

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: World War One (In One Take)**[NARRATOR]**

One bullet from a young Serbian's gun,
His trigger the spark for World War One.
But how did one shot prove so lethal,
As to kill over 17 million people?

It's time for the History Bomb of World War One. Let's set the scene.

Late 19th Century, Germany was booming,
But there were signs of a storm brewing,
Her emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm the second,
Had plans to teach his rivals a lesson.

[KAISER WILHELM II]

Now Deutschland is high, but I'll take her higher,
One word, two syllables...EMPIRE!
Like Britain I will rule sea and land,
Watch out world, it's the Fatherland!

[NARRATOR]

It's worth pointing out that the Kaiser was mentally unstable, but unfortunately for the rest of Europe he was in charge. Germany's neighbours started to take notice.

[GENERAL JOFFRE]

Hey Russia, have you heard this guy?
I'm thinking of putting my army on standby.

[TSAR NICHOLAS II]

I know, cousin Willie is giving me nausea,
And now he's signed an agreement with Austria?

[GENERAL JOFFRE]

Zut alors! Well, we've got your back,
We'll be here if the Kaiser attacks!

[NARRATOR]

It was against that backdrop that Gavrilo Princip, a young Serbian nationalist shot dead Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, setting off a terrible chain of events. Are you ready? Let's go!

Austria and Germany attack into Serbia,
Who are allies with Russia (didn't mention that earlier).
Russia gets ready to advance,
And that brings in their pals, yep, France.
Germany attack France as quick as they can,
Adopt an approach called the 'Schlieffen Plan'.
They go through Belgium, awful decision,
As Belgium have friends, namely Great Britain.
In come Italy, now let's join the advance,
With the first British troops fighting in France.

[BRITISH OFFICER]

Forward!

Get down boys, we must take cover,
Or we'll be more machine gun fodder!
Good Lord, those Howitzer shells are big!
Without delay, quick chaps, dig!

[NARRATOR]

By November 1914, 400 miles of barbed wire and mud
Stretched from the Alps to Belgium. Commonwealth
soldiers arrived from Australia, Africa and India, but still
more troops were needed.

[FIELD MARSHALL KITCHENER]

Men of Britain, there's much to do,
Your time is now. Your country needs you!

[BRITISH SOLDIER]

Sir, we've just had news from Gallipoli.

[FIELD MARSHALL KITCHENER]

Ah yes, against the Turks, a resounding victory?

[BRITISH SOLDIER]

No sir, 500,000 casualties,
And a telegram: "SEND HELP PLEASE"

[FIELD MARSHALL KITCHENER]

Oh dear...

[NARRATOR]

Back in the trenches there was more to fear,
As chemical weapons began to appear.

[BRITISH OFFICER]

Gas! Gas! An ecstasy of fumbling,
No mask? A damp cloth's better than nothing!

[YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER]

Sir, I can't see! The gas stings and burns!

[BRITISH OFFICER]

Come here soldier, let's get you to a nurse.

[NARRATOR]

Behind the front line, volunteer nurses tended to the injured soldiers. Both at home and on the front line, women made tremendous contributions to the war effort.

[NURSE]

Hold still, deep breaths, I'll soon be through,
It's barbaric what they've done to you.

[BRITISH SOLDIER]

Thank you miss, you're a real pearl,
These trenches are no place for a girl.

[NURSE]

Neither are they fit for a man!
But we're here to help the best we can,
And who do you think manufactured your gun?
Us girls will see this war is won!

[NARRATOR]

1916 saw terrible losses on the Western Front. The
Germans advanced at Verdun and the British went
forward at the Somme, but neither battle proved
decisive.

Meanwhile on the Eastern Front, the Russians were achieving some successes.

[BRITISH SOLDIER]

Sir, news from the Russian army.

[BRITISH OFFICER]

Blimey that pigeon's flown a long way!
Let me guess, they've been pushed back?

[BRITISH SOLDIER]

No, actually they've had a good crack.
General Brusilov makes good progress,
His wide attacks put Fritz under stress,
He's advanced no less than 60 miles.

[BRITISH OFFICER]

Superb, great news, I like his style!

[BRITISH SOLDIER]

Oh, hang on, and now his attack's been stalled,
German reserves have been called.

[BRITISH OFFICER]

Oh, blast!

[NARRATOR]

It would take new tactics and technology to break the deadlock on either front. In 1917 Germany made a fatal calculation by pursuing a ruinous naval strategy.

[KAISER WILHELM II]

This war has gone on long enough,
It's time for Deutschland to get tough!
The Allies need imports to stay alive,
Cut this off and they cannot survive!

[NARRATOR]

German U-Boats attacked Allied shipping to cut off supply. Critically they attacked American ships and in response the United States declared war on Germany. It would take another year, however, for American troops to actually arrive in Europe. In the meantime, a Russian revolutionary seized his moment.

[VLADIMIR LENIN]

My Russian brothers, listen in,
Let me introduce myself, Vladimir Lenin.
I promise to take this country far,
But first we need to kick out the Tsar!
Good, that was easy, now everyone's equal,
We'll have bread, land and peace for the people.
I think Mother Russia's had enough of this war,
I'll meet with the Germans to settle the score!

[NARRATOR]

The meeting took place in November 1917 and Russian land was divided by Germany into independent states, including the Ukraine. With Russia now out of the war, the Germans moved all efforts to the Western Front and planned a colossal effort in the spring of 1918. Ultimately the offensive failed and, at this pivotal moment, the Americans finally arrived.

[AMERICAN SOLDIER]

Hey, what's up! No photographs please
We got your memo and...jeez!
Things have gotten out of hand.
Good thing you called up Uncle Sam!
The enemy had better reach for the skies,
We'll light it up like the 4th of July!

[BRITISH SOLDIER]

Get down you idiot!

[NARRATOR]

By May 1918, 200,000 American troops were arriving per month. And after withstanding the German offensive, new technology and tactics proved decisive for the allies.

[BRITISH OFFICER]

Right chaps, this is it!
We have orders to make the hit.
Keep behind the tanks, and use the Lewis gun,
A creeping barrage will shatter the Hun.
Our planes will protect from the skies,
Then we'll hold the line until support arrives.

[NARRATOR]

Finally the Allies got some traction,
Putting the Germans out of action.
At 11am on the 11th November,
The guns fell silent upon German surrender.
All in all, a tragic loss,
Europe secured, but at what cost?
A generation lost, we are forever in debt.
100 years hence, lest we forget.