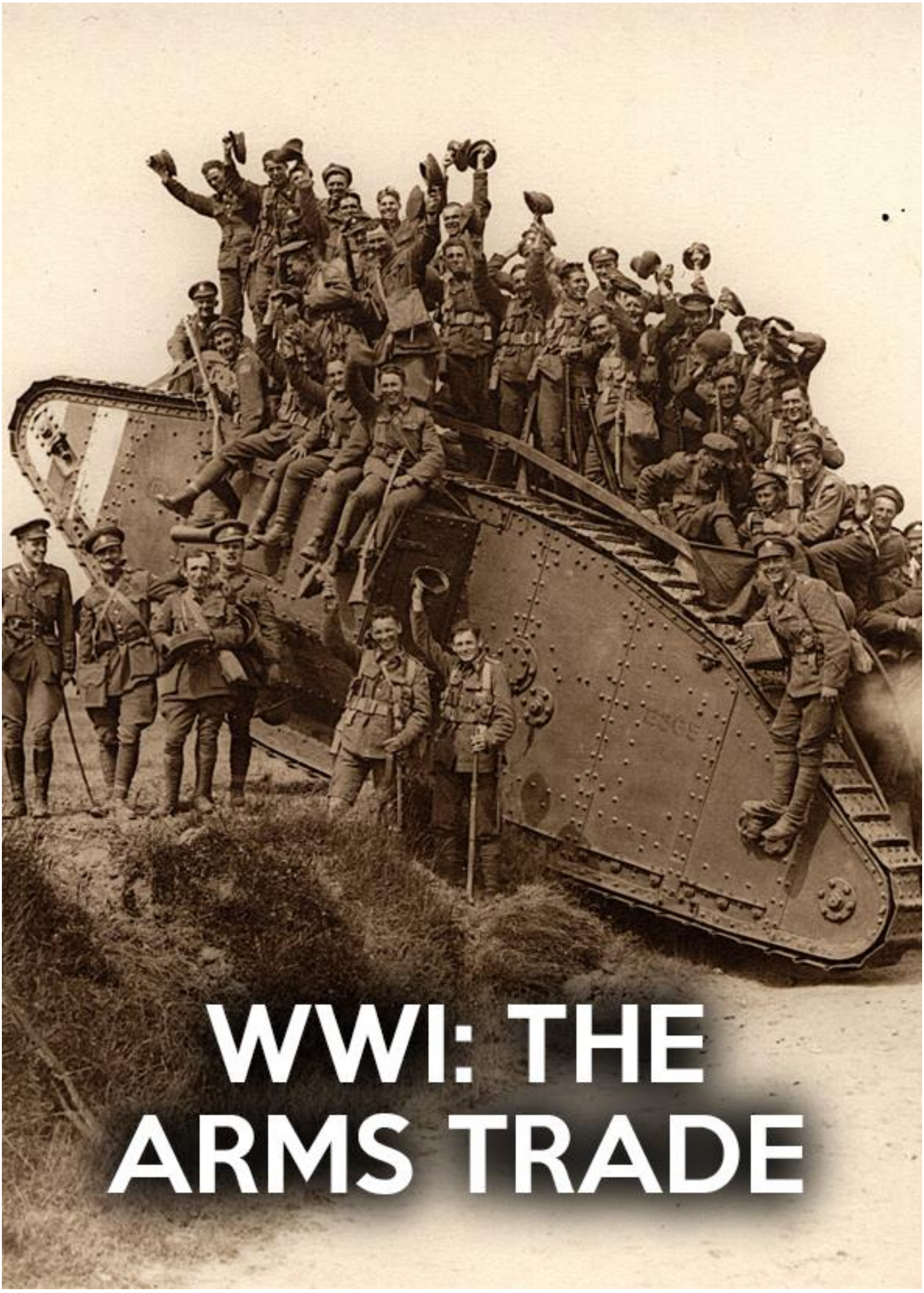


WWI: THE ARMS TRADE

WWI and the Arms Trade

Relevant videos:

Inside Story - Global arms trade: Who are the winners?

