook her head.

"Please, please, mother. Please believe me."

"All right," his mother said chokily. She looked up at him. "I believe you, Harold."

Krebs kissed her hair. She put her face up to him.

"I'm your mother," she said. "I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby."

Krebs felt sick and vaguely nauseated.



"I know, Mummy," he said. "I'll try and be a good boy for you."

"Would you kneel and pray with me, Harold?" his mother asked.

They knelt down beside the dining-room table and Krebs's mother prayed.

"Now, you pray, Harold," she said.

"I can't," Krebs said.

"Try, Harold."

"I can't."

"Do you want me to pray for you?"

"Yes."

So his mother prayed for him and then they stood up and Krebs kissed his mother and went out of the house. He had tried so to keep his life from being complicated. Still, none of it had touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie. He would go to Kansas City and get a job and she would feel all right about it. There would be one more scene maybe before he got away. He would not go down to his father's office. He would miss that one. He wanted his life to go smoothly. It had just gotten going that way. Well, that was all over now, anyway. He would go over to the schoolyard and watch Helen play indoor baseball.

From *In Our Time* (1925)

## *Questions for Discussion and Suggestions for Further Reading*

### **I. WHY FIGHT? / Introduction by Michael S. Neiberg**

1. Alan Seeger was an American who volunteered to fight for France in 1914. How does his view of the war compare with the one presented by President Wilson in 1917?
2. Why did Americans fight in World War I? How do their reasons for going to war compare with those of the Americans who have fought in more recent conflicts?
3. What reasons did the Socialists give for opposing the war in 1917? How do their criticisms compare with those directed at American foreign policy today?

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Edward A. Gutiérrez, *Doughboys on the Great War: How American Soldiers Viewed Their Military Service* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014)

Jennifer D. Keene, *World War I: The American Soldier Experience* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011)

Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (New York: Viking, 2004)

### **II. THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR / Introduction by Edward G. Lengel**

1. How can language be used to describe modern combat to those who have never experienced it?
2. What place do traditional concepts of courage and strength have on a battlefield where even the bravest and most skilled soldiers are vulnerable to sudden, random, and unseen forces of destruction?
3. War is defined by violence, and yet much of the experience of war takes place away from scenes of violence, in moments of anticipation, recollection, or simply waiting. How do the selections portray/evoke these moments?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998)

Edward G. Lengel, *Thunder and Flames: Americans in the Crucible of Combat, 1917–1918* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2015)

———, *To Conquer Hell: The Meuse-Argonne, 1918, The Epic Battle That Ended the First World War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008)

Michael S. Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005)

### III. RACE AND WORLD WAR I / Introduction by Chad Williams

1. How did W.E.B. Du Bois see the role of black Americans in fighting for democracy in “Close Ranks”? When he wrote “Returning Soldiers” less than a year later, how had his vision changed?
2. How does the military of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries compare with the army of 1917–19 in regards to race? What impact has the desegregation of the armed forces had on American society as a whole?
3. What does Charles Isum’s story tell us about the US army in 1919? What were the senior officers in his division afraid of, and how would their leadership be judged in today’s US military?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

*W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*, ed. Nathan Huggins (New York: Library of America, 1986)

Richard Slotkin, *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005)

Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010)

#### IV. AMERICAN WOMEN AT WAR / Introduction by Jennifer D. Keene

1. What are we to make of the varied experiences related in the selections? Is there a “women’s experience of war”?
2. How much has changed since World War I in the roles that women play during times of national conflict? Is their support as essential on the home front as it was in World War I?
3. Does war act as a transformative force in women’s lives?

##### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Hazel Hutchinson, *The War That Used Up Words: American Writers and the First World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015)

Jennifer D. Keene, *World War I: The American Soldier Experience* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011)

Susan Zeiger, *In Uncle Sam’s Service: Women Workers with the American Expeditionary Force, 1917–1919* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004)

#### V. THE HOME FRONT: SELLING UNITY, SUPPRESSING DISSENT / Introduction by Chad Williams

1. How did Justice Holmes defend the value of free speech? Do you find his arguments persuasive?
2. Are there legitimate political and moral limits to wartime dissent in a democratic society?
3. How do the efforts of the Wilson administration to win support for World War I compare with the attempts of more recent administrations to rally public opinion in wartime?

##### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Celia Malone Kingsbury, *For Home and Country: World War I Propaganda on the Home Front* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2010)

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Geoffrey R. Stone, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime, From the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, Inc., 2004)

## VI. AMERICA ON THE WORLD STAGE / Introduction by Michael S. Neiberg

1. Should the United States try to promote democracy internationally?
2. Can the United States best serve its interests and preserve peace by acting through international organizations, or by maintaining its national sovereignty and the freedom to act unilaterally?
3. Was Wilson foolish or wise in trying to build an international order that did not rest upon the balance of power? Is it possible to have an international system that does not ultimately depend upon the use of force?

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

- A. Scott Berg, *Wilson* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2013)
- Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001)
- Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War, America and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916–1931* (New York: Viking, 2014)

## VII. AT HOME/COMING HOME: THE TOLL OF WAR / Introduction by Jennifer D. Keene

1. Was the Great War a just and noble cause for the Americans who fought in it? Were America's interests best served by fighting in World War I?
2. Did the use of conscription in World War I result in a more fair sharing of the burdens and sacrifice of war than the all-volunteer force of today?
3. How has the experience of returning from war changed in the last hundred years? What has remained the same?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

David Reynolds, *The Long Shadow: The Legacies of the Great War in the Twentieth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2014)

Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003)

Steven Trout, *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919–1941* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2010)

## *Chronology, June 1914–November 1921*

1914

Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife Sophie are shot to death in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on June 28 by Gavrilo Princip, a young Bosnian Serb. Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, July 28. Russia orders full military mobilization, July 30. Austria-Hungary orders full mobilization, July 31.

Germany declares war on Russia, August 1. France orders full mobilization, August 1. Germany invades Luxembourg, August 2, and Belgium, August 4. Britain declares war on Germany, August 4. President Woodrow Wilson proclaims American neutrality on August 4. Montenegro declares war on Austria-Hungary, August 5. Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia, August 6. France and Great Britain declare war on Austria-Hungary, August 12. Japan declares war on Germany, August 23. (Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary becomes known as the Central Powers, and alliance of France, Russia, and Britain as the Entente or the Allies.)

Germans occupy Brussels, August 20. French and British are defeated in series of battles fought along the French frontiers, August 20–24.

Germans defeat Russians in East Prussia in battle of Tannenberg, August 24–31, capturing 92,000 prisoners. Russians begin offensive in eastern Galicia, August 26.

