**Week 4 DBQ: America in the Great War (World War I)**

***Directions: Read and annotate the excerpts below, then answer the questions for each selection by coloring in the correct answer choice on the bubble sheet provided.***

**Excerpt from *These Truths: A History of the United States* by Jill Lepore, 2018**

At the start, Americans only watched, numb, shocked to discover that the nineteenth-century's great steam-powered ship of progress had carried its all-too-trusting passengers to the edge of an abyss. "The tide that bore us along was then all the while moving to this as its grand Niagara," wrote Henry James. The scale of death in the American Civil War, so staggering at the time - 750,000 dead, in four years of fighting - looked, by comparison, minuscule. Within the first eight weeks of the war alone, nearly 400,000 Germans were killed, wounded, sick, or missing. In 1916, over a matter of mere months, there were 800,000 military casualties in Verdun and 1.1 million at the Somme. But civilians were slaughtered, too. The Ottoman government massacred as many as l.5 million Armenians. For the first time, war was waged by airplane, bombs dropped from a great height, as if by the gods themselves. Cathedrals were shelled, libraries bombed, hospitals blasted. Before the war was over, nearly 40 million people had been killed and another 20 million wounded.

***1. The Great War took lives in numbers that astounded most Americans. How did the Industrial Revolution make this degree of killing possible?***

a. The Industrial Revolution led to new weapons that killed in huge numbers and with an indiscrimination unheard of before.

b. New factories sold secret weapons to both sides in the war

c. Machine guns were easier to make in factories

d. War against civilian targets became routine in the Industrial Age.

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Public support for suffrage plummeted as the United States grew closer to entering the war and questioning the president began to look like disloyalty. In January 1917, Wilson released an intercepted telegram from German minister Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador in Mexico in which Zimmermann asked Mexico to enter the war as Germany's ally, promising to help regain for Mexico the "lost territories" of New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas should the U.S. declare War on Germany. After Wilson was inaugurated, German U-boats sank three American ships. Wilson concluded that there was no longer any way to stay out the war. At the beginning of April, he asked Congress to declare war...

...Congress declared war. But Wilson's claim that the United States was fighting to make the world safe for democracy was hard for many to swallow. Wilson had in fact pledged not to make the world democratic, or even support the establishment of democratic institutions everywhere, but instead to establish the conditions of stability in which democracy was possible. A war for peace it was not. The war required a massive mobilization: all American men between eighteen and forty-five had to register for the draft; nearly five million were called to serve. How were they to be persuaded of the war's cause? In a speech to new recruits, Wilson s new secretary of state, Robert Lansing, ventured an explanation. "Were every people on earth able to express their will, there would be no wars of aggression and, if there were no wars of aggression, then there would be no wars, and lasting peace would come to this earth," Lansing said, stringing one conditional clause after another. "The only way that a people can express their will is through democratic institutions," Lansing went on. "Therefore, when the world is made safe for democracy...universal peace will be an accomplished fact.''

***2. The presumption by Woodrow Wilson and Robert Lansing that making the world "safe for democracy" would end war was incredibly naive. What does Lansing's explanation to the troops fail to take into account?***

a. That democracy is ill suited to expressions of human will.

b. That soldiers can detect liars pretty easily.

c. That human nature is such that there will always be war.

d. That wars of aggression stem from uninformed citizens wanting what they cannot have.

**Excerpt from *A History of the Great War* by Eric Dorn Brose, 2010, pp. 8-9**

...But engineers and scientists went beyond merely solving problems related to the breakdown of the technology of the first industrial revolution: they also spawned devices and processes that created new material possibilities: electrical power and equipment, wireless telegraphs, telephones, synthetic chemicals for manufacturing and medicinal uses, nitrogen-based high explosives, and ingenious machine tools to shape all kinds of items requiring precise tooling. These scientific and technological breakthroughs had the potential to revolutionize the art of warfare, for they resulted in killing machines like magazine repeating rifles shooting thirty to forty bullets a minute; machine guns capable of spewing out six hundred bullets a minute; semi-recoilless rapid-firing field artillery firing hundreds of shells per hour; and artillery shells packed with extremely powerful nitrogen explosives that were also "smokeless," thus helping artillerymen conceal their batteries. It was not as obvious as one might think, however, that armies would adopt everything from the cornucopia of new weapons produced by the quickly evolving second industrial revolution.

