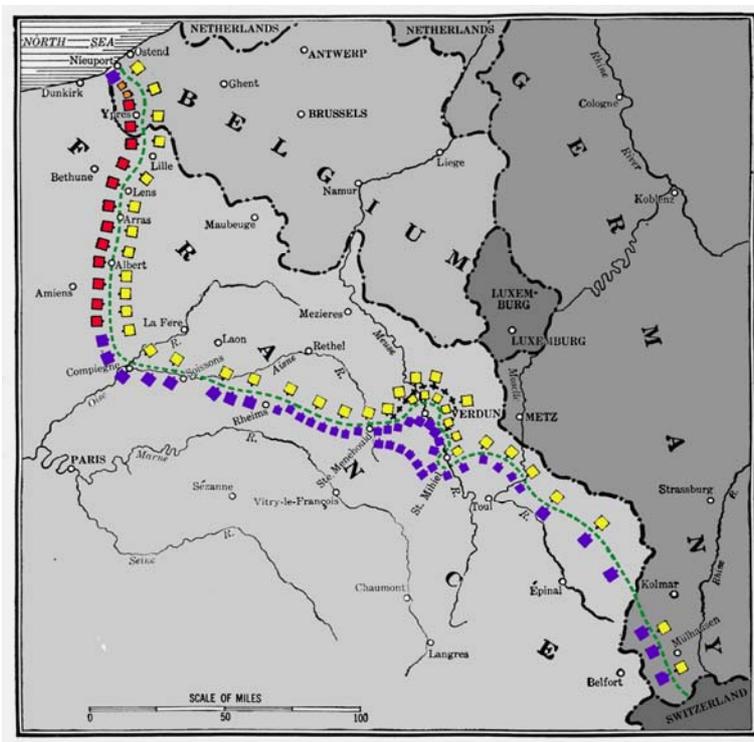# Theatres of War

Although World War One was a world war, most of the fighting was confined to a few key areas. These areas are usually referred to as the theatres of war.

The Western Front

The German army crossed the Belgian border on August 3rd 1914. Britain and France declared war on Germany on August 4th. The Germans pushed through Belgium and entered France. The British and French armies marched to stop the German advance. The Battle of Marne 4th - 10th September stopped the Germans from marching on Paris.
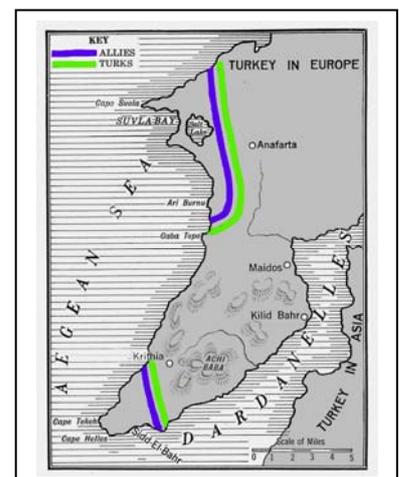

To avoid losing the territory already gained in France, the Germans began digging trenches. The British and French, unable to break through the line of trenches, began to dig their own trenches. Throughout the entire war, neither side gained more than a few miles of ground along what became known as the western Front.