Austro-Hungarians invade northwest Serbia, August 12, but are defeated and retreat across border, August 23.

British begin naval blockade of Germany as main body of German surface fleet remains in harbor, unwilling to risk battle with numerically superior British forces.

German troops in Togoland surrender to British and French forces, August 26. New Zealand, Australia, and Japan occupy German colonies in the Pacific, August 26–October 14.

French and British halt German advance in battle of the Marne, fought west of Paris, September 5–9. Germans withdrawn from the Marne to the Aisne River. Both sides move troops north toward the Channel coast.

Russians capture Lemberg (Lviv) in Austrian Galicia, September 3, and begin siege of Przemyśl, September 24.

Germans defeat Russians in East Prussia in battle of the Masurian Lakes, September 7–13.

Austro-Hungarians launch second invasion of northwest Serbia, September 8.

British and French capture Douala, capital of Cameroon, September 27. (Last German garrison in Cameroon surrenders February 18, 1916.)

Germans begin series of attacks on Allied forces defending Belgian town of Ypres, October 19, in attempt to break through to Channel ports of Dunkirk and Calais. Belgian army retreats to west bank of Yser River and floods lowlands between Nieuport and Dixmude.

Austro-Hungarian forces in Galicia relieve siege of Przemyśl, October 9.

Ottoman Empire enters war on October 29 as Turkish fleet bombards Russian ports in Black Sea.

Battle of Ypres ends November 22 as Germans fail to break through Allied defenses. Both sides entrench along Western Front, which runs for 475 miles from the North Sea coast to the Swiss border.

Siege of Przemyśl resumes on November 6 as Austro-Hungarian armies in Galicia withdraw to the Carpathians.

Garrison at Tsingtao (Qingdao), German concession port in northern China, surrenders to Japanese, November 7, after six-week-long siege.

Austro-Hungarian forces begin major offensive in Serbia, November 6. Serbs evacuate Belgrade, November 29.

Fighting begins between Russians and Turks in the Caucasus, November 6. Ottoman Sultan Mehmed V declares jihad against the Allies, November 14, in unsuccessful attempt to foment rebellion among the Muslim populations of the British, French, and Russian empires. British and Indian troops occupy Basra in Mesopotamia, November 22.

French launch unsuccessful offensives in the Artois, December 17, 1914–January 13, 1915, and in Champagne, December 20, 1914–March 20, 1915.

Germans occupy Łódź in western Poland, December 6. Austro-Hungarian forces defeat Russians in battle of Limanowa-Lapanow, fought southeast of Cracow, December 3–12. Fighting continues in Carpathians during winter.



Serbs launch counteroffensive, December 3–6, that recaptures Belgrade on December 15 as Austro-Hungarian forces are driven from Serbia.

Turks launch offensive in Caucasus, December 22, and are defeated at Sarikamish, December 29–30.

1915 Sarikamish campaign ends, January 15, after Turks lose 75,000 men killed or captured.

Germans announce on February 4 that Allied merchant ships in war zone around Great Britain and Ireland will be sunk by U-boats (submarines) without warning and that neutral shipping should avoid entering the zone. Unrestricted U-boat campaign begins on February 18.

Germans defeat Russians in second battle of the Masurian Lakes, February 7–22.

Anglo-French naval force begins bombarding Turkish fortifications in the Dardanelles, February 19.

Russians capture 120,000 prisoners when garrison of Przemyśl surrenders on March 22.

British impose total blockade on Germany, including all food imports, March 11.

Anglo-French fleet loses three obsolete battleships to mines in unsuccessful attempt to force passage of the Dardanelles, March 18.

Germans launch offensive at Ypres, April 22, using poisonous chlorine gas released from cylinders. Battle continues until May 25 as Germans gain ground but fail to capture Ypres. (British begin using poison gas in September 1915.)

Turkish police arrest more than two hundred prominent Armenians in Istanbul, April 24. (Evidence indicates that in March 1915 the leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress, which had ruled the Ottoman Empire since 1913, decided to remove the Armenian population of Anatolia by deportation and mass murder.) British, Australian, New Zealand, and French troops land on Gallipoli peninsula, April 25, beginning land campaign to open the Dardanelles. Campaign becomes stalemated, with Allied forces confined to shallow beachheads.

French launch new offensive in the Artois, May 9–June 18, supported by British attacks at Aubers Ridge, May 9, and Festubert, May 15–25.

Germans and Austro-Hungarians break through Russian

lines between Gorlice and Tarnow in southeast Poland, May 2–4, and recapture Przemyśl, June 3, and Lemberg, June 22, as Russians retreat from Galicia.

Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary, May 23. Italian troops cross the Austrian border and advance to the Isonzo River with objective of seizing Trieste. In the first battle of the Isonzo, June 23–July 7, Italians fail to capture high ground east of the river. (Italians will launch four additional offensives in the Isonzo valley, July 1915–March 1916, that fail to break through Austro-Hungarian defenses.)

Ottoman authorities begin deportation of Armenians from Anatolia into the Syrian desert in May as mass killings are carried out by Kurdish tribesmen and criminal gangs recruited by the Special Organization, paramilitary group controlled by the Committee of Union and Progress. (By the summer of 1916 an estimated 800,000 to one million Armenians are killed, or die from hunger and disease, in the massacres and deportations, along with at least 150,000 Assyrian Christians.)

U-boat sinks British ocean liner *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland on May 7, killing 1,198 people, including 128 Americans. United States protests sinking on May 13 as an “unlawful and inhumane act.” Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan resigns on June 9, fearing that Wilson’s continued defense of the right of Americans to travel on belligerent ships will lead to war.

German air service deploys first fighter aircraft with forward-firing machine gun in July. (British and French will introduce equivalent aircraft into service by early 1916. From the beginning of the war all of the major powers use aircraft for reconnaissance and bombing raids; Germans also use Zeppelins for bombing and maritime reconnaissance.)

German forces in South-West Africa (Namibia) surrender, July 9.

Germans and Austro-Hungarians launch new offensive, July 13, that forces Russians to retreat from Poland. German forces capture Warsaw, August 5. Austro-Hungarians capture Brest-Litovsk, August 26.

U-boat sinks British liner *Arabic* off Ireland, August 19, killing two Americans. Seeking to avoid American entry into war, Germans suspend unrestricted U-boat campaign, August 27, and pledge on September 1 not to sink passenger ships without warning.

