

What was the contribution of Britain to the defeat of Germany in WW1?



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Britain contributed to the defeat of Germany in WW1 in several ways, I will write all the reasons and conclude on my thought on which was the most important contribution. The British army in France and Belgium Britain joined the First World War when the Germans invaded neutral Belgium in August 1914.

The BEF (British Expeditionary Force) was sent to France to try and defend Belgium and stop the Schlieffen Plan. BEF arrived in France on 21 August and was a small force of 100,000 men. The BEF had experience in the Boer War, was well trained and equipped. BEF advanced to Mons and delayed the German advance for a full day on 23 August. The Germans suffered heavy casualties, but the BEF retreated as a lack of men. The Schlieffen Plan depended heavily on speed for success and the BEF action in France and Belgium delayed their plan and gave time for France to launch a counter attack.

BEF contributed to the battle of the Marne which forced the Germans to retreat where trench warfare began. Schlieffen Plan was unsuccessful and now the German had to fight on two fronts in the west against Britain and France and in the east against Russia. The BEF was successful at the battle of the Channel ports 12 October to 11 November. The BEF saved the Channel ports for the allies this was very important as it meant that Britain was able to continue to transport the troops and supplies to France through these ports.

The general believed that the only way to win the war on the western front was to take over the enemy's trenches and drive their forces back until they were surrounded. The battle of Somme Britain had many casualties on the first

day 60, 000 men as they bombarded men to go and kill as many Germans as possible. At the end of the battle the Germans had lost 500, 000 men these losses had long term effect on their military strength. The battle of Passchendaele both sides lost a lot of men and morale. Germany tried to attack but the attacks were stopped as new troops from America had come.

Germany's morale finally had broken, with cases of whole companies surrendering to single tanks. The Royal Navy The main role of the British navy in the war was to guard the shores of Britain against attacks from German ships. They also convoyed troops across the channel to enable them to fight on the western front and protected British commerce and shipping. A more offensive role was their attempt to blockade the German coast to starve Germany into defeat. In the early years of the war there were two sea battles. The Germans lost three light cruisers at Heligoland in August 1914 and the cruiser Blücher at Dogger Bank in January 1915.

By July 1915 allied sea power controlled the oceans so they could gain maximum blockade. By the end of 1916 Germany was suffering from the effects of the blockade and the lack of imported fertiliser resulted in poor harvests which lowered the resistance of the Germans to disease and led to an increase in the death rate within Germany in 1917 and 1918. The most effective action taken by the British government against U-boats was the introduction of armed convoys in April 1917. This meant that merchant ships travelled in groups across the Atlantic and were guarded by warships. This made it very dangerous for U-boats to attack.

The most effective weapon against the U-boat was the mine which was responsible for the destruction of the U-boats. The Home front Lord Kitchener was placed in charge of the war effort in Britain. He soon realised that he needed to recruit men quickly. He launched an appeal for volunteers, posters appealed for people's patriotism, disgust for Germans and those who did not join were branded cowards and handed white feathers as a mark of weakness.

Half a million people signed up in one month. As the war continued volunteers became fewer only 55,000 volunteered while 436,000 in September. People became weary at home. So in January 1916 the government introduced conscription all able bodied men between 18-41 were recruited. The defence of the realm act (DORA) was introduced which gave more power than it previously had so that it could protect the country from invasion and do everything possible to win the war.

censorship was introduced to stop rumours from spreading and to keep the spirit of the home people up. DORA also gave the government power to take over factories for war production. rationing was introduced to foods such as sugar, butter and beef and everyone was given ration books with coupons so everyone was entitled to the same amount of food. Women played a vital role in the war, they did the jobs men had to do making shells in munitions factories.

They were needed as the war lengthened and the work of these 'munitionettes' was important. Women also did other jobs which they never have done before like mechanics, window cleaner, fire fighters and steel

making etc. Conclusion After looking at all the reasons, which contributed, to the defeat of the Germans in WW1 I think that BEF was the most pivotal reason why the Germans were defeated. I think this because THE Schlieffen plan depended a great deal on the speed of this plan as they were to beat the East and then go fight the West and the BEF managed to delay the plan and eventually the plan failed. This then led to trench warfare, battles at sea and ground and everything else that happened after the Schlieffen plan. IF the BEF had never intervened there is a big possibility that the Schlieffen plan would have been successful and not lead to the Germans being defeated.

The BEF also won the battle for the Channel ports which allowed the Allies to continue transport troops and supplies to France through these ports.