

World War 1

1. Article
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M-A-I-N

The M-A-I-N acronym is often used to analyse the war - , , and . It's simplistic but provides a useful framework.

Article

The late nineteenth century was an era of military competition, particularly between the major European powers.

The policy of building a stronger military was judged relative to neighbours, creating a culture of paranoia that heightened the search for alliances. It was fed by the cultural belief that war is good for nations.

hms-queen-elizabeth-dreadnought

A British dreadnought - the building of these ships was a source of tension between Great Britain and Germany.

Germany in particular looked to expand its navy. However, the 'naval race' was never a real contest - the British always maintained naval superiority. But the British obsession with naval dominance was strong. Government rhetoric exaggerated military expansionism. A simple naivety in the potential scale and bloodshed of a European war prevented several governments from checking their aggression.

Alliances

A web of alliances developed in Europe between 1870 and 1914, effectively creating two camps bound by commitments

to maintain sovereignty or intervene militarily - the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance.

The Triple Alliance of 1882 linked Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy.

The Triple Entente of 1907 linked France, Britain and Russia.

A historic point of conflict between Austria Hungary and Russia was over their incompatible Balkan interests, and France had a deep suspicion of Germany rooted in their defeat in the 1870 war.