British troops land at Suvla Bay, August 6, as part of new attempt to break stalemate at Gallipoli. Offensive ends on August 15 with Turks still holding high ground and the Allies confined to their beachheads. French launch offensives in Champagne, September 25–November 6, and the Artois, September 25–October 16. Attack in the Artois is supported by British offensive at Loos, September 25–October 19.

Germans capture Vilna, September 18. Russian retreat ends in late September along line running from Gulf of Riga south to the Romanian border near Czernowitz (Chernivtsi).

British and Indian troops in Mesopotamia advance up Tigris and capture Kut, September 28.

French and British troops begin landing at Salonika, Greece, on October 5 in effort to aid Serbs. German and Austro-Hungarian forces invade Serbia from the north, October 7, and capture Belgrade, October 9. Bulgaria invades Serbia from east, October 14. Serbian army begins winter retreat across mountains into Montenegro and Albania, November 24. (Survivors are evacuated from the Adriatic coast by Allies, January–April 1916, and later join Allied forces at Salonika.)

British begin advance up Tigris toward Baghdad, November 19, but fail to break through Turkish defenses at Ctesiphon (Salman Pak), November 22–25, and retreat to Kut. Turks begin siege of Kut, December 7. Allies begin evacuation of Gallipoli in mid-December.

1916 Allied evacuation of Gallipoli is completed, January 8. Austro-Hungarians invade Montenegro, January 5, and complete occupation of the country, January 25. Russians begin offensive in the Caucasus, January 10, and capture Erzurum, February 16.

Germans begin offensive at Verdun, February 21, and capture Fort Douaumont, key French position, February 25, but are unable to break through inner defensive line. Fighting extends to left (west) bank of the Meuse, March 6, as Germans continue offensive intended to exhaust French army in battle of attrition.

Germany declares war on Portugal, March 9, after the Portuguese government seizes interned German ships.

Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa raids Columbus,

New Mexico, on March 9, killing eighteen Americans. Wilson sends military expedition led by General John J. Pershing into Mexico in pursuit of Villa, March 15 (expedition ends in early February 1917 without Villa being captured).

U-boat torpedoes French passenger ship *Sussex* in the English Channel, March 24, injuring several Americans. Wilson warns Germany on April 18 that the U.S. will break diplomatic relations if attacks on passenger ships continue. German government pledges on May 4 that it will abide by established rules of naval warfare, which require that the passengers and crew of a ship be placed in lifeboats before it is sunk.

Allied forces begin offensive in German East Africa, April 3. (Fighting extends into Portuguese East Africa and Northern Rhodesia in 1917–18 before last German forces surrender on November 25, 1918.)

Irish republicans begin Easter Uprising in Dublin, April 24. Insurrection is suppressed by British troops, April 29.

Russians capture Trabzon, Turkish Black Sea port, on April 18. British garrison at Kut surrenders, April 29.

American volunteer pilots fly first patrol with Escadrille N. 124, French fighter squadron later known as the Lafayette Escadrille, May 13.

Sykes-Picot agreement, ratified May 16, divides postwar Middle East into zones of British and French direct control and indirect influence while envisioning international zone in Palestine under British, French, and Russian administration. (The borders established in Middle East during the 1920s do not follow boundaries outlined in Sykes-Picot agreement.)

Austro-Hungarians begin offensive in the Trentino, May 15, and capture Asiago, May 28. Offensive is halted on June 10.

German fleet sails into North Sea on May 31 in attempt to engage British fleet on favorable terms. In battle of Jutland, May 31–June 1, British lose three battle cruisers, three armored cruisers, eight destroyers, and 6,000 men killed, while Germans lose one battle cruiser, one obsolete battleship, four light cruisers, five destroyers, and 2,500 men killed. British retain control of North Sea and continue blockade.

Russian offensive in Galicia, June 4, breaks through

Austro-Hungarian lines and captures 200,000 prisoners by June 12. Germans make final attempt to capture Verdun, June 23.

Arab revolt against Ottoman rule begins in the Hejaz, June 10.

British and French begin offensive along Somme River, July 1, after weeklong preliminary bombardment.

In sixth battle of the Isonzo, August 6–17, Italians succeed in capturing Gorizia. (Italians will launch another four offensives along the Isonzo, September 1916–June 1917, that make limited gains in the high ground east of the river.) Italy declares war on Germany, August 28.

Romania declares war on Austria-Hungary, August 27, and invades Transylvania. German, Bulgarian, and Turkish forces invade southern Romania, September 2. Germans and Austro-Hungarians begin counteroffensive in Transylvania, September 25.

British use tanks for the first time with limited success on the Somme, September 15. Russian offensive in Galicia ends, September 20. French counteroffensive at Verdun recaptures Fort Douaumont, October 24.

Wilson wins reelection on November 7, defeating Republican Charles Evans Hughes.

Battle of the Somme ends, November 18, with a maximum Allied advance of seven miles. British lose 420,000 men killed, wounded, or missing, while French casualties total 200,000; German casualties are estimated at 430,000.

Franz Joseph, emperor of Austria since 1848, dies on November 21 and is succeeded by his nephew Karl.

Herbert Henry Asquith, prime minister of Great Britain since 1908, resigns on December 5, and is succeeded by David Lloyd George. Germans capture Bucharest, December 6, as Romanian army retreats north into Moldavia. French counteroffensive at Verdun, December 15–18, regains much of the ground lost earlier in the year. French lose 377,000 men killed, wounded, or missing in battle, while German casualties total 337,000.

1917 Decision by German military and naval leadership to resume unrestricted U-boat warfare is endorsed by Kaiser Wilhelm II on January 9.

Wilson calls for “peace without victory” in address to the Senate, January 22.

Unrestricted U-boat warfare resumes, February 1. United States breaks diplomatic relations with Germany, February 3. Decoded text of Zimmerman telegram, diplomatic message proposing a German-Mexican alliance against the United States, is published on March 1.

Germans shorten their line in France by withdrawing twelve to twenty-five miles to "Hindenburg Line," strongly fortified position, March 16-18.

British retake Kut, February 25, and occupy Baghdad, March 11.

Food riots in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), March 8-12, result in mutiny by city garrison. Tsar Nicholas II abdicates, March 15, as provisional government is established with Prince Lvov as prime minister.

Wilson asks Congress on April 2 to declare war against Germany. War resolution is approved by the Senate, 82-6, on April 4 and by the House, 373-50, on April 6. (U.S. Army has 127,000 officers and men, with another 80,000 men in the National Guard on federal service.)

British begin offensive at Arras on April 9. Canadian troops capture Vimy Ridge, April 9-12. Battle continues until May 16 as British are unable to exploit initial success; British casualties total 150,000 killed, wounded, or missing.