Making a Killing: Inside the international arms trade

The First World War Part 1 Race to Arms

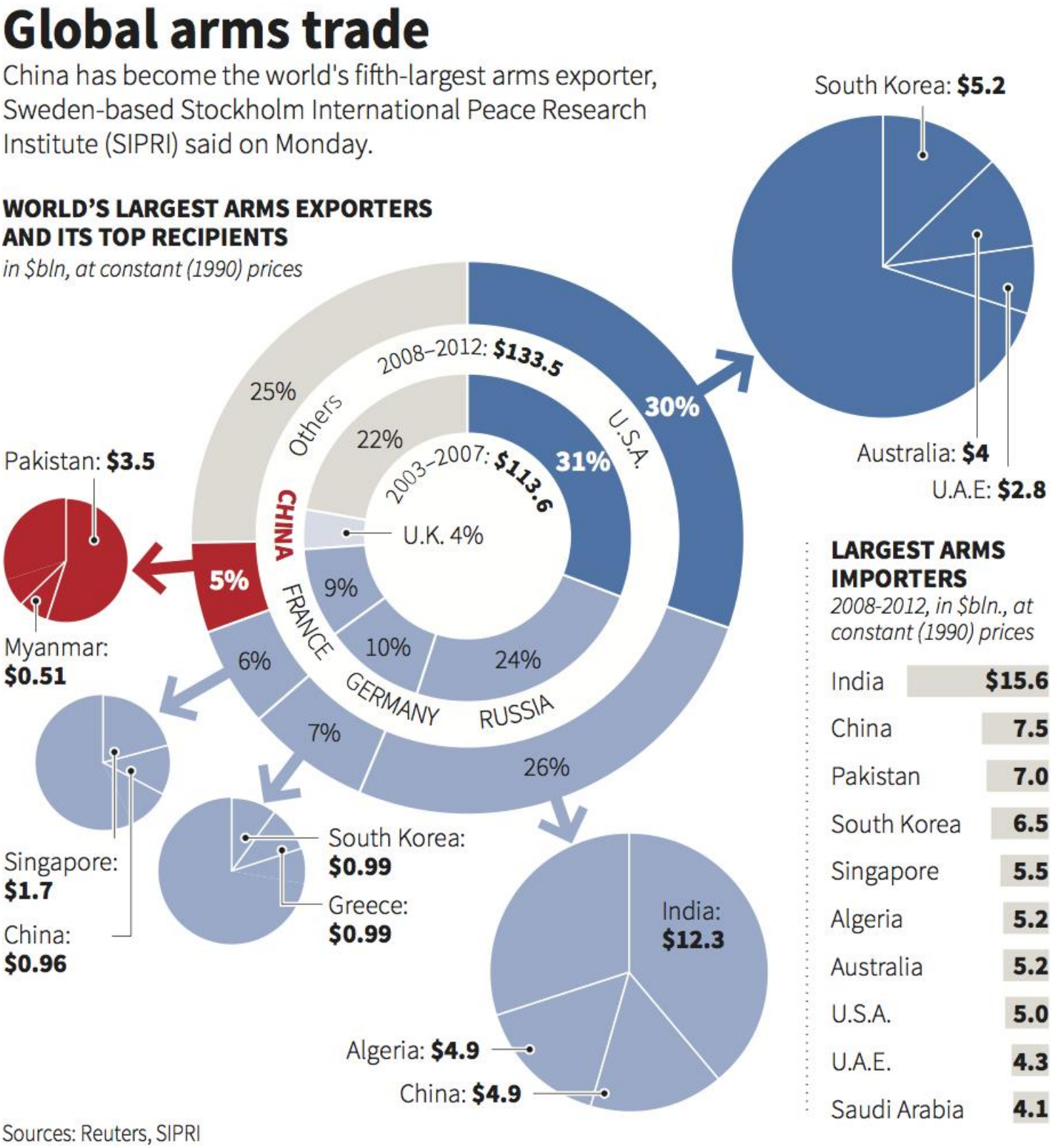
Weapons of World War One

Trade in weapons

The arms industry is a global business that manufactures weapons and military technology and equipment. It consists of commercial industry involved in research, development, production, and the service of military material, equipment, and facilities. Arms producing companies, also referred to as defence contractors or military industry, produce arms mainly for the armed forces of states. Departments of government also operate in the arms industry, buying and selling weapons, munitions and other military items. Products include guns, ammunition, missiles, military aircraft, military vehicles, ships, electronic systems, and more. The arms industry also conducts significant research and development and provides other logistics and operations support.

It is estimated that yearly, over 1.5 trillion United States dollars are spent on military expenditures worldwide (2.7% of World GDP). This represents a decline from 1990 when military expenditures made up 4% of world GDP. Part of this goes to the procurement of military hardware and services from the military industry. The combined arms sales of the top 100 largest arms producing companies amounted to an estimated $395 billion in 2012 according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). In 2004 over $30 billion were spent in the international arms trade (a figure that excludes domestic sales of arms). According to SIPRI, the volume of international

transfers of major weapons in 2010–14 was 16 per cent higher than in 2005–2009. The five biggest exporters in 2010–14 were the United States, Russia, China, Germany and France, and the five biggest importers were India, Saudi Arabia, China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Pakistan. The arms trade has also been one of the sectors impacted by the credit crunch, with total deal value in the market halving from US$32.9 billion to US$14.3 billion in 2008.

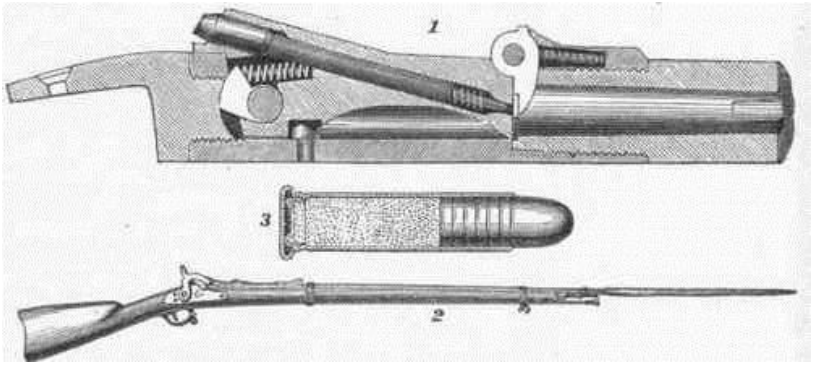


Many industrialized countries have a domestic arms industry to supply their own military forces. Some countries also have a substantial legal or illegal domestic trade in weapons for use by its citizens. An illegal trade in small arms is prevalent in many countries and

regions affected by political instability. The Small Arms Survey estimates 875 million small arms in circulation worldwide, produced by more than 1,000 companies from nearly 100 countries.

Contracts to supply a given country's military are awarded by the government, making arms contracts of substantial political importance. The link between politics and the arms trade can result in the development of what U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower described as a military-industrial complex, where the armed forces, commerce, and politics become closely linked, similarly to the European defence procurement. Various corporations, some publicly held, others private, bid for these contracts, which are often worth many billions of dollars. Sometimes, such as the contract for the new Joint Strike Fighter, a competitive tendering process takes place, where the decision is made on the merits of the design submitted by the companies involved. Other times, no bidding or competition takes place.

Trade in arms and technological diffusion is as old as the history of war itself. During the early modern period, France, England, Netherlands and some states in Germany became self-sufficient in arms production, with diffusion and migration of skilled workers to more peripheral countries such as Portugal and Russia.



The modern arms industry emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century as a product of the creation and expansion of the first large military-industrial companies. As smaller countries (and even newly industrializing countries like Russia and Japan) could no longer produce cutting-edge military equipment with their indigenous resources and capacity, they increasingly began to contract the manufacture of military equipment, such as battleships, artillery pieces and rifles to foreign firms.

In 1854, the British government awarded a contract to the Elswick Ordnance Company of industrialist William

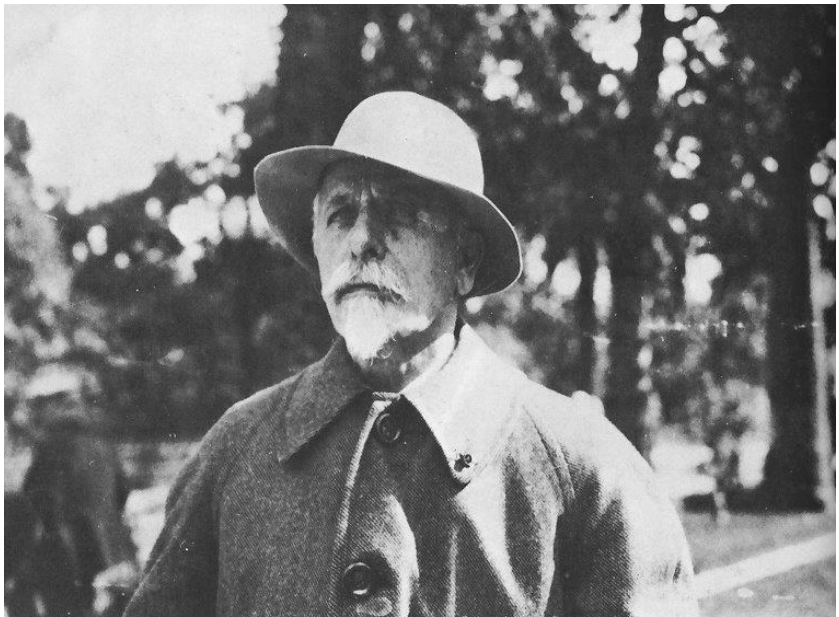
Armstrong for the supply of his latest breech loading rifled artillery pieces. This galvanised the private sector into weapons production, with the surplus being increasingly exported to foreign countries. Armstrong became one of the first international arms dealers, selling his weapon systems to governments across the world from Brazil to Japan. In 1884 he opened a shipyard at Elswick to specialise in warship production—at the time, it was the only factory in the world that could build a battleship and arm it completely. The factory produced warships for many navies, including the Imperial Japanese Navy. Several Armstrong cruisers played an important role in defeating the Russian fleet at the Battle of Tsushima in 1905.