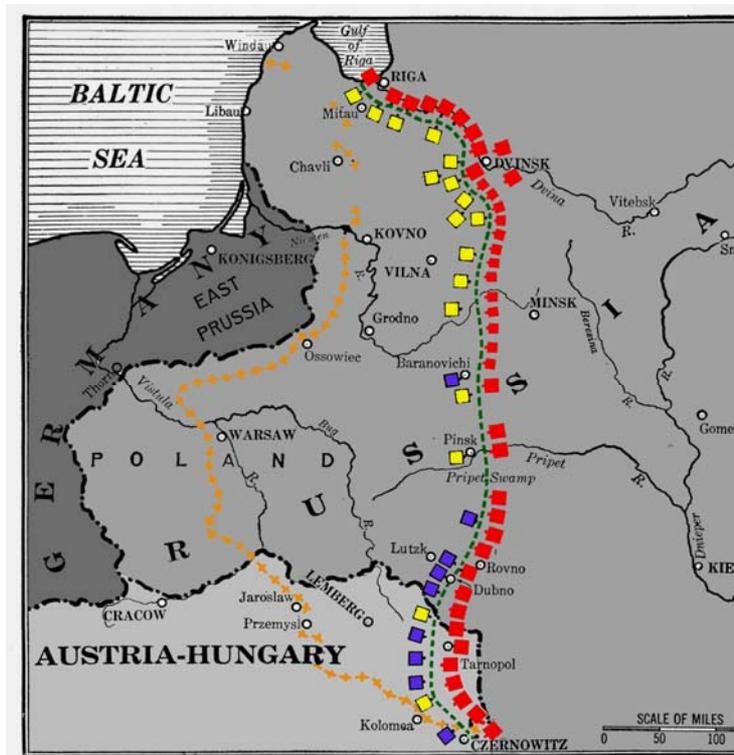The squares on the map represent the British, French and German armies.

Gallipoli

The Gallipoli peninsula is located in the south of Turkey. In 1915, the allied commanders decided to try to attack Germany by attacking her ally, Turkey. Allied soldiers, mainly from Australia and New Zealand, were sent to the Peninsula while British ships tried to force a way through the Dardanelles. The entire mission was a failure. The allies lost more than 50,000 men but gained hardly any land.

The Eastern Front

The line of fighting on the Eastern side of Europe between Russia and Germany and Austria-Hungary is known as the Eastern Front.
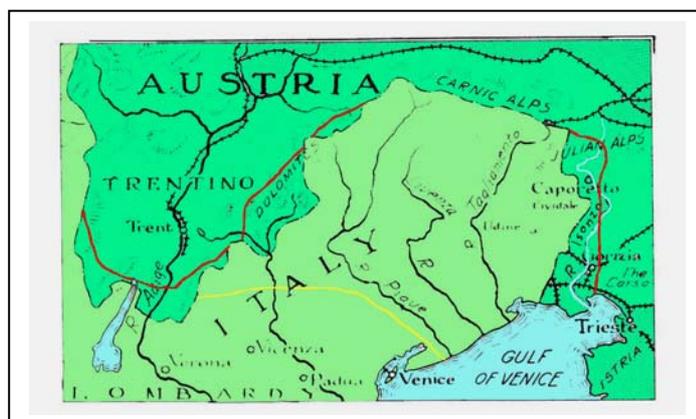

Fighting began on the Eastern front when Russia invaded East Prussia on 17th August 1914. Germany immediately launched a counter-offensive and pushed Russia back. This pattern of attack and counter-attack continued for the first two years of the war and meant that the Eastern Front changed position as land was captured and lost by both sides.

The squares on the map represent the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian armies.

By 1917, the Russian people were fed up with the huge number of Russian losses. The government and monarchy were overthrown and the new Bolshevik government signed the treaty of Brest Litovsk which took the Russians out of the war.

Italian Front

Before the outbreak of war in August 1914, Italy had sided with Germany and Austria-Hungary. However, tempted by offers of more land once the war was won, Italy entered the war in April 1915 on the side of the allies. The Italian front is the name given to the fighting that took place along the border between Italy and Austria. The Italians only managed to advance a short way into Austria. Between 1915 and 1917 there were twelve battles fought along the river Isonzo, just inside the Austrian border, all of which were inconclusive. After being defeated at the battle of Caporetto in 1917, the Italians were pushed back.

The War at Sea

Even before the war, Germany and Britain were involved in a naval race. Germany knew that she was unlikely to win a naval war against Britain and avoided naval conflict with Britain.

The British produced the Dreadnought battleship. Germany produced their own version of the Dreadnought shortly afterwards.

Britain's main naval tactic was to keep German ships in German ports and to block supplies from reaching Germany. Germany's main naval tactic was to post u-boats (submarines) in the Atlantic Ocean and to destroy ships taking supplies from America and other countries to Britain.

On 7th May 1915, a German submarine torpedoed the passenger liner, Lusitania. Nearly 1200 civilians lost their lives.