French launch offensive against Chemin des Dames, high ground north of the Aisne, on April 16 that fails to achieve breakthrough. Offensive ends on May 16 after French lose 130,000 men killed, wounded, or missing. Failure of attack causes widespread protests and unrest in French army, with many soldiers refusing to engage in further attacks. French commanders restore order by improving leave conditions and avoiding costly attacks.

General Pershing is appointed commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), May 10. Wilson signs Selective Service Act, May 18, making men twenty-one to thirty eligible for the draft (registration is extended in September 1918 to men eighteen to forty-five).

British capture Messines ridge south of Ypres, June 7-14.

Wilson signs Espionage Act, June 15, that includes penalties for attempts to incite "disloyalty" in the armed forces or to obstruct enlistments.

White mobs attack black residents of East St. Louis, Illinois, July 2-3, during rioting in which at least thirty-nine African Americans and nine whites are killed.

Greece declares war on Central Powers, July 2. Arab insurgents capture Aqaba, July 6.

Russians launch offensive in Galicia, July 1–16. Demoralized Russian forces collapse when Germans counterattack, July 19. Alexander Kerensky becomes prime minister of Russian provisional government, July 21.

Germans begin using mustard gas, a liquid blistering agent, in Flanders, July 12. (Allies will begin using mustard gas in June 1918. Poison gas causes death of an estimated 90,000 soldiers on all sides, 1915–18.)

British launch offensive at Ypres, July 31, after fifteen-day preliminary bombardment.

U-boats sink almost 4.4 million tons of shipping, February–August 1917. (Germans had sunk 4.2 million tons, August 1914–January 1917.) Sinkings begin to decline as British gradually adopt convoy system, aided by increasing numbers of U.S. destroyers made available for escort duty.

Italians capture Bainsizza plateau northeast of Gorizia in eleventh battle of the Isonzo, August 19–September 12.

Germans capture Riga, September 3.

Germans and Austro-Hungarians launch offensive at Caporetto on the upper Isonzo, October 24, and force the Italians to retreat sixty miles to the Paive River. Italians lose 280,000 men taken prisoner, while another 350,000 men become stragglers or desert.

Third battle of Ypres (also known as battle of Passchendaele) ends, November 10, with maximum Allied advance of four miles; British lose 244,000 killed, wounded, or missing, the Germans 215,000. Georges Clemenceau becomes premier of France, November 16. British break through Hindenburg Line at Cambrai, November 20, in surprise attack using more than 300 tanks. German counteroffensive on November 30 recovers much of the lost ground.

British break through Turkish defenses at Gaza, November 1–6, and advance into Palestine. Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issues declaration on November 2 committing British government to “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” British occupy Jerusalem, December 9.

Bolshevik coup in Petrograd overthrows provisional government, November 7, and establishes Soviet regime led by Vladimir Lenin. Romania signs armistice, December 9. Bolsheviks sign armistice, December 15.

U.S. declares war on Austria-Hungary, December 7. Congress proposes Eighteenth Amendment, establishing prohibition, to the states, December 18.

1918 Wilson outlines terms of peace settlement in Fourteen Points address to Congress, January 8.

Bolsheviks sign peace treaty with Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, March 3.

Outbreak of Spanish influenza in Kansas in early March spreads across the United States and travels overseas.

Germans launch offensive against British at St. Quentin, March 21–April 5, and advance up to forty miles. Attack is most successful on Western Front since 1914, but fails to capture railroad junction at Amiens. Allies lose 255,000 men killed, wounded, or captured, the Germans 240,000. French general Ferdinand Foch becomes first Allied supreme commander on the Western Front, April 3. Germans break through British defenses along Lys River south of Ypres, April 9–29, but fail to capture supply center at Hazebrouck.

Romania signs peace treaty with Central Powers at Bucharest, May 7.

Wilson signs Sedition Act, May 16. (The Wilson administration will prosecute 2,168 individuals under the Espionage and Sedition acts for their speeches or writings and obtain 1,055 convictions; forty-one defendants are sentenced to terms of ten, fifteen, or twenty years.)

Germans launch third spring offensive, May 27–June 4, breaking through French lines along the Aisne River and advancing to the Marne. American troops join French in defense of Marne crossing at Château-Thierry, June 1–3, and drive Germans from Belleau Wood, June 6–25.

Italians defeat Austro-Hungarian offensive along Piave, June 15–23. American troops in Europe total 897,000 by June 30.

During final German offensive, July 15–18, Americans fight with the French along the Marne, then join counter-offensive that advances to Aisne and Vesle rivers in early August.

British launch offensive at Amiens, August 8–12, that captures 12,000 prisoners in its first day.

American troops land at Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok, August 16, and Arctic port of Archangel, September



4. (Troops are sent to guard military supplies and railroads and to assist Czechoslovak forces that seek to leave Russia and fight with the Allies.)

New and more virulent strain of Spanish influenza arrives in United States in late August. (Influenza pandemic of 1918–19 kills an estimated 675,000 Americans and at least thirty million people worldwide.)

In its first operation as an independent army under Pershing's command, the AEF eliminates the St. Mihiel salient southeast of Verdun, September 12–16, capturing 13,000 prisoners. Allies begin general offensive, September 26–29, attacking in Flanders, Picardy, and Champagne. AEF launches Meuse-Argonne offensive, September 26.

French, British, Serbian, and Greek forces begin offensive in Macedonia, September 15, and advance up the Vardar valley. Bulgaria signs armistice, September 29.

Eugene V. Debs, four-time Socialist candidate for president, is tried in Cleveland under the Espionage Act of 1917 for having made an antiwar speech in June 1918. Convicted on September 13, he is sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

British forces capture Damascus, October 1.

British break through Hindenburg Line, September 29–October 5. Prince Max of Baden, the newly appointed German chancellor, sends note to Wilson on October 5 asking for an armistice and peace negotiations on basis of the Fourteen Points. Americans break through main defensive line in the Meuse-Argonne, October 14–17. German navy orders U-boats to end attacks on civilian ships, October 21. (Germans sink 4.1 million tons of merchant shipping, September 1917–October 1918; 178 U-boats are lost at sea, 1914–18.) American troops in Europe total 2,057,000.

Ottoman Empire signs armistice, October 30. Italian victory in battle of Vittorio Veneto, October 24–November 3, brings about collapse of Austro-Hungarian army. Austria-Hungary signs armistice, November 3. Allies launch series of attacks along the Western Front, October 31–November 4. Wilhelm II abdicates his throne, November 9, as German republic is proclaimed in Berlin. Germans sign armistice, which goes into effect on November 11 at 11 A.M.

