

OH WHAT A LOVELY PRIMER

EUROPE 1837-1914 A (VERY) BRIEF HISTORY

- 1837 Queen Victoria ascends the throne of Great Britain. She will reign for 63 years and see her Empire grow to be the largest in the history of the world.
Queen Victoria will have 9 children and 46 grandchildren. Many will become European monarchs.
- 1839 In the Treaty of London, the Great European Powers agree on the independence of Luxembourg and the sacred neutrality of Belgium as a deterrent to future European wars.
- 1853–56 The Crimean War, fought over a shrinking Ottoman Empire, features the Russian Empire against a coalition of the English, French, and Ottomans (Turks).
In this war, Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing.
- 1870 France attacks Prussia sparking the Franco/Prussian War. France loses its territories of Alsace and Lorraine.
- 1871 The Prussian territories unite to become the German Empire.
- 1884 Sir Henry Maxim invents the machine gun, which will be developed into the perfect weapon for trench warfare.
- 1887 Swedish chemist and arms manufacturer Alfred Nobel (of Peace Prize fame) patents the perfect smokeless gunpowder.
- 1888 Kaiser Wilhelm II takes the throne of Germany presiding over what has become Europe's most powerful, populous and imperially ambitious country.
- 1904 The Russian Empire enters into a disastrous War with Japan.
Alfred Graf von Schlieffen, head of the German general staff, develops a plan to capture Paris (the Western Front) before the Russians can mobilize on the Eastern Front.
- 1908 The Austro-Hungarian Empire, under Emperor Franz Josef, annexes the Balkan territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina leading to a political movement for the unification of southern Slav states (Yugoslavia).



1914 Germany has allied with the Austro-Hungarian Empire to help protect against the Slavs and their ally, Russia.

Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany (Queen Victoria's grandson) is itching to implement the Schlieffen Plan and march into Paris.

The Kaiser is wary of rousing the ire of his first cousin George the V of England.

He is equally wary of the Russian Empire led by Nicolas and Alexandra (another first cousin).

France is preparing an offensive against Germany with the hopes of winning back Alsace and Lorraine.

The Balkans are a powder keg fuelled by revolutionary Yugoslavs. Arch Duke Ferdinand, the Austro-Hungarian Emperor-in-waiting, is planning a trip to Sarajevo.

Great Britain, in possession of the world's most powerful navy, is sitting on the fence.

Germany's industrial dynasty, the Krupp family, creates history's largest gun and names it after the family matriarch (Big) Bertha.

The whole happy family is waiting for a good excuse to put their toys to use.

OH WHAT A LOVELY GLOSSARY

TOMMY – *An English soldier*

LIMEY – *The English*

JOHN BULL – *A cartoon character symbolizing Great Britain*

JERRY – *The Germans*

THE HUN – *The Germans*

THE BOSCH – *The Germans*

NO MAN'S LAND – *The space between two opposing trenches*

PICCADILLY – *Soldier slang for No Man's Land*

PENALTY AREA – *Soldier slang for No Man's Land*

WIPERS – *Ypres, the sight of a major battle*

CIVVY – *Civilian*

FAGS – *Cigarettes*

THE REICHSTAG – *seat of the German parliament*

WIZZ-BANG – *A commonly used artillery bomb that hisses before it explodes*

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