In 1885, France decided to capitalize on this increasingly lucrative form of trade and repealed its ban on weapon exports. The regulatory framework for the period up to the First World War was characterized by a laissez-faire policy that placed little obstruction in the way of weapons exports. Due to the carnage of World War I, arms traders began to be regarded with odium as "merchants of death" and were accused of having instigated and perpetuated the war in order to maximise their profits from arms sales. An inquiry into these allegations in Britain failed to find evidence to support them. However, the sea change in attitude about war more generally meant that governments began to control and regulate the trade themselves.

The volume of the arms trade greatly increased during the 20th century, and it began to be used as a political tool, especially during the Cold War where the United States and the USSR supplied weapons to their proxies across the world, particularly third world countries.

Basil Zaharoff

Although the second-hand arms trade proved vast—and the illegal trade in weapons very hard to control—the big money was found in the manufacturing and selling of the new weapons to governments. In that arena the major military industrial producers included Krupp (Germany), Schneider-Creusot (France), and Vickers (Britain).



Sir Basil Zaharoff, the infamous sales agent for Vickers, was probably the world's best-known

arms dealer through World War I. Zaharoff once boasted to a London paper, "I made wars so that I could sell arms to both sides. I must have sold more arms than anyone else in the world."

His first important achievement was the sale of submarines to Greece and Turkey in the late 1880s. Calculating that if he could sell to one of these countries, then the rival country would feel compelled to keep pace, Zaharoff offered one submarine to the Greeks.

After the Greeks had purchased their submarine, Zaharoff turned to the Ottoman Turks alerting them to the new danger now emanating from Greece. To counter the perceived threat, the Turks subsequently acquired two submarines themselves from Zaharoff. In this way he managed to create a one-man arms race in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Such ploys paid off handsomely, and as Zaharoff built his fortune, he became a primary example of the “merchant of death” persona that captured the imagination and earned the opprobrium of the public during the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s.

Activities

Remember

1. ***Create a mind map showing all the people, places and things that are linked to trading weapons***

Understand

2. ***Why is arms trading important politically?***

Apply

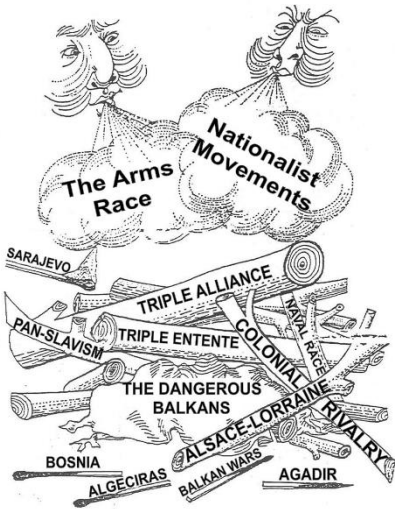
3. ***Compare who were the biggest five arms exporters during WWI and who are the five biggest now. Are they the same countries? Why / why not? Provide some research for your answer.***

Analyse

4. ***Create a timeline including at least 6 things, of arms-trading events leading up to WWI. For each event, include a label explaining how this would have made war more likely.***