Czechoslovak republic proclaimed in Prague, November

14. Independent Polish state proclaimed in Warsaw, November 16.

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes proclaimed in Belgrade, December 1. American occupation forces enter Germany, December 1, and cross the Rhine, December 13. Wilson sails for France on December 5 to attend peace conference.

1919

Ratification of Eighteenth Amendment completed, January 16 (Prohibition goes into effect on January 17, 1920). Paris peace conference opens, January 18, and adopts draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations, February 14. Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge announces that thirty-seven senators and senators-elect are opposed to the draft covenant, March 4. Treaty of Versailles is presented to German delegation, May 17. American troops leave North Russia, June 3–August 5. Congress proposes Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote, to the states on June 4. Treaty of Versailles is signed on June 28. Wilson presents the Treaty to the Senate, July 10. Twenty-three African Americans and fifteen whites are killed during race riots in Chicago, July 27–31. In attempt to rally support for the League of Nations, Wilson begins national speaking tour, September 3. Peace treaties with Austria, Bulgaria, and Hungary are signed, September 10–June 4, 1920. Wilson has nervous breakdown in Pueblo, Colorado, on September 25 and returns to the White House. Suffers ischemic stroke that leaves him paralyzed on his left side, October 2. White mobs and U.S. troops kill more than one hundred African Americans in Phillips County, Arkansas, September 30–October 4, in response to false reports of an uprising by black sharecroppers. Lodge presents fourteen reservations to treaty, October 24. Wilson sends letter on November 18 rejecting the Lodge reservations as a “nullification” of the Treaty. On November 19 Senate rejects ratification with reservations, 39–55, and unconditional ratification, 38–53. (In first vote, thirty-five Republicans and four Democrats support the Lodge reservations; in the second vote, thirty-seven Democrats and one Republican vote for the treaty.)

1920

Last American troops leave France, January 3. (American occupation of Germany ends in January 1923.) Soviet Russia signs treaties recognizing Estonian, Lithuanian,

and Latvian independence, February 2–August 11. Senate votes 49–35 to ratify Versailles treaty with reservations, March 19, falling seven votes short of the necessary two-thirds majority. (Austrian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian treaties all incorporate the League of Nations covenant, and are never submitted to the Senate for ratification.) Last U.S. troops leave Vladivostok, April 1. At conference held in San Remo, Italy, April 19–26, British and French agree that France will receive League of Nations mandate for Syria (including Lebanon) and Britain will receive mandates for Iraq and Palestine (including territory that becomes Transjordan in 1923). Peace treaty with Turkey is signed at Sèvres, August 10. (United States is not a signatory to the Sèvres treaty, which is replaced by Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.) Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment is completed, August 18. Poland and Lithuania sign peace treaty, October 7. Warren G. Harding, Republican senator from Ohio, defeats James M. Cox, Democratic governor of Ohio, in presidential election on November 2. Eugene V. Debs, who is still in federal prison, receives more than 3 percent of the popular vote. (Debs is released on December 25, 1921, after Harding commutes his sentence.)

1921 Poland and Soviets sign treaty in Riga, March 18, ending their 1919–20 war. Harding signs congressional resolution ending state of war with Germany, Austria, and Hungary, July 2. United States signs separate peace treaties with Austria, August 24, Germany, August 25, and Hungary, August 29. Harding dedicates Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, November 11.

More than 116,000 Americans died while serving in the armed forces during World War I; of these deaths, 53,000 were the result of hostile action and 63,000 were from non-combat causes. Battle deaths by service were approximately 50,500 in the army, 400 in the navy, and 2,500 in the marines; 26,000 of the battle deaths were men killed in the Meuse-Argonne campaign (September 26–November 11, 1918). It is estimated that 46,000 of the noncombat deaths were from influenza.

Great Britain and Ireland lost 744,000 military dead; India, 74,000; Australia, 62,000; Canada, 57,000; New Zealand, 18,000; South Africa, 7,000; and Newfoundland,

1,200. France lost 1,400,000 military dead, including 70,000 from its colonies; Russia, 1,800,000; Italy, 650,000; Romania, 336,000; Serbia, 278,000; and Belgium, 38,000. Germany lost 2,000,000 military dead; Austria-Hungary, 1,200,000; the Ottoman Empire, 770,000; and Bulgaria, 87,500. About 15,000 African soldiers died on both sides in African campaigns, along with an estimated 150,000 porters and laborers, mostly from disease and malnutrition. The total number of military dead from 1914 to 1918 is estimated at more than 9 million, while total civilian deaths from violence and war-related food shortages and epidemics (excluding the 1918 influenza pandemic) are estimated at 6 million, including 2,100,000 in the Ottoman Empire and 1,500,000 in Russia.

## Biographical Notes

**Mary Borden** (May 15, 1886–December 2, 1968) Born in Chicago, Illinois, the daughter of a wealthy businessman with extensive holdings in real estate, mining, and dairy products. Graduated from Vassar in 1907. Married George Douglas Turner, a Scottish lay missionary, in 1908. Published two novels under pseudonym Bridget Maclagan, 1912–13. Used her inheritance to establish military hospital at Rousbrugge, Belgium, in July 1915; her nursing staff included the American volunteer Ellen N. La Motte. Served as director of hospital at Bray-sur-Somme, August 1916–February 1917, and at hospital in Mont-Notre-Dame during the 1917 spring offensive in Champagne, before returning to Rousbrugge. Published four poems in the *English Review*, August–December 1917. After divorce from her first husband, married Edward Spears, a British liaison officer who had served with the French army on the Somme. Lived in Paris, 1918–21, before moving to England. Published *The Forbidden Zone* (1929), collection of sketches and poems based on wartime experiences, nonfiction work *The Technique of Marriage* (1933), and numerous novels, including *Jane: Our Stranger* (1923), *Flamingo* (1927), and *Passport for a Girl* (1939). Organized field hospital in Lorraine in February 1940. Escaped from Bordeaux in late June 1940 and returned to England. Reorganized hospital unit and served with Free French forces in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Libya, 1941–42, and in eastern France in 1945; spent remainder of the war with her husband, who served as the British envoy to Syria and Lebanon, 1941–44. Published memoir *Journey Down a Blind Alley* (1946), describing experiences in Second World War. Continued to write novels, including *For the Record* (1950) and *Martin Merriedew* (1952). Died in Warfield, Berkshire, England.

