

THE FRONT LINE

Edition: 61

THE WGG'S FIRST WORLD WAR NEWSPAPER

FOR HISTORY MATTERS

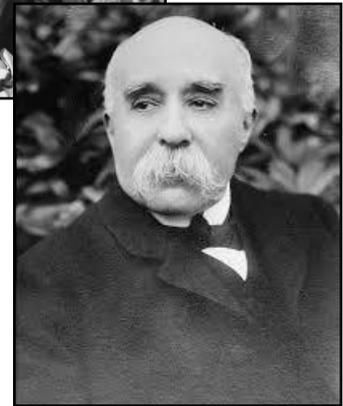
6th February 1918

FOURTEEN POINTS: PREPARING FOR PEACE?

On January 8th, US President Woodrow Wilson gave a speech to Congress regarding war aims and peace terms, in which he laid down his hopeful blueprint for world peace in the form of 14 points. He is intent that these points should set the stage for rebuilding international relations after the tumult of the First World War.

Wilson has proposed that there should be no more secret treaties between countries; free navigation of international seas; free trade between the countries who accept the peace; worldwide disarmament; impartial settlement of colonial claims; evacuation of troops from Russian soil; evacuation of Belgium and the establishment of its independence; restoration of French territory, including the long-disputed Alsace-Lorraine; readjustment of the frontiers of Italy to conform to clearly recognisable lines of nationality; self-determination for Austria-Hungary; evacuation of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania by the Central Powers; self-determination for all non-Turkish peoples of the Ottoman empire; independence for Poland to be established, with access to the sea; the setting up of the League of Nations, an association intended to protect the independence of all member countries. These 14 points certainly resound with a tone of anti-imperialism, arguably a good sign for the future European stage, what with imperialist desires being incendiary in the lead up to World War I. There is also reason for optimism in the proposal for free trade and the setting up of the League of Nations: countries reliant on each other for flourishing trade will be less likely to risk these gains and sever relations by going to war, and the League will create a tangible international community.

However, despite Wilson's vision of a peaceful, unified international climate, other foreign leaders have deemed these points too idealistic. It is likely that the voice of French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau will be particularly loud in the call for a merciless treaty for Germany. With a long and violent shared history and



Both Wilson (top) and Clemenceau (right) will push their own agenda, should a peace with Germany come immanently.

Clemenceau himself having lived through the events of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, it is not difficult to understand where this spirit of vengeance has its roots.

The question will be for political leaders to decide: is it wiser to “squeeze the German lemon until the pips squeak” with a ravaging treaty, ruled by the desire to make Germany compensate for the bloodiest war Europe can remember? Or will it be better to act with caution and foresight, imposing a lenient peace which avoids the risk of future resentment? Emotion and the self-interest of the Allied Powers will possibly impede this idea of a long-lasting international coexistence, and will almost certainly ensure that Wilson's points are overhauled before any real treaty is signed. It is also note-worthy that despite the President having made the speech, the real issue will come in getting the American public to agree. President Wilson's warning rings menacingly: without America's involvement there will be another world war within a generation.

Reporter: Anastasia Vartanian



HOSPITAL SHIP SUNK AT CARDIFF FURTHER EVIDENCE OF GERMAN ATROCITIES!

On the 4th of January 1918, yet another of Britain's brave hospital ships was sunk by the unrestrictedly savage Germans. The converted passenger ship 'Rewa' was lost to a single torpedo, a mere 90 miles away from its Welsh destination of Cardiff, sinking in only two hours after the attack. All the patients survived and escaped on lifeboats, along with a majority of the personnel, but three Lascars (Indian seamen who were working in the boiler room) were killed on impact.

Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare has resulted in another casualty of this Great War, this time a hospital ship. It is rumoured that Germany claims the sinking of the 'Rewa' was an error in judgement and not an intentional breach of the 1907 Hague Convention laws regarding the neutral treatment of hospital ships.

Hospital ships may not be attacked by any side in a war and the hospital ships themselves may be recognised by their pure white hulls and prominent insignias of the Red Cross. It is confirmed by a source that the 'Rewa' had both (the white hull dating back to her days as a passenger router from Britain to India) along with enough lights to illuminate her status to all passing ships and submarines. From this information, it can only be inferred that the U-boat 55 intended to destroy this humanitarian vessel and thus breach the Hague principles of compassion in war time.

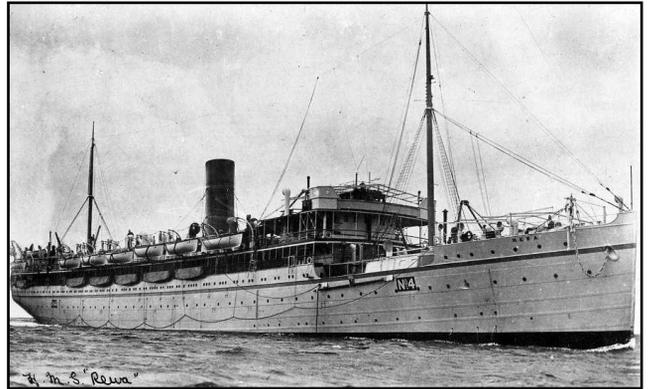
'Rewa' left from the Eastern Mediterranean in December of last year, carrying 279 patients, a crew of 207 and a further 80 medical personal on board, including walking wounded from Greece. It was checked to be a hospital ship in Gibraltar, neutral Spanish observers boarding to confirm its identity in keeping with the laws and also removing any reasonable doubt that it was carrying military supplies or troops and so the 'Rewa' was clearly a non-target for the German U-Boats. The boat is a sister ship of the famed 'Rohilla', the first hospital ship tragedy of the war, and luckily carried enough lifeboats for all to survive to Swansea where they recently received support from the 'British and Foreign Sailors' Society'.