***3. How did the second Industrial Revolution fundamentally change the nature of warfare?***

a. It introduced Americans to European battlefields.

b. It unleashed the potential of modern invention to make the battlefield a much deadlier place.

c. It provided armies with new ways of fighting that they quickly adopted.

d. It made soldiers obsolete.

**Excerpt from *The Social History of the Machine Gun* by John Ellis, 1975, pp. 16-17**

...For the machine gun was a product of the Industrial Revolution, of the fundamental changes in manufacturing and financial techniques that had gathered pace during the nineteenth century. To the proponents of this massive technological leap the machine was the answer to everything. For them even killing could be mechanised and made more efficient. But the various armies remained outside this school of thought. The bulk of their officers came from those very landowning classes that had been left behind in the Industrial Revolution. They tried to make the army a last bastion of the attitudes and the lifestyle that had characterised the pre-industrial world. Because of their rigid hierarchical structures and the fact that all promotions had to be sanctioned from above they were able, for decade after decade, to minimize the impact of the new faith in science and the machine. In 1840 the eleven-pound, six-foot musket was still the standard battlefield weapon. And not even widespread introduction of the rifle made a very significant difference to the traditional military modes of thought. Even in 1914 most professional soldiers still saw the rifle and bayonet, basically a shortened pike, as the ultimate weapon. In essence their tactical scheme of things had altered little since Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick the Great, or Napoleon. When faced with the machine gun and the attendant necessity to rethink all the old orthodoxies about the primacy of the final infantry charge, such soldiers either did not understand the significance of the new weapon at all, or tried to ignore it, dimly aware that it spelled the end of their own conception of war...Even in 1926 Field Marshal Haig could assert that "aeroplanes and tanks ... are only accessories to the man and the horse, and I feel sure that as time goes on you will find just as much use for the horse ... as you have ever done in the past."

Clearly the machine gun, more than anything else, was a dire threat to such assumptions about the nature of war. The officer corps of the nineteenth century clung on to their old beliefs in the centrality of man and the decisiveness of personal courage and individual endeavour.

***4. European officer corps made a tragic error that resulted in horrific bloodshed in World War I because they failed to grasp what essential new truth of modern war?***

a. That men and courage always trump mere machinery.

b. That technology and industry had devised implements of war that largely made old tactics obsolete.

c. That warfare was essentially the same as it had always been.

d. That air power would never play a major role in combat.

**Excerpt from *The First World War* by Hew Strachan, 2003, p.311**

In April 1918, when the British army was fighting its desperate defensive action against the second of Ludendorff's offensives, Vera Brittain, serving as a nurse in Etaples, saw a contingent of American soldiers march down the road. They looked like "Tommies in heaven...I pressed forward...to watch the United States physically entering the War, so god-like, so magnificent, so splendidly unimpaired in comparison with the tired, nerve-racked men of the British Army." That confidence and self-assurance both helped and hindered the American Expeditionary Force in its adaptation to European warfare. It bred a courage not yet dimmed by age, loss and experience, a product of ignorance and naivety. But what [American forces General] Pershing could not accept was that in losing that vigour, which they, too, had possessed in 1914, the British and French armies had also learnt tactical wisdom. He believed that mobile warfare was the path to victory, that battle should be fought in the open, and that the key to success was aimed rifle fire. He rejected the views of those who urged that machinery could substitute for manpower. The American division consisted of 28,000 men, twice the size of those of its allies, which were being restructured as smaller units with fewer men but greater firepower. It was short of lorries and guns, and it proved cumbersome in manoeuvre and poor in its ability to coordinate infantry and artillery.

***5. Why was the sight of the American doughboys so remarkable to Vera Brittain?***

a. Because they were all more handsome than European soldiers.

b. Because the soldiers of Europe were ragged and exhausted from four years of terrible fighting and the Yankees looked so fresh and new.

c. Because European soldiers had the confidence to not worry about marching.

d. Because American soldiers loved to show off for foreign girls with a parade.