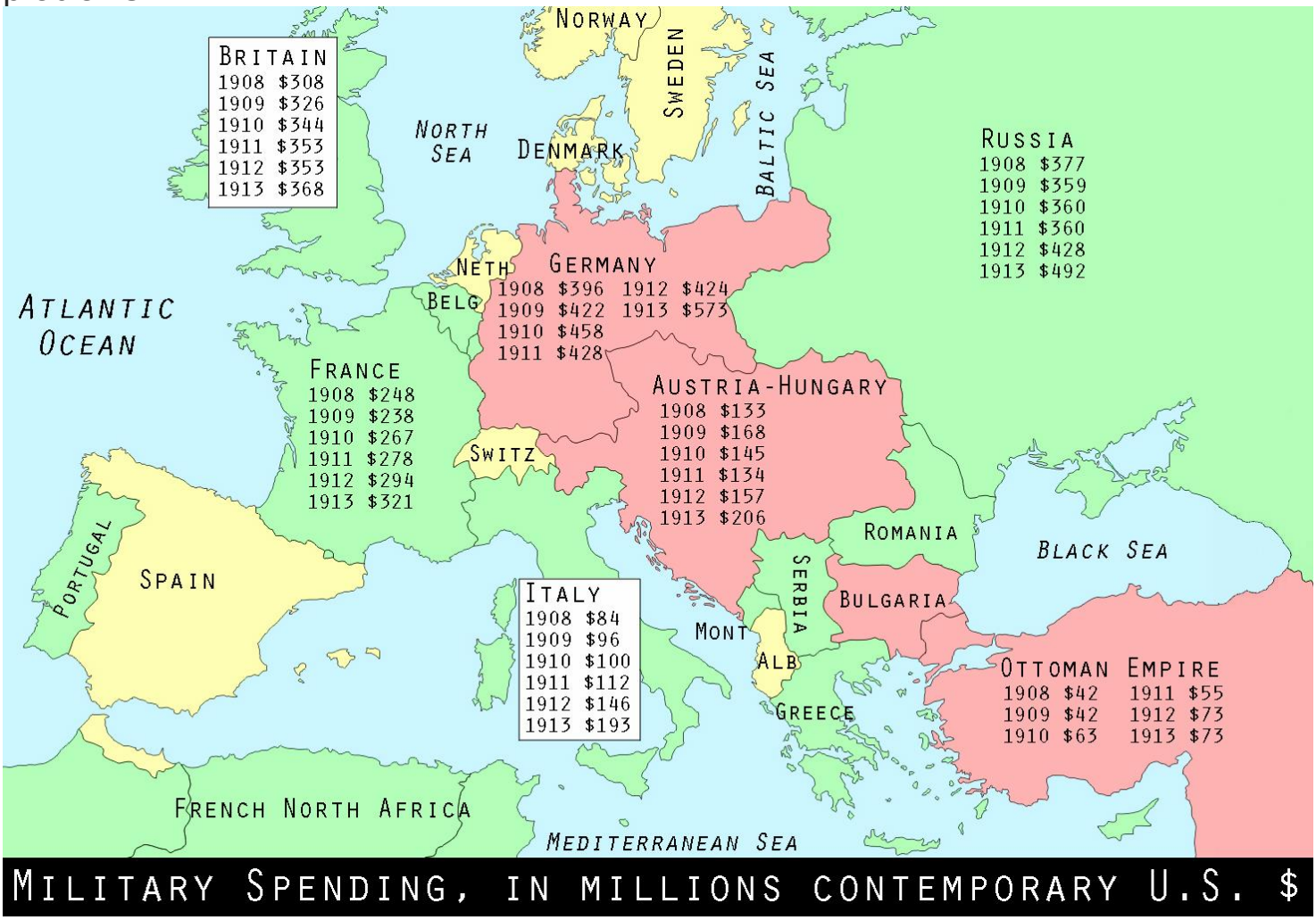
Create

5. ***Using the data in this section, create a bar graph to show the largest arms importers in 2008-2012. Remember to use correct bar graph conventions.***

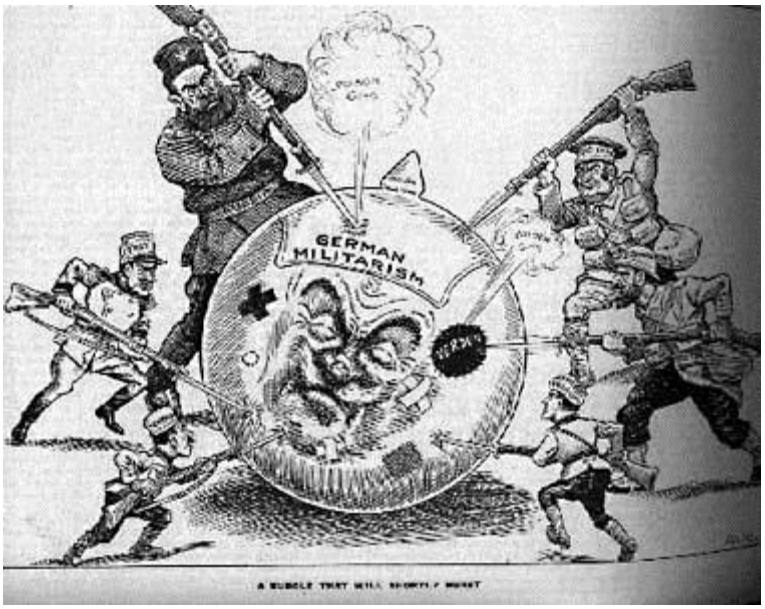


WWI – The Arms Race

The German army officer Alfred Vagts described militarism as the "domination of the military man over the civilian, an undue preponderance of military demands, an emphasis on military considerations". In the decades prior to 1914 militarism was a defining force in several European nations. Governments and aristocracies were strongly influenced, if not dominated, by their military personnel and considerations. Generals and admirals often acted as de facto government ministers, advising political leaders, influencing domestic policy and demanding increases in defence spending. Militarism fathered a dangerous child, the arms race, which pushed European nations to equip, expand and modernise their military forces. Militarism also shaped public opinion, with the press hailing military leaders as heroes or national leaders. Militarism alone did not start World War I – that first required a political crisis – but it inflamed nationalism and fed a culture of expectation about military strength. Even worse, militarism created an environment where war was considered the best or only response to political and diplomatic problems.



Militarism, nationalism and imperialism were intrinsically connected. In the 19th and early 20th centuries military forces were considered a manifestation of national and imperial strength. A powerful state needed a powerful military to protect its interests and support its policies. Strong armies and navies were needed to defend the homeland, to protect imperial and trade interests abroad and to deter threats and rivals. War was to be avoided where possible – but it could also be used to advance a nation's political or economic interests (as the famous Prussian theorist Carl von Clausewitz wrote in 1832, war was "a continuation of policy by other means"). In the 19th century European mind, politics and military power became inseparable, in much the same way that politics and economic management have become inseparable in the modern world. Governments and leaders who failed to maintain armies and navies capable of enforcing the national will were considered weak or incompetent.



"The belief in war as a test of national power and a proof of national superiority added a scientific base to the cult of patriotism… In Britain, a real effort was made to teach boys that success in war depended upon the patriotism and military spirit of the nation, and that preparation for war would strengthen 'manly virtue' and 'patriotic ardour'."

Prussia is rightly considered the wellspring of militarism in Europe. Germany's government and armed forces were both based on the Prussian model and many of its politicians and generals were Junkers (land-owning Prussian nobles). Prior to the 1871 unification, Prussia was the most powerful Germanic state, both in political and military terms. The Prussian army was reformed and modernised in the 1850s by Field Marshal von Moltke the Elder. Under von Moltke's leadership the Prussian army implemented new strategies, improved training for its officers, introduced advanced weaponry and adopted more efficient means of command and communication. A crushing military defeat of France in 1871 revealed the Prussian army as the most dangerous and

effective military force in Europe. This victory also secured German unification, allowing Prussian militarism and German nationalism to become closely intertwined. Prussian commanders, personnel and methodology became the nucleus of the new German imperial army. The German Kaiser was its supreme commander; he relied on a military council and chief of general staff, made up of Junker aristocrats and career officers. When it came to military matters, the Reichstag (Germany's elected civilian parliament) had no more than an advisory role.

Militarism

Elsewhere in Europe militarism took on a different flavour, yet it was an important political and cultural force. British militarism, though more subdued than its German counterpart, was considered essential for maintaining the nation's imperial and trade interests. The Royal Navy, by far the world's largest naval force, protected shipping, trade routes and colonial ports. British land forces kept order and imposed imperial policies in India, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. British attitudes to the military underwent a stark transformation. During the 18th century Britons had considered armies and navies a necessary evil, their ranks filled with the dregs of the lower classes, most of their officers failed aristocrats and ne'er-do-wells. But in 19th century Britain soldiering was increasingly depicted as a noble vocation, a selfless act of service to one's country. As in Germany, British soldiers were glorified and romanticised, both in the press and popular culture. Whether serving in Crimea or the distant colonies, British officers were hailed as gentlemen and sterling leaders, while enlisted men were well drilled, resolute and ready to make the ultimate sacrifice 'for King and Country'. The concept of soldiers as heroes was epitomised by Tennyson's 1854 poem The Charge of the Light Brigade and reflected in cheap 'derring-do' novels about wars, both real and imagined.

