U.S. Military Involvement in WWI
John J. Pershing is chosen to command the U.S. troops
U.S. Naval leaders developed a “convoy” system to keep products flowing to Europe for the war effort

- **Convoy** = a large group of merchant vessels sailing together
- Between February and April 1917, German subs sank 844 Allied vessels
- Convoys successfully made Allied ship losses fall to a fraction of what they had been
The first U.S. troops in Europe were sent to prop of the French morale

- The first U.S. troops reached Europe in June 1917
- The first troops were not yet ready for combat
- These troops symbolized America’s commitment to the fight and its intention to send more troops
The Russian Army was exhausted

- Russia was struggling between establishing a new government and fighting the war
- 2 million soldiers deserted the front lines!
- Germany was advancing further into Russia
A Communist leader takes over in Russia and pulls the country out of the war

• **Vladimir Lenin** was the leader of a radical extremist party known as the **Bolsheviks**.

• **Communism** = an economic and political system based on the idea that social classes and the right to private property should be eliminated.

• Lenin’s first task after seizing control was to pull Russia out of the war
  – Signed a peace agreement with Germany called the **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** in March 1918
Russia leaving the war = Bad news for the Allies!

• When Russia leaves the war, it allows the Germans to shift all of the troops that were previously fighting the Russians to the Western Front.

• Germany begins a “Peace Offensive” to try and end the war quickly
  – Their goal is to launch a series of attacks on the Allies to take them out of the war before the Americans send the majority of their troops
The Americans arrive just in time at Chateau-Thierry

- The Germans broke through the Allied lines in Belgium and France, and reached the town of Chateau-Thierry less than 50 miles from Paris
- 1 million Parisians fled the city
- U.S. troops had arrived to support the Allies
U.S. and French troops counterattacked at Belleau Wood

U.S. Marines fought 3 weeks of intense combat & suffered many casualties

The U.S. was successful in driving the Germans out
The Germans attempted to take Paris again in the Second Battle of the Marne

- At first the Germans gained ground when they attacked
- The Allies (including 250,000 Americans) counterattacked
- Both sides suffered many losses
- Germans had to pull back
The Allies eventually broke through the German line at the Battle of Argonne Forest

• Now that the Germans were weakened, it was the Allies turn to attack
• In Sept. 1918, more than 1 million U.S. soldiers advanced on the German position between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest in NE France
• American advanced slowly at first, but the German forces eventually began to fall
The Armistice ended the fighting

- **Armistice** = a halt in fighting that allows peace talks to begin

- Germans realized that they would not succeed and asked for an armistice in the fall of 1918
WWI ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year 1918