**Excerpt from *Eyewitness to America*, David Colbert, ed., pp. 341-342**

This morning Cliff Schwartz awakened us and I rolled out of my blankets hungry and thirsty. Our little signal detail is located in a trench to the left of the [artillery] battery, just at the bottom of the hill on which the village of Montfaucon stands.

Cliff had obtained a paper from a passing Red Cross worker, and I read the German peace appeal which the enemy had made to President Wilson.

Art Long interrupted me with, "These whiz-bangs Fritz is putting over don't sound like peace to me, any more than the steel we are dousing them with."

"Well, any way you take it, boys, we've got him licked, and I believe all of us who are lucky enough to live through this battle will get back home," replied Danny Slentz.

I stopped the discussion by announcing that I was going to get some mess.

"You're crazy, Doc," Cliff remarked. "A big H.E. [high explosive shell] will pounce on you and leave nothing but a grease spot. Better wait for a while right here in the trench until things clear up a bit."

Two of our fellows had already been wounded by an explosion near our kitchen this morning, but I was determined to go back for some mess because I was so confounded hungry. Besides, shells seemed to be landing everywhere and one place seemed about as safe as another (or as dangerous), so I climbed out of the trench and made my way carefully back to clump of bushes where our kitchen was concealed.

I had just got a panful of slum and started eating when I saw part of the temporary trench which I had left screened by an exploding shell. I thought it had come over the trench, but no - just then Smithy and Netterfield jumped out calling for stretchers.

I dropped my mess and ran to the trench and looked in. Poor Art was dead, one arm completely severed from his body. Danny had a hole in his stomach and we placed him on a stretcher and sent him back to the first aid station.

Dan Slentz looked at me with a smile on his face as we loaded him in the ambulance. l gave him a word of cheer and he said, "I don t know, old boy, I've got a pretty bad wound in my stomach. You boys give 'em hell for me." [He died that day.]

I have seen many die, but none have been so close to me as these fellows. I have worked with them and fought beside them every day since I joined the outfit, and they have been my best pals. But we must carry on, whatever happens.

***6. The excerpt describes the life of a soldier in the trenches of the western front. What truth of trench warfare does it describe?***

a. Living or dying was as much random chance or luck as it was skill.

b. Trench warfare meant going long periods without a hot meal.

c. German artillery was very accurate and precise.

d. Sometimes wounds seemed slight but would kill you later.

**Excerpt from *Memories of World War I: North Carolina Doughboys on the Western Front***

**by R. Jackson Marshall, III - pp. 52-54**

While Carl Clodfelter bound the wounds of Americans on the battlefields near Paris, his fellow North Carolinians continued the fight in the trenches. In Belgium, the Thirtieth Division had arrived in France on May 24, 1918, and was immediately sent into British training camps. In June, the Twenty-seventh and Thirtieth Divisions were combined to form the American Second Corps, but at the insistence of the British, General [John J.] Pershing detached the corps from the American First Army and left it to serve with the British. After about a month of training, both divisions were sent to the British Second British Army: the Twenty-seventh to the British Nineteenth Corps and the Thirtieth to the British Second Corps. On July 2, 1918, these two American divisions were sent into the trenches at Ypres. The Ypres front gave the young soldiers of the Thirtieth Division their first impressions of the realities of war. Joe Thompson of Smithfield was a wagoner in the 119th Infantry Regiment. His nightly trips to the front to deliver supplies were nightmarish and surrealistic. "There was a graveyard as big as Raleigh," he recalled. "The English had lost a million soldiers. Canadians, New Zealanders, South Africans, West Indians, and Australians were all buried there; it was a big graveyard. When we were on that hill there and looked down, there was the valley of Belgium near the French-Belgium line. There was a smoke haze in the air from the gunpowder, and there were observation balloons in the air looking for targets, and that cemetery. You were going down through the valley of the shadow of death, that's what it was, the jaws of hell, to tell you the truth. That was Ypres, Belgium."