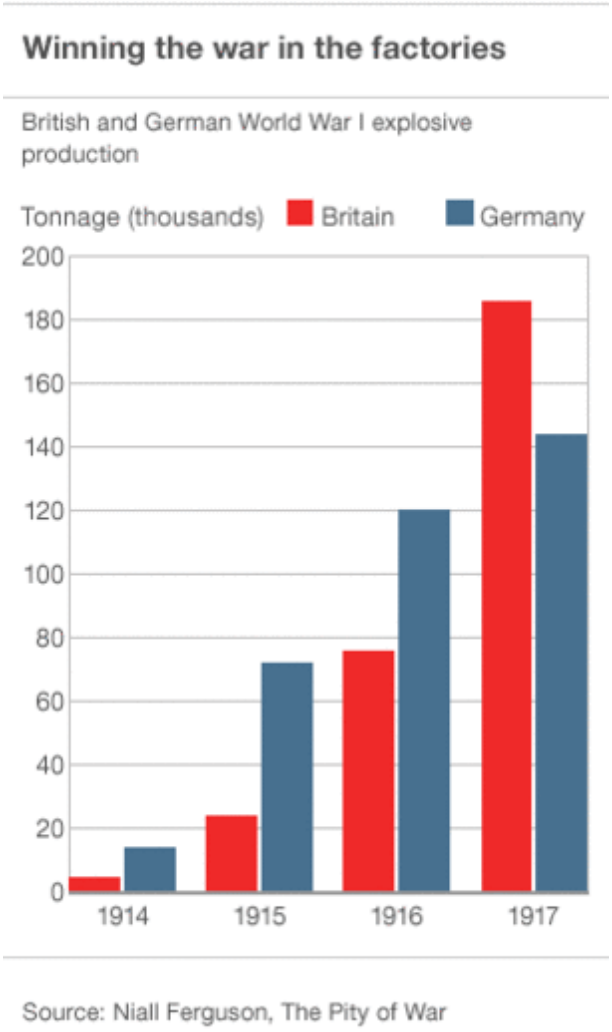
The arms race

Military victories, whether in colonial wars or major conflicts like the Crimean War (1853-56) or the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), only increased the

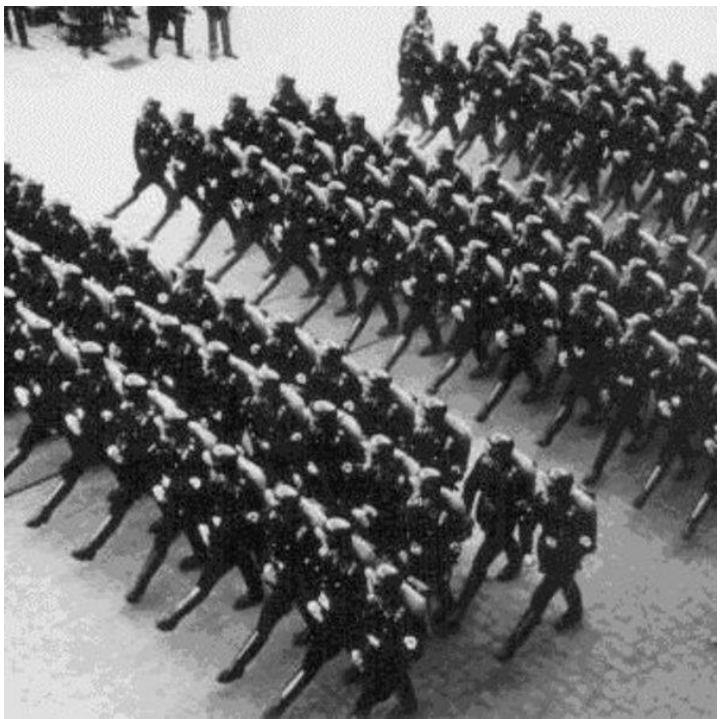
prestige of the military and intensified nationalism. In contrast, a military defeat (such as Russia's defeat by Japan in 1905) or even a costly victory (like Britain in the Boer War, 1899-1902) might expose problems and heighten calls for military reform or increased spending. Virtually every major European nation engaged in some form of military renewal in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In Germany, military expansion and modernisation was heartily endorsed by the newly crowned Kaiser, Wilhelm II, who wanted to retain his country's "place in the sun". In Britain the arms race was driven not by the monarchy but by public interest and the press. In 1884 the prominent newspaperman W. T. Stead published a series of articles suggesting that Britain was unprepared for war, particularly in its naval defences. Pressure groups like the British Navy League (formed 1894) agitated for more ships and personnel. By the early 1900s the Navy League and the press were calling on the government to commission more Dreadnoughts (battleships), one popular slogan being "We want eight and we won't wait!"

As a consequence of this pressure and other factors, European military expenditure between 1900 and 1914 sky-rocketed. In 1870 the combined military spending of the six great powers (Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Italy) totalled 94 million pounds. By 1914 it had quadrupled to 398 million pounds. German defence spending during this period increased by a massive 73 per cent, dwarfing the increases in France (10 per cent) and Britain (13 per cent). Russian defence spending also grew by more than one third. Russia's embarrassing defeat by the Japanese (1905) prompted the tsar to order a massive rearmament program. By the 1910s around 45 per cent of Russian government spending was allocated to the armed forces, in comparison to just five per cent on education. Every major European power, Britain excluded, introduced or increased conscription to expand their armies. Germany added 170,000 full-time soldiers to its army in 1913-14, while dramatically increasing its navy. In 1898 the German government ordered the construction of 17 new vessels. Berlin also led the way in the construction of military submarines; by 1914 the German navy had 29 operational U-boats. This rapid growth in German naval power triggered a press frenzy and some alarm in Britain. London responded to German naval expansion by commissioning 29

new ships for the Royal Navy. This period saw significant changes to the quality of military weapons and equipment, as well as their quantity. Having studied the lessons of the Crimean War and other 19th century conflicts, military industrialists developed hundreds of improvements and rushed them to patent. Perhaps the most significant improvements were made to the calibre, range, accuracy and portability of heavy artillery. During the American Civil War (1861-65) heavy artillery could fire up to 2,500 metres at best; by the early 1900s this range had almost tripled. The development of explosive shells was also significant, giving a single artillery round greater killing power wherever it landed. These advances allowed artillery shelling and bombardments to become standard practice along the Western Front during World War I. First developed in 1881, machine guns also became smaller, lighter, more accurate, more reliable and much faster, some capable of firing up to 600 rounds per minute. Small arms also improved significantly. The effective range of a rifle in the 1860s was around 400 metres; in contrast the British issue Lee-Enfield .303 could hit a target more than 2,000 metres away. Barbed wire, an invention of the 1860s, was also embraced by military strategists as an anti-personnel device. While historians often disagree on the reasons for the arms race, there is no doubt that the development of new weaponry changed the face of modern warfare. Sir Edward Grey, reflecting on his service as British foreign secretary in July 1914, said it thus:



