

- 1918 begins with no end in sight
- 1917 = bad year for Allies in West
 - Joffre = out; replacement = Gen. Robert Nivelle
 - Nivelle view = artillery tactics learned at Verdun provide key
 - “Nivelle Offensive = massive bombardment
 - Ger = “defense-in-depth”
 - FR revolt
 - Nivelle out; replaced by Gen. Philippe Petain
 - Petain appeals to Haig for relief
 - Haig needs little encouragement
 - Dreams of campaign in Flanders
 - BUT, no new strategy
 - NOTE: Brit politicians = terrified
 - Events in Russia
 - Plots to remove Haig blocked by Lloyd George
 - 3rd Battle of Ypres
 - Began well w/ set-piece action
 - Brits use 20 “mines”
 - Then attack Ypres salient w/ massive offensive
 - Haig = overconfident

- Ger defenses = solid

- “Hindenburg Line”
 - » Bases on “defense-in-depth”

 - » 1st line = lightly manned; bulk = further back

 - » Terrain favors Ger

 - » Assault creates field of mud

- July 31st – Brits surge forward
 - » Haig’s vision = breakthrough; turn Ger flank

 - » Cruel joke of Flanders fields

 - » Result = attrition

 - » NOTE#1 – to win

 - » NOTE#2 – purpose of OP

— Haig not done

- Nov 20th = Battle of Cambrai

- Battle = wars of the future

— 1st day = 5 miles

— But, no reserves to exploit breakthrough

• 1918

— Jan 29th - Supreme War Council met at Versailles

- SWC created Nov 1917 for better coordination

- Haig & Petain called before SWC
- SWC shift to short-term defensive strategy
 - Exception = Lloyd George's op vs. Ottomans
- Forms General Reserve
- Ludendorff consolidates control
 - Hindenburg replaced Falkenhayn
 - Ludendorff = Quartermaster General & General of Infantry
 - Obstacle = Reichstag
 - Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg
 - Opportunity = Spring 1917
 - » Reichstag passes resolution for peace w/out gain
 - » Bethmann-Hollweg blamed
 - » Replacement = Georg Michaelis
 - Ignores home front
 - Believes solution = victory
- Formulates *Kaiserschlacht*
 - It=4 offenses
 - Operation Michael = main attack
 - Focus=junction between armies
 - Plan = pure Ludendorff

- Strategy = no prolonged bombardment
 - » 1) short artillery attack
 - » 2) Then infantry charge
 - » 3) Reserves = mop up duty
- 50 division moved from East
 - 44 “mobile” divisions of *Sturmtroepen*
 - 30 “attack” divisions
 - 100 “trench” divisions
 - 10,500 train loads
- Ludendorff moves; Allies bicker
 - Lloyd George vs. Haig
 - Haig’s ego
 - » Exposes Gen. Hubert Gough’s 5th Army
 - » Truth = repositioning for another Flanders offensive
 - Haig vs. Petain – no system of support
- March 21, Ger launch attack
 - Gough’s line collapsed
 - Ger troops rush into open countryside
 - Offensive falls short
 - Penetrations = uneven

- Brits retreat in orderly fashion
- March 26th, Allies gather to devise response
 - Haig & Petain = blowout
 - SWC creates Allied Command
 - Gen. Ferdinand Foch = selected
 - Foch moves
 - 1st reverse Petain's hoarding of troops
 - Heart of defense = Amiens
 - Creates mechanism for transferring troops
- Operation Michael = costly
 - Ludendorff doesn't throw in towel
 - Launches 4th Battle of Ypres
 - Stalls when troops refuse to advance
 - Ludendorff believes Allies worse off
 - Launches 3rd Battle of the Aisne
 - Wasn't main thrust
 - But Ludendorff pushes ahead & again stalls
 - Americans = tipping point
 - » Defeat Ger @ Chateau-Thierry
 - » NOTE: Ludendorff believes US not serious threat

