

Doughboys

In the spring of 1917, the United States entered World War I ill-prepared to fight. It had an army of only 110,000 soldiers, and a call for volunteers failed to significantly increase the ranks. Consequently, a selective service law was passed in May 1917. Approximately 24,000,000 young Americans registered for the draft. Roughly 3,000,000 were enlisted, and some 1,000,000 young men went to serve in France.

Infantrymen of the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) who went to France in 1917 were called doughboys. (Infantrymen are soldiers trained to fight on foot.) The exact origin of the term "doughboys" is unknown, although some sources say it came from soldiers in the 1850s who cleaned their belts with a "dough" made of clay. Regardless, the name was applied to all American foot soldiers who served in the trenches on the western front.

The arrival of the A.E.F. turned the tide in favor of the Allies. In the last year of the war, American doughboys took part in thirteen major operations. Their heroic fighting at Belleau Woods, Château-Thierry, and the Argonne Forest in northern France prevented the Germans from crossing the Marne again.

The fighting in the Argonne Forest produced the war's greatest hero. His name was Corporal Alvin York. (He later became Sergeant Alvin York.) On October 8, 1918, York singlehandedly killed the crew of a German machine-gun nest and captured 132 other soldiers who had been working machine-gun nests. This feat earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor, the military's highest award.

Decide which words could be used to fill the blanks in the sentences below the puzzle. Then complete the puzzle by writing one letter per blank.

1. _____ **D** _____
2. _____ **O** _____
3. _____ **U** _____
4. _____ **G** _____
5. _____ **H** _____
6. _____ **B** _____
7. _____ **O** _____
8. _____ **Y** _____
9. _____ **S** _____

1. A doughboy was an American foot _____.
2. The American Expeditionary _____ arrived in France in 1917.
3. Soldiers were once thought to clean their belts with a _____ made of clay.
4. American doughboys proved themselves at France's _____ Forest.
5. American doughboys also distinguished themselves at _____-Thierry in France.
6. _____ Woods was the site of another important battle.
7. The Congressional Medal of _____ is the military's highest award.
8. Corporal Alvin _____ captured 132 Germans singlehandedly.
9. A selective _____ law helped build the ranks of the United States Army.

The United States Enters

The United States managed to stay out of World War I for three years. Although many Americans sympathized with the Allied cause, few favored going to war. In general, Americans felt that what went on in Europe was of no concern to them.

Several things happened from 1914 on that gradually changed this viewpoint. Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium in 1914, the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915, and the effects of Allied propaganda slowly turned American opinion against the Germans. When Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with them.

American involvement in the war was assured even before the Germans gave free rein to their U-boats. In January 1917 the British intercepted a note sent by German foreign secretary Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador in Mexico. The note instructed the ambassador to urge Mexico to attack the United States. In return for its cooperation, the Germans promised to restore to Mexico land in the southwestern United States that it had lost during the Mexican War some seventy years earlier.

The British immediately forwarded the note to Washington, and Americans were outraged. When three American cargo ships were torpedoed and sunk by German U-boats two months later, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war. After remaining neutral for three years, the United States joined the fighting on April 6, 1917.

Number the following events to put them in chronological order.

1. ____ The United States declares war on Germany.
2. ____ Germany invades Belgium.
3. ____ The British intercept Zimmermann's note.
4. ____ The *Lusitania* is sunk by a German submarine.
5. ____ The United States breaks off diplomatic relations with Germany.
6. ____ German submarines sink three American cargo ships.

7. How did most Americans feel about the war when it broke out in 1914?

8. Why was Zimmermann's note so upsetting to the American people?