“A great European war under modern conditions would be a catastrophe for which previous wars afforded no precedent. In old days, nations could collect only portions of their men and resources at a time and dribble them out by degrees. Under modern conditions, whole nations could be mobilized at once and their whole life blood and resources poured out in a torrent. Instead of a few hundreds of thousands of men meeting each other in war, millions would now meet – and modern weapons would multiply manifold the power of destruction. The financial strain and the expenditure of wealth would be incredible.”



1. Militarism is the incorporation of military personnel and ideas into

civilian government – and the belief that military power is essential for national strength.
2. Militarism was strongest in Germany, where the Kaiser relied heavily on his military commanders and the civilian legislature (Reichstag) exerted little or no control over the military.
3. Militarists were also driven by experiences and failures in previous wars, such as the Crimean War, Boer War and Russo-Japanese War.
4. Militarism, combined with new weapons, emerging technologies and developments in industrial production, fuelled a European arms race in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
5. Influenced by nationalism and advice from military commanders, European governments ramped up military spending, purchasing new weaponry and increasing the size of armies and navies. Effects

Militarism

Total Defense Expenditures for the Great Powers [Ger., A-H, It., Fr., Br., Rus.]
in millions of £s (British pounds).

1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1914
94	130	154	268	289	398

	1910-1914 Increase in Defense Expenditures
France	10%
Britain	13%
Russia	39%
Germany	73%

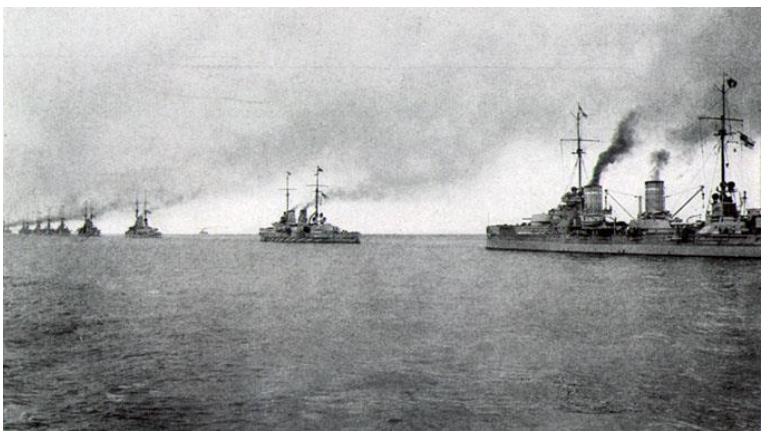
1. The British developed the idea that Germany wanted to challenge British sea power - the basis of Britain's greatness (cf 'Britannia rules the waves').
2. A strong navy would also allow Germany to threaten British colonies overseas.
3. Britain made an alliance with Japan in 1902, so as not to have to worry so much about the Pacific.
4. Britain also began to build Dreadnoughts. The British government had planned to build four Dreadnoughts in 1909, but when Germany refused to limit the number of ships it was building, the British public protested, demanding: 'We want eight and we won't wait'. Britain and Germany thus had a naval arms race.
5. By 1914, Britain had won this naval arms race and the British navy was much larger than the German navy, so it is arguable that this was NOT a major cause of World War One.

Another thing that the countries of Europe did was to train all their young men so that if there was a war they could call, not only on the standing army, but on huge numbers of trained reservists. One historians has estimated the total number of men (including reservists) that the countries could thus call upon as:

- Germany: 8.5 million men
- Russia: 4.4 million
- France: 3.5 million
- Austria-Hungary: 3 million

It is important to realise that - although in 1914 the German army was the biggest and best in the world - the Russian army was growing the fastest, and German generals were worried that, in a few years' time, they would not be able to defeat Russia so easily.

This American cartoon shows Serbia being attacked by Austria Hungary, who is then attacked by Russia, who is then attacked by Germany, who is then attacked by Britain and France.
Each says: 'Leave him alone or I'll...



From the dates 1891 to 1919, an arms race between several European countries, including Germany, France, Russia, (as well as some other smaller countries,) took place. British concern about rapid increase in German naval power resulted in a costly building competition of Dreadnought-class

ships. This tense arms race lasted until June 1914, when after two antagonistic power blocs were formed because of the rivalry, the World War broke out. If it weren't for this arms Race, World War I may never have taken place, as the governments of these nations would not have felt they had the military technology and navies to risk their citizens in the war. After the war, a new arms race developed among the victorious Allies. The Washington Naval Treaty was only partly able to put an end to the race.

Activities

Remember

1. ***What is militarism?***

Understand

2. ***How did militarism help start WWI?***

Apply

3. ***Create a map showing the location of the conflicts leading up to WWI, from 1850-1918. Use this blank world map as your base. Include BOLTSS and at least four wars.***

Analyse

4. ***Compare and contrast the different resources (manpower, military and spending) that each of the Great Powers had during the build up to WWI. How do you think this affected the outbreak of the war?***

Create

5. ***Using the data in the map entitled "Military spending, in millions contemporary U.S.$", create a line graph with a different coloured line for each country. Now write three sentences explaining the data on your graph. Use line graph conventions.***

WWI – Military technology

World War I is often considered the first true 'modern war', a conflict fought between industrialised countries equipped with modern weapons. It saw the rise of powerful weapons such as heavy artillery, machine guns and airplanes – and the decline of 19th century weapons like sabres and bayonets. This section contains brief summaries of the most significant weapons of World War I:

Here we look at weapons that defined the nature of the conflict during the Great War, including innovations that would help to break the stalemate on the Western Front.

