



[World War I](#)

In A Nutshell

Between April 1917 and November 1918, over two million Americans fought in the biggest and most costly war in European history to that date. Entering only at the tail end of four years of slaughter and horror, the United States helped turn the tide of the war in favor of the Allies, and brought America onto the international stage as a major military, financial and industrial power. Though at times unpopular at home, America's involvement in World War I was successful from a military standpoint. The largest national project the country had ever undertaken, World War I led to an increasingly large army and more power for the federal government. By the war's end, over 50,000 American soldiers lay dead on Flanders' Fields, with even more felled by disease. World War I marked the end of the old order in Europe. For the United States, it marked the beginning of the American Century.

Visit Shmoop for much more analysis:

- [World War I Analysis](#)
- [World War I Timeline](#)
- [World War I Photos](#)
- [World War I People](#)
- Quotes, Trivia, Movies, Links, Historical Documents, and More

Brain Snacks - Trivia

Visit Shmoop for full coverage of [World War I](#)

Shmoop: [study guides](#) and [teaching resources](#) for [literature](#), [US history](#), and [poetry](#)



Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0

This document may be modified and republished for noncommercial use only.
You must attribute Shmoop and link to <http://www.shmoop.com>.

On 1 July 1916, some 58,000 British soldiers were killed and wounded (20,000 killed) on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. The entire active United States Army numbered fewer than 58,000 men on that date. General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, commander of American forces in Europe during World War I, is the only six-star general in American history. He was awarded the rank of General of the Armies by Act of Congress in order to simulate the European rank of Field Marshal (which does not exist in the United States Army), so as to put Pershing on an equal footing with haughty French and British commanders. Pershing was a humble man, however, and he never wore his sixth star on his uniform.

Visit *Shmoop* for more [World War I Trivia and Facts](#)

Visit Shmoop for full coverage of [World War I](#)

Shmoop: study guides and teaching resources for literature, US history, and poetry



Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0

This document may be modified and republished for noncommercial use only.

You must attribute Shmoop and link to <http://www.shmoop.com>.