**Willa Cather** (December 7, 1873–April 24, 1947) Born in Back Creek Valley, near Winchester, Virginia, daughter of a sheep farmer. Parents and other relatives moved to the Nebraska Divide in 1883, ultimately settling in Red Cloud. Attended University of Nebraska, where she studied Greek, Latin, French, German, and English literature; graduated 1894. Published poetry and short fiction and began contributing reviews to *The Nebraska State Journal*. Worked in Pittsburgh as a magazine editor and reviewer for Pittsburgh *Leader*, and later as high school Latin teacher. Published poetry collection *April Twilights* (1903) and story collection *The Troll Garden* (1905). Moved to New York in

1906 as editor of *McClure's Magazine*; subsequently spent time in Boston and London, and frequently returned to Nebraska. First novel *Alexander's Bridge* published in 1912, followed by *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and *My Ántonia* (1918). Traveled extensively in Southwest. Toured French battlefields to research novel *One of Ours* (1922), inspired by cousin G. P. Cather, who was killed at Cantigny in 1918. Later novels included *A Lost Lady* (1923), *The Professor's House* (1925), *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), *Shadows on the Rock* (1931), *Lucy Gayheart* (1935), and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (1940), along with story collections *Youth and the Bright Medusa* (1920), *Obscure Destinies* (1932), and *The Old Beauty and Others* (1945). Died in New York City.

**George Creel** (December 1, 1876–October 2, 1953) Born in Lafayette County, Missouri, the son of a farmer. Reporter for *Kansas City World*, 1896. Freelance joke writer for newspapers and magazines in New York City, 1897–98. Co-founded *Kansas City Independent*, a weekly newspaper, in 1899 and served as its publisher and editor until 1909. Editorial writer for the *Denver Post*, 1909–10, and the (Denver) *Rocky Mountain News*, 1911–13. Married Blanche Bates, 1912. Supported Woodrow Wilson in 1912 presidential election. Served as reform police commissioner of Denver, 1912–13, before losing position in political power struggle. Wrote for magazines and published *Children in Bondage* (1914), study of child labor written with Edwin Markham and Ben Lindsay. Worked on Wilson's reelection campaign and published *Wilson and the Issues* (1916). Appointed chairman of the Committee on Public Information, government wartime propaganda organization, in April 1917 and served until its dissolution in June 1919. Published *Ireland's Fight for Freedom* (1919), *The War, The World, and Wilson* (1920), and *How We Advertised America* (1920). Moved to San Francisco in 1926. Published a history of Mexico, *The People Next Door* (1926), *Sam Houston: Colossus in Buckskin* (1928), and *Tom Paine: Liberty Bell* (1932). Defeated by Upton Sinclair in 1934 California Democratic gubernatorial primary. After death of his wife, married Alice Rosseter in 1943. Published *War Criminals and Punishment* (1944), autobiography *Rebel at Large* (1947), and *Russia's Race for Asia* (1949). Died in San Francisco.

**W.E.B. Du Bois** (February 23, 1868–August 29, 1963) Born William Edward Burghardt Du Bois in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the son of a barber and a domestic servant. Entered Fisk University in 1885; spent summers teaching in the South; graduated Fisk 1888. Studied philosophy at Harvard, awarded BA cum laude in 1890, MA in history in 1891. Studied for two years in Berlin. Awarded PhD in history from Harvard in 1895. Taught at Wilberforce

University, 1894–97. Married Nina Gomer in 1896. Published *The Suppression of the Africa Slave-Trade to the United States of America 1638–1870* (1896), *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), and *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Professor of history and economics at Atlanta University, 1897–1910. Helped found National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909 and edited its monthly magazine, *The Crisis*, 1910–34. Executive secretary of Pan-African Congress held in Paris in 1919. Later books included *John Brown* (1909), *Darkwater* (1920), *Black Reconstruction* (1935), and *Dusk of Dawn* (1940). Resigned from NAACP in 1934 in policy dispute. Professor of sociology at Atlanta University, 1934–44. Returned to NAACP in 1944 as director of special research, but was dismissed in 1948 for criticizing “reactionary, war-mongering” American foreign policy. Helped found Peace Information Center in 1950 and served as its chairman. Indicted in 1951 under Foreign Agents Registration Act for his role in the now-dissolved Center; charges were dismissed at trial later in the year. After wife’s death, married Shirley Graham in 1951. Denied passport in 1952; after it was restored in 1958, visited Soviet Union and China. Settled in Ghana in 1961. Died in Accra.

**Robert Frost** (March 26, 1874–January 29, 1963) Born in San Francisco, California, the son of a journalist. Family moved to New Hampshire in 1885 following father’s death. Attended Dartmouth in fall 1892. Worked as schoolteacher, in woolen mill, and as newspaper reporter. Married Elinor White in 1895. Attended Harvard, 1897–99, before taking up poultry farming. Moved to England in 1912 and published poetry collections *A Boy’s Will* (1913) and *North of Boston* (1914). Met Ezra Pound and William Butler Yeats; formed close friendship with English essayist and poet Edward Thomas. Returned to United States in 1915. Began teaching at Amherst in 1917 and at the Bread Loaf School of English in 1921; would also hold appointments at the University of Michigan and Harvard. Later collections included *Mountain Interval* (1916), *Selected Poems* (1923), *New Hampshire* (1923), *West-Running Brook* (1928), *Collected Poems* (1930), *A Further Range* (1936), *A Witness Tree* (1942), *Steeple Bush* (1947), and *In the Clearing* (1962). Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress, 1958–59. Recited his poem “The Gift Outright” at the inauguration ceremony of John F. Kennedy in 1961. Visited Russia in 1962. Awarded Bollingen Prize shortly before his death in Boston.

**James Norman Hall** (April 22, 1887–July 5, 1951) Born in Colfax, Iowa, the son of a farmer and grocer. Graduated from Grinnell College in 1910. Worked for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Boston while studying for a master’s degree at Harvard. While on vacation in England at the outbreak of World

War I, enlisted in the 9th Royal Fusiliers by claiming to be Canadian. Landed in France in May 1915 and served as machine gunner at the Battle of Loos. Discharged in December 1915 on discovery of his nationality. Returned to Boston. Published *Kitchener's Mob: The Adventures of an American in the British Army* (1916). Sent to France by *The Atlantic* to cover the formation of an American squadron in the French Air Service. Volunteered for aviation training in October 1916. Joined the Lafayette Escadrille (Escadrille N. 124) in June 1917 and was shot down and wounded later in the month. Returned to the Lafayette Escadrille in October 1917. Commissioned as captain in the U.S. Army aviation service in February 1918. Served with the 103rd Aero Squadron and 94th Aero Squadron. Published *High Adventure: A Narrative of Air Fighting in France* (1918). Shot down and captured near Pagny-sur-Moselle in Lorraine on May 7, 1918, and was a prisoner until the Armistice. Collaborated with Charles Nordhoff on *The Lafayette Flying Corps* (1920), history of American pilots in French service. Traveled to Tahiti with Nordhoff in 1920 and settled there for the remainder of his life. Married Sarah Winchester in 1925. Collaborated with Nordhoff on series of novels, including *Falcons of France* (1929); the trilogy *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1932), *Men Against the Sea* (1934); and *Pitcairn's Island* (1934); *The Hurricane* (1936); *Botany Bay* (1941); and *Men Without a Country* (1942). Published numerous books written on his own, including *On the Stream of Travel* (1926), *Mid-Pacific* (1928), *Doctor Dogbody's Leg* (1940), *Lost Island* (1944), *The Far Lands* (1950), and *My Island Home* (1952). Died in Arue, Tahiti.