***7. What about the cemetery Joe Thompson saw explains the insistence of the British that the Americans be detached to serve with the British army?***

a. Americans and Britons shared a special relationship that no other countries had.

b. The cemetery showed Britain and its colonies had lost over a million men and needed reinforcements.

c. Gen. Pershing wanted American dead to be buried with British troops.

d. The Belgians took especially good care of the dead in the cemetery.

**Excerpt from *The American YAWP, Volume II,* Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright, eds, 2019 - p. 149**

In France, the experiences of black soldiers during training and periods of leave proved transformative. The army often restricted the privileges of black soldiers to ensure that the conditions they encountered in Europe did not lead them to question their place in American society. However, black soldiers were not the only ones tempted by European vices. To ensure that American "doughboys" did not compromise their special identity as men of the new world who arrived to save the old, several religious and progressive organizations created an extensive program designed to keep the men pure of heart, mind, and body. With assistance from the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and other temperance organizations, the War Department put together a program of schools, sightseeing tours, and recreational facilities to provide wholesome and educational outlets. The soldiers welcomed most of the activities from these groups, but many still managed to find and enjoy the traditional recreations of soldiers at war.

Women reacted to the war preparations by joining several military and civilian organizations. Their enrollment and actions in these organizations proved to be a pioneering effort for American women in war. Military leaders authorized the permanent gender transition of several occupations that gave women opportunities to don uniforms where none had existed before in history. Civilian wartime organizations, although chaired by male members of the business elite, boasted all-female volunteer workforces. Women performed the bulk of volunteer work during the war.

***8. Why would the European acceptance of black American soldiers cause them to question their place in American society?***

a. Most black Americans could speak French.

b. Europeans saw black soldiers as a novelty

c. Back home, blacks lived under repressive laws and restrictions like Jim Crow and segregation, but enjoyed much more acceptance and freedom in Europe.

d. Josephine Baker sang songs that made black soldiers miss home.

***9. How did the participation of women in the war effort change gender roles in American society?***

a. Women were allowed into combat roles traditionally reserved for men.

b. Soldiers ridiculed women and were critical of their participation in the war effort.

c. Women were granted full equality back home after serving in the war.

d. American women found roles in society beyond the home that opened doors to careers and more.

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...When America entered the war, the mobilization of military resources and the cultivation of popular support consumed the country, generating enormous publicity and propaganda campaigns. President Wilson created the Committee on Public Information, known as the Creel Committee, headed by Progressive George Creel, to inspire patriotism and generate support for military adventures. Creel enlisted the help of Hollywood studios and other budding media outlets to cultivate a view of the war that pitted democracy against imperialism and framed America as a crusading nation rescuing Western civilization from medievalism and militarism. As war passions flared, challenges to the onrushing patriotic sentiment that America was making the world "safe for democracy" were considered disloyal. Wilson signed the Espionage Act in 1917 and the Sedition Act in 1918, stripping dissenters and protesters of their rights to publicly resist the war. Critics and protesters were imprisoned. Immigrants, labor unions, and political radicals became targets of government investigations and an ever more hostile public culture. Meanwhile, the government insisted that individual financial contributions made a discernible difference for the men on the Western Front. Americans lent their financial support to the war effort by purchasing war bonds or supporting the Liberty Loan Drive. Many Americans, however, sacrificed much more than money.

***10. What best describes the efforts of the Creel Committee?***

a. The Creel Committee produced propaganda to drum up support for the war effort.

b. The Creel Committee targeted German Americans for discrimination.

c. The Creel Committee tried to hide the real truth of the war from Americans at home.

d. The Creel Committee hired actors to portray war heroes in movies.

**Excerpt from *The Zimmermann Telegram* by Barbara Tuchman, 1966**

"We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the [Mexican] President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain, and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace.  
 Signed, ZIMMERMANN"

***11. The Zimmermann Telegram offered Mexico what in return for their joining the war against the United States?***

a. Former Mexican territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

b. Assumption of Mexican war debt.

c. Trade agreements with Japan.

d. All of the above.