Machine gun

"Few technical developments had quite the impact of the machine gun on the Western Front during the First World War. The German army's Maxim guns effectively ended an entire, attrition-based, strategy of military campaigning, although it took the best part of the war for the allied generals to realise this." - Peter Squires, writer

The image of infantrymen charging pointlessly into machine-gun fire is a common motif of the war. There were fewer machine-guns deployed in the war than is commonly thought – but where used, they often proved deadly. At the outbreak of war Germany had the upper-hand in both the quality and quantity of machine-guns. The German army had more than 10,000 units in 1914, while the British and French had fewer than 1,000 each. Machine-guns of the time were capable of firing up to 500 rounds per minute – but they were cumbersome, very heavy (often more than 50 kilograms) and required at least three well-trained men to set up and operate effectively. Their rapid rate of fire also caused machine-guns to quickly overheat, requiring elaborate water and air-based cooling systems to prevent them from jamming or exploding

Grenade

“The Mills bomb was a simple, rugged and effective hand grenade… At the start of the war, Britain lacked an effective grenade and troops often resorted to the use of home-made ‘jam tin’ bombs.” Roger Lee, historian

Grenades are small bombs, thrown by hand or launched from a rifle attachment, which are detonated on impact or by a timer. Germany, as it did for other small arms, led the way in grenade development. Early British models like the Mark I (a cylindrical device attached to a long stick) were awkward to use and prone to accidental detonation. These were superseded by the pineapple-shaped Mills bomb, with its safety pin and firing lever. Mills bombs were produced with four and seven second fuses. Allied soldiers were trained to hurl Mills bombs over-arm – in fact the best cricket players were often co-opted as grenade specialists.

Rifles

The standard rifle of the British army during World War I was the Lee-Enfield .303, a variation of a weapon that had been used by the army since 1902. Fed by a magazine that could hold 10 bullets, the bolt-action Lee-Enfield was a robust, reliable rifle well-suited to the harsh conditions of trench warfare. A trained regular soldier could fire 15 rounds per minute with the weapon. In fact, it was so successful that further variants were used throughout World War II and, in some countries, for decades after that.

German infantry, meanwhile, were issued with the Gewehr 98, a rifle with a bolt action designed by the famous Mauser Company. The Gewehr was a well-constructed and accurate weapon, but it was ill-suited to the conditions on the Western Front. Longer than the Lee-Enfield, it was unwieldy in a trench and required an extra sight for short-range firing.

Artillery

The majority of casualties on the battlefields of World War I were inflicted by artillery shelling. Artillery barrages to “soften up” enemy lines before an infantry assault could last for weeks – a bombardment of German trenches during the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 lasted a fortnight, with 4.5 million shells fired from 3,000 guns.

Field guns such as the British Howitzer Mark 1 could fire two rounds of 290lb shells a minute, while in March 1918, the Germans began shelling the French capital with their long-range 'Paris Gun'. Made by Krupps, it had a 118-foot-long barrel and could fire a shell 25 miles into the air, targeting Paris from a site 74 miles away.

Poison gas

Chlorine gas was first used by the Germans at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915, killing hundreds of French troops.

The British also deployed chlorine gas, and later developments in the war included the deadlier phosgene and mustard gas, which blinded those it came in contact with. By 1917, poison gas could be delivered with greater precision by chemical shells and mortars, and there were an estimated one million gas casualties on all sides throughout the war.

Aircraft

When the war started, most of the belligerents had a few unarmed, wood-and-canvas aircraft, which they intended to use as aerial scouts. By November 1914, though, pilots were dropping grenades on enemy troops as they flew over them, or carrying pistols to take pot shots at other aircraft. Air warfare took a leap forward the following year with the adoption of the interrupter gear, which allowed a machine gun mounted on a plane to fire without damaging the propeller.

This led to the era of dog fights and fighter aces such as the Germans Manfred von Richthofen, known as the Red Baron, and Max Immelmann, whose skills in their Fokker Eindecker aircraft made them the leading threats in what the British called the "Fokker scourge".

During the Battle of the Somme, German fighters were technically superior to their British counterparts, hence the German nickname "kaltes fleisch" – cold meat – for the British planes. But Britain introduced better fighters such as the SE5 and Sopwith Camel in 1917, and it was the latter which mostly likely claimed the life of the Red Baron when he was shot down in April the following year.

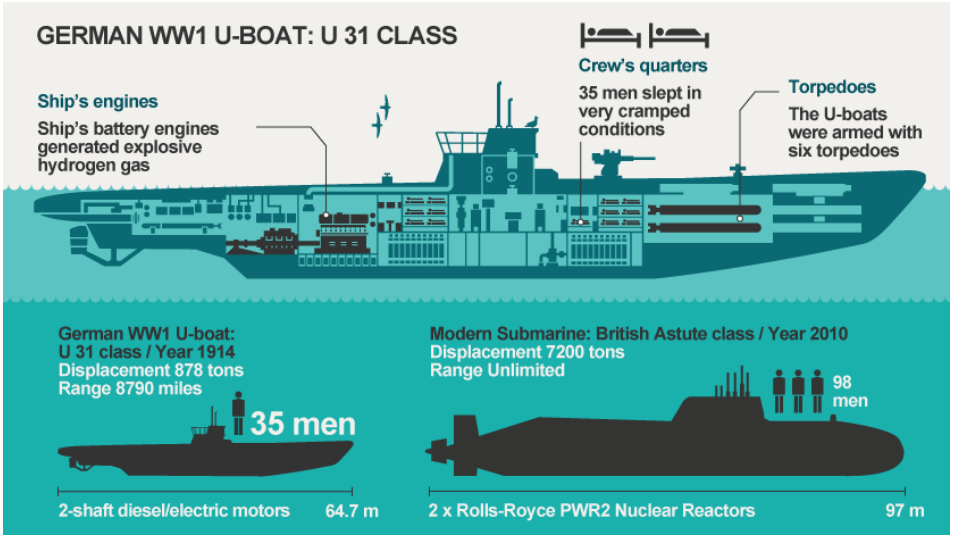
Tanks

Originally called “land battleships”, then “thingum-a-jigs”, tanks were developed on the orders of Winston Churchill and first deployed on the Somme battlefield in September 1916. The tank was specifically developed to break the trench warfare stalemate – their armour would be impervious to machine gun fire, and their tracks would be able to cross trenches and barbed wire entanglements. But although the tanks at the Somme weakened German morale, they were slow and beset by mechanical problems.

"By 1918 (tanks) were more reliable and were available to British forces in greater numbers," says Mr Brosnan. "It was only during the Hundred Days offensives – from the Battle of Amiens on August 8 until the Armistice on November 11, 1918 – that tanks were used to full effect in combination with sophisticated artillery, advanced infantry tactics, aircraft and well-organised logistical support.