**Warren G. Harding** (November 2, 1865–August 2, 1923) Born in Blooming Grove, Ohio, the son of a farmer who became a homeopathic practitioner. Graduated from Ohio Central College in 1882. Became editor and publisher of the *Marion Star* in 1884. Married Florence DeWolfe in 1891. Elected as a Republican to the Ohio state senate and served, 1899–1903. Lieutenant governor of Ohio, 1904–05. Unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1910. Elected as a Republican to the U.S. Senate and served, 1915–21. Won the Republican presidential nomination in 1920 and defeated Governor James M. Cox. President of the United States from 1921 until his death. Died in San Francisco from a heart attack.

**Ernest Hemingway** (July 21, 1899–July 2, 1961) Born in Oak Park, Illinois. Reporter for *Kansas City Star*, 1917–18. Served as Red Cross ambulance driver and canteen worker with Italian army in World War I and was severely wounded in July 1918. Married Hadley Richardson in 1921. Traveled to France in 1921 as foreign correspondent for *Toronto Star*. First story collection *In Our Time* appeared in 1925,



followed by novels *The Torrents of Spring* and *The Sun Also Rises* in 1926. After divorce from his first wife, married Pauline Pfeiffer in 1927. Returned to United States in 1928, settling in Key West in 1930. Subsequent fiction included *Men Without Women* (1927), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *Winner Take Nothing* (1933), and *To Have and Have Not* (1937); also published *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), about bullfighting, and *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935), about big game hunting. Covered Spanish Civil War as correspondent for North American Newspaper Alliance, 1936–37, an experience that helped inspire novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Settled in Cuba, 1939–40. After divorce from second wife, married war correspondent Martha Gellhorn in 1940 and traveled with her to China as correspondent for *PM*, 1941. War correspondent in northwest Europe for *Collier's*, May 1944–March 1945. After divorce from third wife, married former war correspondent Mary Welsh in 1946. Published *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950) and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). Won Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. Committed suicide in Ketcham, Idaho.

**Morris Hillquit** (August 1, 1869–October 8, 1933) Born Moishe Hillkowitz in Riga, Russia (now Latvia), the son of a factory owner. Immigrated to New York City in 1886. Worked as cuff maker in shirt factory. Joined Socialist Labor Party of America in 1887 and became union organizer in garment industry. Graduated from New York University Law School in 1893 and became successful labor lawyer. Married Vera Levene in 1893. Led faction of Socialist Labor Party that merged with Social Democratic Party to form Socialist Party of America in 1901. Published *History of Socialism in the United States* (1903) and *Socialism in Theory and Practice* (1909). Ran for Congress in 1906, 1908, 1916, 1918, and 1920. Became counsel for International Ladies Garment Workers Union in 1913. Along with Algernon Lee and Charles Emil Ruthenberg, drafted antiwar resolution adopted by Socialist Party in spring 1917. Served as attorney for socialist publications censored by the post office. Ran for mayor of New York in 1917 and 1932. Elected national chairman of the Socialist Party in 1929. Died in New York City.

**Oliver Wendell Holmes** (March 8, 1841–March 6, 1935) Born in Boston, the son of the physician, poet, and essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes. Graduated from Harvard in 1861. Served as an officer with the 20th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, July 1861–July 1864, and was wounded at Ball's Bluff, Antietam, and the Second Battle of Fredericksburg. Graduated from Harvard Law School in 1866. Practiced law in Boston, wrote legal articles, and edited new edition of James Kent's *Commentaries on American Law*. Married Fanny Bowditch Dixwell in 1872. Published *The Common Law* in 1881. Served as an

associate justice of the Massachusetts supreme judicial court, 1883–99, as its chief justice, 1899–1902, and as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1902–32. Died in Washington, D.C.

**Charles R. Isum** (May 22, 1889–March 6, 1941) Born in California. Worked as bookbinder for the *Los Angeles Times*. Drafted into army and was assigned to the medical detachment of the First Battalion, 365th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division. In June 1918 his regiment arrived in France, where it held the St. Die sector of the Lorraine front, August–September. Regiment was kept in reserve during opening of the Meuse-Argonne offensive before being sent to Marbache Sector along the Moselle in October. Served in battalion aid station at Pont-à-Mousson under heavy artillery fire, November 5–10, before being sent to Lesménils, where he was gassed on the night before the Armistice. Threatened with court-martial in January 1919 for violating order forbidding black soldiers from speaking with French women, but charges were dropped, and Isum was honorably discharged in March 1919. Returned to Los Angeles and job at the *Times*. Married Zellee Jones. Retired from work in 1930s as heart condition linked to wartime gassing worsened. Daughter Rachel, born 1922, began studying nursing in 1940 at UCLA, where she met star athlete Jackie Robinson and introduced him to her father shortly before his death. (Rachel Isum and Jackie Robinson married in 1946, the year before he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers.)

**Vernon E. Kniptash** (December 6, 1896–September 1987) Born in Terre Haute, Indiana, the son of a clerk for a dry goods wholesaler. Family moved to Indianapolis. Graduated from Manual High School in 1914. Became draftsman at architectural firm of Vonnegut and Bohn. (Firm was co-founded by Bernard Vonnegut, grandfather of the novelist Kurt Vonnegut.) Enlisted in April 1917. Landed in France in November 1917 with 150th Field Artillery Regiment, 42nd (Rainbow) Division. Assigned to regimental headquarters as wireless operator. Served in Lunéville and Baccarat sectors of the Lorraine front, February–June 1918, and in Marne-Aisne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne campaigns, July–November 1918. Discharged as corporal in May 1919. Returned to work at Vonnegut and Bohn. Married Maude Wolfe in 1920. Studied structural engineering. Lost job with Vonnegut and Bohn during the Depression. Worked for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Joined the Carl M. Geupel Company, major Indiana construction firm, in 1942 as consulting engineer. After the death of his first wife, married Margaret Kellenbach in 1946. Retired in 1967.