— Ludendorff painted into corner

- Vulnerable salient created on Aisne
- To improve = attack again
- Battle of Matz
- Again, initial = successful, then stall
- NOTE: Foch adjusts tactics

— Implements “calculated elasticity”

— Summer 1918 – new adversary enters war

- Spanish Flu
- It = form of H1N1 influenza virus
- WWI = increased transmission & mutation
- 3 waves; worst = 2nd
- 25% world population infected; 20-50 million deaths
- Ludendorff doesn't understand issues; allies attempt to make clear
 - 2nd Battle of Marne = last major Ger offensive of war
 - Allies counter = overwhelming
 - July 24th = Foch & Haig meet
 - » Decide time for “regaining the initiative and passing to the offensive”
 - Ludendorff = “the blackest day for the German army in war”
 - » Aug 14th @ Crown Council in Spa – diplomatic overtures “after next success”

- Aug 1st, Foch officially ends “static” warfare policy
 - » Wants attacks “executed with such rapidity as to inflict on the enemy a succession of blows.”

- NOTE: Pershing launches own offensive
 - » 1st American Army attacks
 - » Offensive = Battle of Saint-Mihiel
 - » Plan = penetration by “combined arms” approach
 - » “Doughboys” perform well

- Allied counter-offensive defied all expectations
 - NOTE: British Plan 1919

 - Haig & Foch had other ideas
 - Focus = wearing Ger down

 - Best hope = causing enough damage to provoke retreat

 - Plan = giant pincer movement

 - Counter causes shock in Berlin
 - Ludendorff knows army could last winter

 - But only delay inevitable

 - Oct 1st – “final defeat was probably inescapably at hand”

 - New goal = avoid complete defeat & humiliating settlement

 - Aim = protect monarch & army

- Oct 6, Berlin contacts Wilson
 - Request caught Brit & FR unprepared
 - Granting armistice before peace terms agreed = dangerous
 - Both want continued military action
 - Plus, both suspicious of Wilson
 - Clemenceau has Foch draw up armistice terms
 - Designed to cripple Ger
 - By end of Oct, Big Three all agree
 - NOTE: also “in theory” on 14 Points
- Wilson throws curveball at Ger
 - Only deal with elected representatives of Ger people
 - This = amounted to unconditional surrender
 - Ludendorff fears rise of Bolshevism
 - Hindenburg appeals to army
 - Then, mutiny by sailors in Kiel
 - Sailors reach out of unions & socialists
 - Adopt slogan *Frieden und Brot*
 - Nov 4 – spontaneous revolt
- Ludendorff suggests creation of parliamentary gov't
 - Chancellor Max von Baden selected

- Nov 6 - Erzberger sent to meet w/ Foch in Campiegne Forest, in Picarde, FR
- Nov 9 - Von Baden announces abdication of Wilhelm II
 - Power transferred to Friedrich Ebert
- Nov 10 – Hindenburg orders Erzberger to accept terms
- 5 am, Nov 11, 1918 - armistice signed in railway car
 - Goes into effect 11am
 - Terms
 - NOTE: Germany NOT defeated
 - Why agree?
 - Ger people believe in Wilson’s “olive branch”
- Germany’s Allies
 - Austro-Hungary barely makes it thru winter
 - Was crippled
 - Army’s manpower drained
 - Returning POWs from Russia = no help
 - Conrad decides on another attack
 - Another strike at Venetia
 - River Piave = flooded; attack fails
 - Conrad dismissed
 - Army disintegrates

- Armistice = Nov 4th
- Bulgaria also collapses
 - From Salonika, assault on Bulgaria on Sept 15th
 - Armistice = Sept 30th
- Ottomans – assaulted by Brits at Jerusalem & in Persian Gulf
 - Much success due to T.E. Lawrence
 - End after capture of Damascus
 - Armistice = Oct 30
- Last battle of WWI = Lettow-Vorbeck's capture of Kasama on Nov 13, 1918