U-boats

Germany had 33 U-boats, or submarines, in operation in 1914. The German navy saw an opportunity to starve Britain – an island nation dependent on maritime trade – out of the war, but Kaiser Wilhelm insisted on "restricted" U-boat warfare, as he was anxious to avoid antagonising neutral America by sinking its ships.



Such restrictions were lifted in 1916, however, and German submarines were sending some 320,000 tonnes of Allied shipping to the bottom of the ocean by the start of 1917. "(The) effects were particularly seriously felt in 1917," says Mr Brosnan, "with significant losses to British merchant shipping in (the) spring and food queues an increasingly common sight on the home front."

Yet the U-boats were a double-edged sword for the Germans, as US casualties on ships sunk by the submarines significantly contributed to America declaring war on Germany in 1917.

Activities

Remember

1. ***Create a table that includes all of the statistics listed in this section. Try and group the data if you can.***

Understand

2. ***Rank the military technology listed above from least to most influential in terms of the outcome of WWI. Give reasons for your first three and your last in your list.***

Apply

3. ***Fighting people to death in war from afar is a problem for inventors of military weapons. How would each of the pieces of military technology listed above help an army overcome <u>distance</u> in war?***

Analyse

4. ***This section lists all the new weapons used in WWI. Assume you knew the exact number of weapons used by each side in the war. Would this be enough to figure out what happened in the war? Why/why not? What other information might we need? How would we get it?***

Create

5. ***Choose one of the weapons listed. Draw a detailed diagram of it, labelling its parts (at least 6). Describe why your weapon was important in WWI.***

How arms dealing connected different parts of the world

The period 1860-1918 witnessed a profound expansion in the volume of arms trafficking. As industrialization picked up speed in Europe, more arms could be produced more quickly than ever before. Mass production and an unending series of technological advancements in weaponry generated obsolete castoffs and war surplus weapons on an increasing scale.

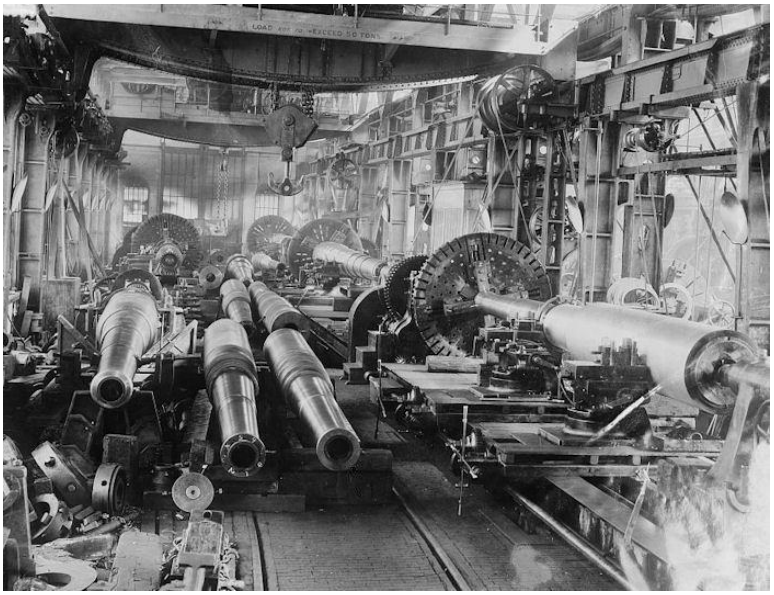
In the global context, the main players in the extra-European arms traffic were the French and Belgians, and the Italians to a lesser extent in the case of East Africa. Overwhelmingly, the weapons sold included older Remington and Gras rifles rather than the state-of-the-art weapons manufactured by Mauser and Steyr.

The prominence of the Belgian city of Liège as a chief supplier of firearms to Africa also reflected changes in the period. By the late nineteenth century, Liège had taken the African gun trade away from Birmingham, and the Belgian city accounted for some 67 percent of the African arms traffic by 1907.

Thanks to the imperial scramble for Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, East Africa rose as the chief destination for imported firearms through trafficking and new private traders and state governments took on leading roles in the trade.

By the early 1880s, both the Italians and the French worked to supply Ethiopia with arms. Italian officials wanted to gain political influence over King Menilek of Ethiopia as part of their imperial efforts, whereas the French interest grew from private arms traders.

By the end of 1882, French rifles were arriving in Ethiopia from Marseilles. French traders delivered obsolete French and Belgian weapons, and often sold them with a markup between 400 and 500 percent. Not to be outdone, the Italians committed to deliver 4,000 rifles immediately and 50,000 Remingtons with 10 million cartridges over the next decade.



Beginning in the second half of the 1890s Belgian and French firms figured prominently in the arms traffic. And the arms trade was a consequential source of jobs for Europeans. At Liège more than 10,000 workmen engaged in the manufacture and repair of arms, of which about 3,000 worked at the large private

factory of Herstal, which was supported by the Belgian government.

In 1895, Ethiopia's Menilek had sent a mission to Paris with the sole purpose of forwarding arms and ammunition via Djibouti. The fruits of this mission manifested in a major shipment of 40,000 arms and 5 million rounds of ammunition from Liège to Ethiopia conveyed by the Dutch steamer *Doelwijk.*

By 1898, no fewer than 300,000 guns and carbines had been exported from Belgium. A single French firm at St. Étienne had supplied 350,000 carbines for Ethiopia, of which 150,000 arrived in March 1900. These were Gras Mousqueton carbines recently discarded by the French artillery service.

While armies moved across the face of Europe, the United States remained neutral. With the onset of World War One, the United States, despite its declared neutrality, rapidly emerged as the leading participant in the international munitions trade. During the period of its neutrality -- August 1914 to March 1917 -- the United States exported approximately $2.2 billion in war supplies to Europe. In 1916, the United States shipped more than $1 billion of arms in a single year. (The enormity of the American presence in the international arms market of that period is suggested by the fact that by 1920 the United States accounted for more than 52% of global arms exports.)

Activities

Remember

1. ***Why countries were involved in arms trading in WWI?***

Understand

2. ***Why do you think the US, while remaining officially neutral, became the world's biggest arms dealer during WWI? Why is the cartoon above funny?***

Apply

3. ***If WWI were to break out right now between the same countries, what would be the five most important weapons? Who would the biggest suppliers of those weapons be?***

Analyse

4. ***Import this picture. Label this image with any landforms you see. Also label it with any features you think would be relevant to military strategy. You should have at least 5 labels.***

Create

5. ***Using a blank Europe map, show the routes of all the European weapons trading discussed in this section. Include BOLTSS on your map and professional looking labels.***
    - ***(if a trade is an export outside of Europe, just draw a line to the outside of the map with a box at the end of the line saying where the exported arms were going to)***