**Algernon Lee** (September 15, 1873–January 5, 1954) Born in Dubuque,

Iowa, the son of a carpenter. Attended University of Minnesota, 1892–97. Joined Socialist Labor Party in 1895 and Socialist Party of America in 1901. Moved to New York City in 1899 to become editor of *The Worker*. Became educational director of the Rand School of Social Science in 1909. Along with Morris Hillquit and Charles Emil Ruthenberg, co-authored anti-war resolution adopted by Socialist Party in spring 1917. Left Socialist Party in factional split in 1936 and helped form Social Democratic Federation. Died in Amityville, New York.

**Henry Cabot Lodge** (May 12, 1850–November 9, 1924) Born in Boston, the son of a successful merchant. Graduated from Harvard in 1871. Married Anna Cabot Davis in 1871. Graduated from Harvard Law School in 1874; awarded a PhD in history and government by Harvard in 1876. Wrote numerous historical works, including biographies of Alexander Hamilton (1882), Daniel Webster (1883), and George Washington (1888). Elected to the Massachusetts house of representatives as a Republican and served 1880–81. Served in Congress, 1887–93, and in the Senate from 1893 until his death. Chairman of the Senate Republican conference, 1918–24, and the Foreign Relations Committee, 1919–24. Died in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**Shirley Millard** (November 25, 1890–March 4, 1977) Born Shirley Eastham, daughter of a socially prominent family in Portland, Oregon. Served as Red Cross nurse with French military hospital in 1918. Married Alfred Millard, Jr., in 1919; they were divorced in 1931. Published memoir *I Saw Them Die: Diary and Recollections of Shirley Millard* (1936). Died in Los Angeles, California.

**Horace Pippin** (February 22, 1888–July 6, 1946) Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania; grew up in Goshen, New York. Developed love of drawing and painting in childhood. Worked at various jobs including hotel porter, furniture crater, and iron molder. Joined the army in 1917 and was sent to France as part of 369th Infantry (“Harlem Hellfighters”). Was badly wounded in the right shoulder near Séchault on September 30, 1918, losing the full use of his arm. Received Croix de Guerre. Returned to United States in 1919 and settled in West Chester, living on odd jobs and his disability pension. Married Jennie Wade in 1920. Resumed activity as an artist, executing oil paintings using his left hand to assist his injured right arm; the first of these, *The End of the War: Starting Home* (c. 1930), took over three years to complete. His work, focused on historical and political themes and scenes of African-American life, attracted local attention and was championed by painter N. C. Wyeth. Began exhibiting in galleries and major museums including the Carlen Gallery (Philadelphia), the

Corcoran Gallery (Washington, D.C.), the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Museum of Modern Art. Died in West Chester.

**Charles Emil Ruthenberg** (July 9, 1882–March 3, 1927) Born in Cleveland, Ohio, the son of a longshoreman. Worked as bookkeeper and sales manager for regional publishing company. Married Rosaline Nickel in 1904. Joined Socialist Party in 1909. Edited *The Cleveland Socialist*, 1911–13, and *Socialist News*, 1914–19. Along with Morris Hillquit and Algernon Lee, helped draft antiwar resolution adopted by Socialist Party in spring 1917. Convicted under Espionage Act for making antiwar speech on May 17, 1917, and sentenced to one year in prison; served almost eleven months before being released in December 1918. Indicted for role in 1919 May Day march in Cleveland that ended in riot, but was never convicted. Became executive secretary of Communist Party of America, one of several competing factions, in September 1919. Convicted in October 1920 of violating the New York State criminal anarchism statute and was imprisoned until April 1922. Became executive secretary of the Workers Party of America, newly unified Communist organization, in 1922. Died in Chicago.

**Alan Seeger** (June 22, 1888–July 4, 1916) Born in New York City, the son of a businessman. Moved with family to Mexico in 1900. Sent to Hackley School in 1902; in 1906 entered Harvard. Became an editor of the *Harvard Monthly*, where he published many poems. Went to live in Paris in 1912. After war broke out in 1914, enlisted in the French Foreign Legion. Mortally wounded during attack on Belloyen-Santerre; awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille Militaire. *Poems* (1916) published posthumously.

**Ashby Williams** (June 18, 1874–May 31, 1944) Born John Ashby Williams in Stafford County, Virginia, the son of a farmer. Family moved to Washington, D.C., in 1892. Worked as clerk in government hydrographic office in Norfolk, Virginia, 1898–1901. Attended Oberlin College, 1901–3, and the University of Virginia, 1903–6, where he was awarded a law degree. Practiced law in Roanoke, Virginia, where he served on the board of aldermen, 1908–12. Published *Corporation Laws of Virginia* (1909), an annotated compilation. Married Eva Wallbridge in 1911. Arrived in France in May 1918, commanding Company E, Second Battalion, 320th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division. Trained behind British lines, June–July, and then served in trenches near Ransart, southwest of Arras, July–August. Assigned command of First Battalion, 320th Infantry Regiment, on August 28; led battalion at St. Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Returned to the United States in May 1919 as lieutenant colonel. Published *Experiences of the Great War: Artois, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne*

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(1919). Moved to Washington, D.C., where he practiced law. After divorce from his first wife, married Lois Allee. Died in Washington, D.C.

**Woodrow Wilson** (December 28, 1856–February 3, 1924) Born Thomas Woodrow Wilson in Staunton, Virginia, the son of a Presbyterian minister. Graduated from the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1879. Admitted to the bar in Atlanta in 1882. Entered graduate school at Johns Hopkins in 1883. Married Ellen Axson in 1885. Published *Congressional Government* (1885), the first of several works on American history and politics. Awarded PhD in 1886. Taught at Bryn Mawr, 1885–88, and Wesleyan, 1888–90. Professor of jurisprudence and political economy at Princeton, 1890–1902, and president of Princeton, 1902–10. Elected as a Democrat to the governorship of New Jersey in 1910 and served 1911–13. Won Democratic presidential nomination in 1912 and defeated Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft; defeated Charles Evans Hughes in 1916 to win reelection. President of the United States, 1913–21. Following the death of his first wife, married Edith Bolling Galt in 1915. Suffered stroke on October 2, 1919, that left him an invalid for the remainder of his term. Awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1919. Died in Washington, D.C.