The attack has been established as being ordered by the Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner, who leads the U-Boat 55 and has done so since last April. He has previously drowned 38 British sailors after 'rescuing' them from the sea, and since a log has been found declaring the attack

on the 'Rewa' as an attack on a cargo ship- an obvious lie due to the 'Rewa's' colouring, he will be held accountable for his actions and charged with this war crime at the end of the war.

He is an example of the worst Germany has to offer, and they only further their reputation as heartless savages as this war continues. Their new policy of firing on all hospital ships, combined with their merciless edicts on Russia, should not strike fear in the hearts of our soldiers, but instead compel righteous rage against them. It is hoped that no more hospital ships will be lost, especially once of the consequences of Germany's actions catches up to them, and that this tragedy can be prevented from occurring ever again.

Reporter: Jenni Wall



The HMHS Rewa; now 200ft under water



THE FRONT LINE REMEMBERS **'LEST WE FORGET'**



HAROLD J. B. BLY

In remembrance of Harold John Barber Bly, an Officer Cadet in the Artists Rifles OTC. He died of pneumonia at age 18 on the 13th January 1918.
He attended WBGs from 1909 – 1918.

PERCIVAL S. GRIMES

In remembrance of Percival Sydney Grimes, a Corporal in the Canadian Forestry Battalion. He died in a train accident on the 28th January 1918, age 25..
He attended WBGs from 1906 – 1907.

Contributor: Katherine Watson



LLOYD GEORGE CLARIFIES WAR AIMS

On the 5th of January Lloyd George came forth in Caxton Hall, London, to speak out regarding the British War Aims, stating that our Nation is entitled to know ‘for what cause or causes they are making the sacrifice.’

Lloyd George has made it clear that there are currently some very important decisions being made as to whether the Great War will continue or will come to a peaceful end. In the words of Lloyd George, ‘we are not fighting a war of aggression against the German people,’ ‘we were forced to join this war in self-defence.’

This speech, already dubbed as the most significant British statement made in wartime, is made in an attempt to quell pressure from radicals and trade unions, and to counter Bolshevik propaganda. It is also likely to influence Woodrow Wilsons Fourteen Points which we are eagerly awaiting the announcement of after the American President said ‘he was anxious to know the genesis of the speech – which he said was often as interesting as a speech itself.’ It is clear Wilson will consider Lloyd George’s words, as he calls for ‘an alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes’ which is something Wilson is also reportedly striving for.

Lloyd George has made it clear that peace would be welcomed if a treaty is established, a territorial settlement is reached, and self-determination is carried out, however, it is unclear whether this will happen and what the impact of Wilson’s fourteen points will be.

Reporter: Alice Gibbons



*Colonel T.E Lawrence,
a.k.a. ‘Lawrence of
Arabia’*

VICTORY IN TAFILEH

A BRILLIANT FEAT OF ARMS FOR LAWRENCE

23rd January 1918

One of Britain’s most faithful allies, the Kingdom of Hejaz, gained a step further to its long-desired independence, after defeating a large Ottoman force at the village of Tafileh, a region southeast of the Dead Sea.

This battle is in a series of attacks by Arab forces, allied with Britain, in the Arab revolt that is seeking a self-governing kingdom led by Hussein bin Ali. Whilst the large-scale revolt started two years earlier with the birth of nationalism, this campaign starting in early January was linked with an unprecedented number of British officers that provided the forces with an abundance of rifles, explosives, mortars and machine guns, no doubt the underpinning of the victory, perhaps even the watershed of Sharif Hussein’s struggle. With Arab forces under the command of Jafar Pasha al-Askari, and forces under Lieutenant Colonel P. C. Joyce also taking up a significant minority of the Arab Northern Army, the battle was a huge blow to the Ottoman Empire and a triumphant display of Thomas Lawrence’s ability to lead both Arab and home troops. Speculations now exist as to whether Lawrence will be awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his leadership at Tafileh, and whether he will be promoted to lieutenant colonel.

The scale of the victory is undeniably evident, when looking at statistics alone. Britain and the Arab forces took the lives of 400 Turks and captured more than 200 prisoners, inflicting over 1,000 Ottoman casualties, whilst only 40 men from our valiant troops have been lost. Whilst this is not in the spotlight of the devastating war, with the recent participation of the United States taking centre stage, the friendship of Britain with Hejaz is an underestimated, and important one. The Sharif of Hejaz is initially a distinguished religious figure supporting Great Britain’s actions, and the geographic location of Hejaz has proved to be advantageous, when not in the perspective as a potential base to attack wartime shipping to and from India. This is not to mention extra invigoration for the Ottoman Empire, and thus such chances to weaken the enemy are not to be carelessly overlooked. If nothing else, we can hope for this battle to contribute positively to the progress of the war.

Reporter: Jiaying Zhang