***12. Why would Germany want Mexico to enter the war on their side?***

a. Because German soldiers love Mexican food.

b. Because they wanted a war with Mexico to hamper America's ability to make war against Germany.

c. Because German submarines needed bases in the Western Hemisphere.

d. Because German submarines were about to win the war anyway.

**Excerpt from *Miracle at Belleau Wood* by Alan Axelrod, 2010**

From an account by war correspondent Floyd Gibbons: "A small platoon line of Marines lay on their faces and bellies under the trees at the edge of a wheat field. Two hundred yards across that flat field the enemy was located in trees. I peered into the trees but could see nothing. Yet I knew that every leaf in the foliage screened scores of German machine guns that swept the field with lead. The bullets nipped the tops of the young wheat and ripped the bark from the trunks of the trees three feet from the ground on which the Marines lay. The minute for the Marine advance was approaching. An old gunnery sergeant commanded the platoon in the absence of the lieutenant, who had been shot and was out of the fight. The old sergeant was a Marine veteran. His cheeks were bronzed with the wind and sun of the seven seas. The service bar across his left breast showed that he had fought in the Philippines, in Santo Domingo, at the walls of Peking, and in the streets of Vera Cruz. I make no apologies for his language. Even if [Victor] Hugo were not my precedent, I would make no apologies. To me his words were classic, if not sacred.

As the minute for the advance arrived, he arose from the trees first and jumped out onto the exposed edge of that field that ran with lead, across which he and his men were to charge. Then he turned to give the charge order to the men of his platoon - his mates - the men he loved. He said: *'COME ON, YOU SONS-O'-BITCHES! DO YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?'* "

***13. According to Gibbons, Belleau Wood was a daunting place to attack because of what?***

a. Wheat fields are very tough to cross.

b. The Marines were not good at fighting in the woods.

c. Germans in the woods had many machine guns ready to shred the attacking Marines.

d. The Marines' lieutenant was not there to lead the men.

***14. What about the old Marine gunnery sergeant suggests he was a good leader?***

a. He had served in many places over many years, long enough to become a gunnery sergeant.

b. He had assumed command of the platoon when the Marine officer was shot.

c. He was the first to jump from cover to begin the assault on Belleau Wood

d. All of the above.

**Excerpt from *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn, 1997, p. 265-266**

The United States claimed the *Lusitania* carried an innocent cargo, and therefore the torpedoing was a monstrous German atrocity. Actually, the *Lusitania* was heavily armed: it carried thousands of cases of ammunition, Her manifests were falsified to hide this fact, and the British and American governments lied about the cargo.

In 1914 a serious recession had begun in the United States. But by 1915, war orders for the Allies (mostly England) had stimulated the economy, and by April 1917 more than $2 billion worth of goods had been sold to the Allies. American prosperity was now tied to England's war.

Prosperity depended much on foreign markets, it was believed by the leaders of the country. Early in his presidency, Woodrow Wilson described his aim as "an open door to the world," and in 1914 he said he supported "the righteous conquest of foreign markets."

With World War I, England became more and more a market for American goods and for loans at interest. J.P. Morgan and Company acted as agents for the Allies, and began lending money in such great amounts as to both make great profit and tie American finance closely to the interest of a British victory in the war against Germany.

Industrialists and the political leaders talked of prosperity as if it were classless, as if everyone gained from Morgan's loans. True, the war meant more production, more employment, but did the workers in the steel plants gain as much as U.S. Steel, which made $348 million in profit in 1916 alone? When the United States entered the war, it was the rich who took even more direct charge of the economy. Financier Bernard Baruch headed the War Industries Board, the most powerful of the wartime government agencies. Bankers, railroad men, and industrialists dominated these agencies.

***15. In Howard Zinn's account of the war, the United States had a vested interest in Great Britain winning because of what?***

a. Great Britain and the U.S. had a long relationship dating back to the colonial era.

b. The U.S. had a strong economic incentive to see Great Britain win the war.

c. Regular workers in the U.S. made lots of money filling British orders for war materials.

d. Making the world safe for democracy was good for the economy in Germany.